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NEW ZEALAND.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

Third Session of the Ninth Parliament.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Fifty-sixth Volume.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM

JULY 20 TO AUGUST 18, 1886.

WELLINGTON:
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ERRATA.

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574. In column 1, last line of table, *for* "Hawke's Bay" *read* "Hurunui-Bluff."
563. In column 1, the quotation from page 79 of Mr. Shaw-Lefevre's decisions terminates with the words "management of the rate." The next sentence, commencing with the words "With regard to local rates," and ending with the word "Lords," is not a quotation, but the comment of Mr. Speaker (Sir Maurice O'Rorke) on Major Atkinson's remark on page 562 about local rates.

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No. 19.

NEW ZEALAND.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SESSION 1886.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

20th July to 21st July.

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WELLINGTON:
BY AUTHORITY: GEORGE DIDSBURY, GOVERNMENT PRINTER.

1886.

Price 2d.

NEW ZEALAND.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

Third Session of the Ninth Parliament.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 20th July, 1886.

First Readings—Second Readings—Third Readings—Maori Form of Legal Terms—Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Salmon and Trout Bill, Imprest Supply Bill (No. 2).

SECOND READINGS.

Wellington and Manawatu Railway Company's Additional Capital and Debentures Validation Bill, Imprest Supply Bill (No. 2).

THIRD READINGS.

New Zealand Bible, Tract, and Book Society Bill, Imprest Supply Bill (No. 2), Municipal Corporations Bill, Destitute Persons Bill.

MAORI FORM OF LEGAL TERMS.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL, in moving the motion standing in his name, said the Standing Orders Nos. 318 and 319 provided,—

"Speeches addressed to the Council by His Excellency the Governor, and Bills introduced into the Council specially affecting the Maoris, shall be translated and printed in the Maori tongue, for the information of Her Majesty's subjects of that race.

"Other papers may be translated into and printed in Maori by order of the Council upon motion."

Now, it occurred to him the other day, when some Bills materially affecting Her Majesty's subjects of the Maori race were before the Council, to glance into the translation made for the information of Maori members, in order to see whether it conveyed a true idea of the terms of the Bill. He was perfectly astonished at what he saw, some of the words being quite strange to him, and he was brought up standing at the words *tenata kamana* and *hea*, which he had never before seen in Maori, and which he knew were not English. On referring to a skilled Maori scholar he was told that *tenata kamana* meant "tenants in common," and that *hea* meant "share." He thought it was essential that these new words should be duly authenticated. He could give a few more instances of the kind; but any honourable gentleman who was acquainted with the Native language—and he was only slightly so—need only go through the *Kahiti*, or Native *Gazette*, and in almost every line he would meet some word which was neither Maori nor English. He could remember that, about thirty years ago, they used to be amused to see extraordinary and unwarrantable words in Maori that appeared in the translation of the Scriptures. For instance, in the imprint, at the end of the translation, appeared the words "He mea ta i te perehi o Wareta Makirowera, ma te Piritihi me te Poreni Paipera Hohaiti," which meant "Printed at the press of Walter McDouall, for the British and Foreign Bible Society;" and the translation was full of neologisms. With respect to *tenata kamana* meaning "tenants in common," he asked the Maori scholar in question what "joint-tenants" was in Maori, and he was informed that it was *tioti tenata*. It was for these reasons that he moved the motion standing in his name. He ought to have added that he wished that the list to be compiled should be printed and circulated in the *Kahiti*.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That the Government cause to be prepared, laid upon the table, and printed a vocabulary of such English and legal words and terms, in Maori form, as are now commonly inserted in official translations, with the words and terms which they are intended to represent; such vocabulary to be arranged (*a*) with the Maori preceding the English, (*b*) with the English preceding the Maori, and (*c*) the Maori neologisms with the full explanation of their intended meaning in pure Maori."—(*Hon. Mr. Mantell.*)

The Hon. Mr. WILSON hoped the Council

would not agree to the motion, which would only incur a scandalous waste of money. There was one gentleman who had been engaged for many years in compiling a Maori lexicon; and the work proposed now was simply giving employment to a class of people whom he (Mr. Wilson) cared little about — these pakeha-Maoris; and he thought the honourable gentleman should undertake this himself, and the expense would be saved. Moreover, he did not think the Maoris ever read these books which were compiled for their use. No doubt there were plenty of applicants to do the proposed work.

The Hon. Colonel BRETT thought the aim of honourable members should be to combine the two races together as much as possible; and that would never be done until the Maori language was abolished. His honourable friend wished to upset the whole system of education in proposing his motion, and it would be very unwise to encourage that sort of thing.

The Hon. Mr. BRANDON thought the better way would be to pass a resolution that, in future, if there was any Maori word needed to explain an English term, the latter should not be converted into a sort of composite Maori-English word which no one could understand, but should remain in its English form.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES thought the motion was only a reasonable one. They had a large population of Maoris in the colony, and there were Maoris in both Houses of Parliament; therefore it was only right that these should be afforded an opportunity of properly understanding the laws of the country; and this could only be done by supplying a true translation of the meaning of a technical term, instead of using barbarous words with meanings arbitrarily assigned to them. This might be done by the compilation of a vocabulary rather than by means of a systematic lexicon. For the last twenty years a Maori scholar had been engaged in compiling a Maori lexicon, but the probability was that the work would occupy him for the remainder of his life, and that even then it would not be completed. He had no doubt there were scholars in the Native Office who could compile a vocabulary such as that indicated, without any extra expense.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN thought that the work could be accomplished within a reasonable period. It would be found exceedingly useful, and he intended to support the motion.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL would like to say a few words in reply. With regard to the time the work would be likely to occupy, he did not think the words were so numerous but what any person on the staff of the Native Office would be able to complete it in a week. Either some such course as he recommended in this motion should be followed, or they had better repeal the Standing Orders to which he had referred, because it would be wrong to allow a translator in future to substitute *tenata kamana* for "tenants in common." He was very glad indeed that the Hon. Mr. Wilson had offered objection to the motion, because the opposition came precisely from the distinguished quarter of which he was a representative, and which would be likely to offer such opposition; for, so long as the Maoris could be induced to accept the gibberish he had pointed out, so long would—he did not say the honourable gentleman, but—members of his fraternity be able to prey upon their ignorance.

The Council divided on the question, "That the motion be agreed to."

AYES, 28.

Acland	Johnson, G. R.	Pollen
Barnicoat	Johnston, J.	Robinson
Bonar	Kenny	Shephard
Brandon	Mantell	Stevens
Brett	Martin	Swanson
Buckley	McLean	Whitaker
Chamberlin	Menzies	Wigley
Dignan	Miller	Williams
Fraser	Peacock	Williamson.
Holmes		

NOES, 7.

Lahmann	Reynolds	Shrimski
Peter	Scotland	Wilson.
Reeves		

Majority for, 21.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT LOANS TO LOCAL BODIES BILL.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Sir, the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill, which I now submit for second reading, is a sequence to one which the Council was pleased to pass last week—namely, the Local Bodies' Loans Bill. By it general provisions were laid down for the raising of loans by local bodies, for the raising of special rates, for the taking of votes of the ratepayers of local bodies, and for the repayment of the loans. The present Bill empowers the Government, when loans are duly authorized by the local bodies, to lend them money on the most favourable terms possible, and under such liberal conditions that it is confidently expected that local bodies will be in a position to carry out every useful undertaking without pressing too heavily on the ratepayers. I trust that honourable members who have studied this Bill will coincide with me that it is a measure of the utmost importance to the local bodies, and that it will prove to be a very useful Bill. Anything that will make the local bodies self-reliant must be an advantage. Instead of depending, as hitherto to a very great extent they have done, on the Colonial Treasury, they will have to depend upon their own resources; and, seeing that they will have to provide the means for the payment of all the interest on all the loans which they borrow, it will make them much more economical than they would otherwise be in the expenditure of these borrowed funds. I have always had a very strong feeling that it is a great mistake for one body to find the funds for another body to expend. In the good old days of Provincialism there was far less extravagance than there is at the present time.

No doubt part of the funds which were provincial revenue was raised by the General Government; but then, Sir, the local expenditure in each provincial district had to be charged against the provincial revenues: and in those days, instead of every member getting up in his place and asking for a post-office here and a telegraph office there, and a new custom-house here and a new Resident Magistrate's Court elsewhere, they were only too glad that the colony did not expend their money on any such extravagance; for I hold that the great portion of the work that has hitherto been undertaken by the colony—I hope it will not be so in the future—has manifested the greatest possible extravagance. However, I shall not detain the Council with any further remarks on that subject, but I will at once proceed to explain the principles of the Bill, and in doing so I will be as brief as I possibly can. The Bill provides, among other things, that no loans are to be available for repairs or maintenance, but only for new works and for reconstruction in the event of total or partial destruction by fire, flood, or accident, or natural decay. When any necessary works are destroyed through any of these causes, the local body is allowed to take from these borrowed funds in order to reconstruct; but the borrowed money is not to be used for purposes of repairs or maintenance. With regard to how loans are to be made to local bodies, I may just state that local bodies are empowered to raise them under this Bill or any other Act, subject to the liabilities under such Act. Of course they could raise these loans under the Local Bodies' Loans Act, but they will be subject by this Bill to the liabilities of the Act. Before any local bodies can get a loan they must satisfy the Treasurer that they have made a special rate, in compliance with "The Local Bodies' Loans Act, 1886." No loan is to be granted when security, either partial or on the whole, is based on rates to be levied under the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act. Then, the Treasurer, so that he need not entirely depend upon himself, is empowered, in certain cases—when there is a doubt in his own mind—to refer the matter to the Controller and Auditor-General, and his decision is to guide the Treasurer as to whether the advance can be made or not. Then, for these loans the Treasurer is to receive debentures from the local bodies, for which the local bodies have to pay interest at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum, payable half-yearly, for twenty-six years. I may say, in passing, that this Bill does not provide for large towns and cities—it only provides loans for the smaller bodies; and there is a limitation as to the amount to be lent in any one year—to a County Council a sum not exceeding £6,000; to a Road Board, not exceeding £3,000; to a Town Board, not exceeding £300; and a River Board, not exceeding £1,000: and the Treasurer is restricted from going beyond these sums, but he may agree to lend within two years a sum not exceeding twice the amount that they are entitled to for the then current year. And by the 14th section it is provided that any loan or portion of a loan not spent in one year may be carried to the next succeeding year. Should it then happen that the works cost a less amount than that borrowed, the surplus is to be refunded to the Colonial Treasurer: that is, supposing that the local body were to borrow £10,000 for a particular work, and the work only cost £7,000, then the balance would have to be refunded to the Colonial Treasurer. This is to be carried out in every case, excepting where the sum is under £50, in which case it may be carried forward as part of the local revenue. In cases of extraordinary damage there is priority of claim of the districts where the damage has occurred. Then, if sufficient funds are not available for all the loans that are applied for, the loans must be awarded *pro ratâ*, but a sum may be set aside and added to the next year's contribution. In certain cases, as honourable members will see by section 19, the Colonial Treasurer may refuse to grant loans under this Bill—cases in which the applicants have not complied with the terms of the Act, or where there is no money available, or if the security is not sufficient. The next section makes the Treasurer's decision to be final, and not subject to any legal proceedings. If it should happen that any particular work should require more than what is voted for by the ratepayers under a poll, the Treasurer may, to the extent of 10 per cent., advance the balance, without entailing a fresh poll. The object of that is, supposing a work is incomplete and only requires a few pounds more—not exceeding 10 per cent.—than the amount authorized, to permit the Treasurer to advance the 10 per cent., without calling upon the ratepayers to take another poll. Then there is also provision made in case local bodies should prove defaulters in paying interest. I think the provision is ample. If honourable members will refer to section 24 they will see what the provision is. As already stated, these loans are not applicable to boroughs having more than a certain number of inhabitants—four thousand; but moneys may be borrowed for the construction of a wharf or bridge on a main road not exceeding £800—that is, by boroughs having a lower number than four thousand inhabitants. Sections 27 to 31 merely provide relief to borrowers under "The Roads and Bridges Construction Act, 1882." Several local bodies have issued debentures under that Act, and they will be able to cancel those debentures and issue other debentures under this Bill. By the former Act they would be paying 9 per cent.; by this Bill they will only pay 5 per cent., which would prove a great relief to those districts which have borrowed money under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act. Sections 32 to 35 provide for the assumption of the debentures of the local bodies. Then, we have also provision as to what sums are available for each year. The sums available are such as may be voted by Parliament; but, supposing there is no vote by Parliament, then the Treasurer is authorized to advance to the extent of £200,000,

but not on any consideration to exceed that amount. No doubt, Sir, it will be expected that I should inform the Council how the Treasurer is to get the funds to make the advances. He is allowed to borrow from the Public Account; from a bank or monetary institution; also, by the sale of local debentures: also, by the hypothecation of local debentures; and if honourable members will refer to section 41 they will see that, by an Order in Council, he may be empowered to borrow any moneys from the Postmaster-General, the Public Trustee, or the Commissioners of the Public Debts Sinking Funds. In order to pay off the debentures in the twenty-six years, the colony is to lay aside a sinking fund of 2 per cent. per annum on the debentures, and that for a period of twenty-six years. An annual report of the Treasurer is to be laid before the General Assembly of all applications made, granted, or refused, of advances made to local authorities, of moneys borrowed or raised by the Treasurer, and of outstanding liabilities and assets. This is to be laid before Parliament within ten days of its meeting. I think there is nothing else that requires any explanation in this Bill. At the same time, if any further information is required I shall be happy to give it in my reply. I beg to move, That this Bill be now read a second time.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—I think it is too much to expect the Council to read this Bill a second time immediately after its provisions have been explained by the honourable the mover. There are some provisions that require to be thought over, and, to enable the Council to do this, I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I have not the least objection to the adjournment of the debate if it is the general wish of the Council, but I do object to one member getting up and demanding it in this fashion. The Bill has been before Parliament for a considerable time, and there is nothing in it that honourable members could not easily understand. There is no mystery in it, and therefore I hope the honourable member will withdraw his motion for the adjournment of the debate. Let us proceed with the business we have before us. If the Bill is read a second time this evening, I shall not have any objection to fixing the committal for the day after to-morrow.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I hope the honourable member will not insist on his motion for the adjournment of the debate. I do not think there is anything in the Bill that necessitates any such delay, so far as its general provisions are concerned; and, if there are any amendments to be made, these can be effected in Committee. It seems to me that, as the session is coming to a close, it would be a waste of time if it were decided to adjourn the debate on the second reading of this Bill.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I wish, Sir, that the Government would name their Bills in such a manner that they could be more easily and accurately distinguished from each other than is the case in reference to the present Bill. While the honourable the mover was explaining at length the principles of this Bill, I was "fogging" over the Local Bodies' Loans Bill which is a different Bill altogether, though very similar in title.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—That Bill has already been passed by the Council.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I did not happen to be here when it was passed, and it is, of course, my fault that I was absent. It does not matter to me, however, whether this Bill is read a second time or not to-night, as I can master its provisions at a later stage.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—There is really nothing to consider. The Bill is not nearly so bad a one as the honourable the mover has represented it, or as any one might suppose after listening to his exposition of its scope. I think, however, that when we get into Committee we shall be able to put it into proper shape, and I hope it will be allowed to be read a second time this evening.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—I have no particular desire to press my motion, but I cannot perceive the necessity for any hurry in the matter.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—Before the Bill is read a second time I would like to ask the honourable gentleman who has introduced it why it is provided in clause 6 that—

"Before granting any loan the Treasurer shall be satisfied that the local authority has been duly empowered to raise money by way of loan for the construction of a public work, and has made a special rate for the purpose of paying the interest and other charges thereon, and has taken all necessary steps to comply with an Act passed in the present session of the General Assembly, called 'The Local Bodies' Loans Act, 1886,' or with such other Act of the General Assembly as may empower the local authority to construct or undertake a public work within the meaning of this Act, and borrow money upon the security of a special rate, or upon the security of a special rate together with such other security as may be authorized by any such Act and this Act.

"The Treasurer shall not grant any loan to any local authority under this Act in any case where any part of the special rate forming the whole or part of the security for such loan is payable by or could be levied upon the Crown or Native owners in respect of Crown lands or Native lands under the provisions of 'The Crown and Native Lands Rating Act, 1882,' or any amendment thereof."

I want to know why it is that these rates are to be exempted from the security which may be tendered for the purpose of borrowing under this Act. I have no doubt the Government have a substantial reason for this; but I should like to hear that reason. According to the Bills we have already had before us, it is apparently intended for the future to make it impossible to bring Native lands under the operation of this rating Act.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I wish to make one or two remarks with the view of eliciting

information. There is a very singular provision in this Bill, by which debentures are to be issued by the local authority. According to the Bill the local authority has to pay the interest during the whole currency of the loan; but upon the face of the debentures issued the Colonial Treasurer engages to repay the principal. The peculiarity of that will strike honourable members, I think, at once. I should like to ask the honourable gentleman if the Government have fully considered that part of the question, and what are their reasons for adopting that singular procedure. The Bill appears to me to be a very fair attempt to meet the wants of the country in regard to local bodies, not being municipalities, raising the money necessary to enable them to make small public works in their district; and if it is the intention that they shall lean upon the State in these matters, instead of raising money on their own credit entirely, I believe this measure is one that may very fairly be accepted. That question has been, I suppose, decided some years ago in the affirmative; and the Roads and Bridges Construction Act was an attempt in that direction which was not altogether successful. My own impression is that the present Bill is a better measure than the Roads and Bridges Construction Act. I wish to call the honourable gentleman's attention to the 25th clause. In this clause there is a provision that a local body, in the form of the Council of a borough, may obtain funds under this Bill to make a bridge on a main road, provided that not more than £800 be lent to any one local body in any one year. Then it says that the local bodies which are to be eligible for this grant are those whose population is under four thousand. A wharf is also one of the works which may be constructed in this manner. I do not know why there should be a limit of a population of four thousand. It appears the definition of what is a main road, so far as this is concerned, rests entirely on the discretion of the Minister. The general question of main roads is entirely untouched by this Bill, as any one may see who chooses to look at the public works estimates. We are as completely astray with regard to the settlement of that question as ever. I want to know also whether the Public Trust Board or Sinking Fund Commissioners will be entirely free to exercise their own discretion as regards the security and as regards the general expediency of making these loans, or whether they are really to accept a direction from the Ministry that the loans are to be made. There is one other point in the same connection which I should like to draw attention to. Is it contemplated that any of the Post Office Savings-bank funds should be employed in this manner? Because, if it is so, I venture to think that those funds—which are likely to be called on at any moment—should not be employed in such permanent investments as these. Those are the principal points I wish to call my honourable friend's attention to. I may say, generally, that if those points are satisfactorily explained I will support the Bill.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN. — Perhaps the honourable gentleman will tell us why it is proposed—seeing we have already made ample provision under the Municipal Corporations Bill for all local works in boroughs—that there should be a provision in this Bill for municipalities. Will the honourable gentleman also say why it is proposed to relieve those local bodies which have borrowed money under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act from the engagements into which they have already entered? The Roads and Bridges Construction Act provides that, where loans have been raised for the purpose of constructing main roads, the local bodies concerned are only required to repay one-fourth of the amount so raised by them for that purpose, and they have a period of fifteen years in which to pay that amount, without interest. In the other case, where loans have been raised for district roads, the local bodies are required to provide every year for a certain period—a shorter period, ten years I think—an annual amount which would be equal to 9 per cent. upon the amount that they have borrowed. I do not know why this arrangement should be disturbed, or why it is proposed that these debentures should be called in and inscribed, and reissued under this Bill upon terms very much more favourable to the local bodies, and very much more unfavourable to the general public, who have to provide the sinking fund and make provision for the repayment of the debt. My honourable friend will no doubt be able to tell us the reasons which induced the Government to make these changes.

The Hon. Mr. ACLAND.—I do not rise for the purpose of opposing this Bill, but to express a hope somewhat to the same effect as that expressed by the Hon. Dr. Pollen. At present Municipal Corporations have power to borrow, and so have counties; then, we have just passed a general borrowing Bill, the Local Bodies' Loans Bill; but, not content with that, now the Government has introduced another Bill under which the Government is willing and anxious to lend money to local bodies. Counties have three methods of borrowing—as counties, as local bodies, and, thirdly, direct from the Government. I should like to have some explanation why there is this immense diversity of borrowing-powers distributed all over the country.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—The few minutes I have had to look over this Bill satisfies me that it has all the faults which the Roads and Bridges Construction Act originally had. That Act originally left everything in the power of the Treasurer, whereas afterwards it was seen fit by the Assembly to lay down a rule, so that the question should not be at the discretion of the Treasurer. I should think, myself, that this matter should be made to work on a principle whereby, if certain conditions are complied with, the local bodies should not be at the mercy of the Colonial Treasurer. The Bill provides that the Treasurer may refer the case of any loans required to the Auditor-General. In such a case the Treasurer is bound by the

Auditor-General; but the Treasurer is not by any means bound to refer any case to that officer, but is at liberty to make any loans he may think proper.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—My honourable friend says "No;" but I think he will find that that will be the end of it. Under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act two or three counties stole a march on the others and borrowed large amounts. From the faults I see in this Bill, probably it will allow the same thing to be done. That is a thing which might be remedied in Committee. It is proposed to lend moneys out of Savings-bank funds.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—Well, these funds may be used for that purpose. These deposits are received from the people, and are tied up in general finance, and no debentures are kept, as they used to be in case of a run upon the bank. Hitherto we have had an Imperial-guaranteed loan, which was kept as a sort of safeguard to borrow money on in case of sudden emergency. The whole of the funds have now been jumbled up together, and now, in case of a sudden demand, it is possible the Government could not comply by paying out a large amount of the deposits—and these deposits are now becoming a large sum; and it behoves the Government, like other banks, to keep a large sum of money to meet these sudden emergencies.

An Hon. MEMBER.—So they have done.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—Well, probably the honourable gentleman will be able to explain where these sums are now. Circumstances look as though they rendered it necessary that the Government should get all the money they can get hold of. I do not profess to review this Bill now; but it appears to me to have the defects at first contained in the Roads and Bridges Construction Act.

The Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON.—Would the honourable gentleman say whether this Bill will in any way do away with other powers of borrowing? Is this the only way in which loans are to be raised? As it appears to me, the power to grant loans under this Act is entirely in the hands of the Colonial Treasurer; and, again, there is only a certain amount of money to be borrowed in each year, so that it may happen that public bodies that require loans for carrying out public works may be prevented for the time being getting that money to carry out those works. The 5th and 6th clauses certainly seem to place it in this light; but I imagine it is simply a machinery Bill, and that it simply offers an easy method of obtaining money which local bodies have been authorized to raise under other Acts. If that is so, I think that the Bill is a good one. I should like to be satisfied on the point I have raised, because it would be hardly fair if loans were confined simply to certain bodies which might be more fortunate than others in being, perhaps, the first to apply for a loan, or for other reasons. I do not quite understand the way in which the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act works. I imagine the object of that Act was to make certain lands within a district where improvements are going on, and lands which are benefited by those improvements, contribute a fair share towards the cost of the improvements; and it seems to me that that is so essentially a fair principle that I cannot see why it should be eliminated. It may be thought right that Crown lands should not be called upon to pay rates; but, on the other hand, it does seem to me that Native lands should contribute their portion. Under the Bill we were considering in Committee to-day it is proposed to take away the power of dealing with these Native lands altogether, and to compel those lands to be sold through the Government. I think it is a very good principle, and I am glad enough that it should be so; but I do recognize that, for a time at any rate, it will put a stop to negotiations for leasing or selling Native lands, and in those districts in which there is a large extent of Native land the progress of settlement will be retarded. It seems hard that in those districts the settlers should be compelled to go on making roads and improving the value of these Native lands without getting any assistance from them. In some districts in the North Island this will be to a very large extent the case. I am not at all an advocate for placing improperly-heavy burdens upon Natives—I quite recognize the position their lands are in at the present time; but I do think we ought to consider the settlers. In various parts of the country there are settlers who have paid large prices for their land, and who have done a great deal in the way of improvements, in making roads, and so forth, and it does seem to me as if they are to be put to all the expense of improving other lands which are not to be taxed. If this Bill is what I term a machinery Bill—namely, one to enable the local bodies to obtain their loans authorized under other Acts in an easy manner and on good terms—it is one which should certainly be passed.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—As I understand, the intention of the Bill is to enable the Colonial Treasurer to make advances on loans which have already been authorized under the authority of some Act. That is, I think, very imperfectly carried out by this Bill. I presume that the Bill has been hastily drawn, and has not been considered. The 5th clause says,—

"Every local authority is hereby empowered to borrow and raise money by way of loan under this Act for the construction of a public work within the meaning of this Act; and shall have and may exercise all such powers, rights, and authorities as such local authority has or could exercise under any Act of the General Assembly in respect of works or undertakings which it is thereby empowered to construct or undertake, and shall be subject to all such liabilities in respect thereof as would arise under any such Act."

I do not find any machinery in that at all. I conceive that that must have been a mistake in drafting the Bill. The object of this Bill, I conceive, is that, where a power to borrow is

given, certain conditions are required to be fulfilled before the loan can be raised, and, those conditions being fulfilled, the Treasurer may make the advance. But in this clause it says that any local authority is empowered to raise loans. I do not find any machinery to raise the money under this Bill at all. There is machinery to borrow money from the Colonial Treasury. That may be considered a Committee question, but it strikes me that the Bill very imperfectly expresses what was intended. The Bill gives the sole power to the Colonial Treasurer to make advances. I do not think that is satisfactory at all. In Committee I will move that it be left to the Governor in Council to decide who shall make these advances.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—We have had a number of Bills in the course of the session authorizing local bodies to borrow, and prescribing the terms and conditions under which they can borrow. I must again express my regret that the legislation this session has been such as to stimulate local bodies to borrow, and to give them increased facilities for doing so. Having laid down conditions under which all the various local bodies can borrow, we now say that, independently and exclusively of the different modes already authorized, they can borrow to a limited extent in another way—namely, that laid down in this Bill. What is that way? It depends entirely on the Colonial Treasurer: they borrow from the Colonial Treasurer. The Bill provides that the Colonial Treasurer may lend to various local bodies; and also that, in the event of the Assembly not voting the money, he can still lend money. Where is the money to come from? It may come from the public trust funds. It would be a most unwise thing, in my opinion, to give the Treasurer power to lend to local bodies from such funds as he may be able to appropriate for the purpose. This Bill gives the Colonial Treasurer the option to take money from various sources. He may borrow from a bank. Is it likely, I ask, that the Colonial Treasurer could borrow from a bank in order to lend to a County Council or Town Board so as to make it a profitable transaction? I doubt very much if he could. The probability is that if he does lend he will borrow from trust funds. It seems to me that the giving of this additional advantage will only give him a certain amount of patronage, and I do not think it advisable that that patronage should be given. Then, there is another aspect of the question: the colony becomes responsible for the loans coming under the operation of this Bill. Is that the first step towards making the colony responsible for all the various debts of public bodies? I have not the least doubt—it may be before the session is over—an attempt will be made to get the colony to become responsible for the repayment of loans to certain local bodies, and it is almost certain that before long the colony will be asked to become responsible for the debts of many public bodies. The colony made a serious mistake by taking the provincial loans at par, and I hope that no action that may be adopted now will be such as to induce or encourage local bodies to go on borrowing with an *arrière pensée* that at a subsequent period they will attempt to make the colony liable. If a precedent is made—and if in a single instance the colony takes up the liabilities of public bodies a precedent will assuredly be made — it will be most certainly followed, and public bodies will become more reckless in borrowing, in the hope that at a subsequent time the colony will be made responsible for them. It does not appear to me that this Bill is really required, and I do not think it is likely to be of service if it is passed, and I believe it might well be postponed till next session.

The Hon. Mr. WILLIAMSON.—Sir, in the case of this Bill we can hardly object to the Government becoming responsible for the repayment of the loans, inasmuch as the Government advance the money. It appears to me that the reason for their becoming responsible for the repayment of this money is, that they themselves may be able to borrow on the securities they obtain. One thing I object to in this Bill is that it seems to provide that the Natives shall not contribute anything to the security for these loans. I notice that another Bill which was before the Council this afternoon provides that Natives shall succeed to certain property without any word at all about the property contributing to the revenue; and it seems to me that this Bill is to provide against the possibility of their contributing at all towards improvements.

The Hon. Mr. BATHGATE.—I beg to express the opinion that the Bill now before us is a remarkably good one. It is an instalment of what we are all seeking for—local government. It is a very small step in that direction, it is true; but still it is a step in the right direction, and we must be thankful for small mercies in such a matter. I think the principle of the Bill is perfectly sound. The question of local government hinges very much on how funds are to be provided for public purposes. We cannot expect the present generation to undertake the expense of making all the roads and bridges. Some portion of the burden must be laid on "the unborn millions," as the phrase goes, and this seems to be in that direction. The principle has been tested in the Imperial Parliament: indeed, in the English Parliament they go a great deal further. Under an Act passed by the Imperial Parliament about six or seven years ago advances are made by the Government in aid of public bodies of all kinds for specified improvements—such as bridges, drainage, cottages, baths, washhouses, and various other things of that kind. I am speaking from memory, but under that Act I think there have been advanced, during the last seven years, between thirty and forty millions of money, which the local bodies would have had to obtain elsewhere but for the Act. I have no doubt that all the local bodies in the country have some amount of credit, and if they chose to pay 7 or 8 per cent. they might raise the money. But by the Government stepping in

as is proposed by this Bill the money is got at the reduced rate of 5 per cent., and to that extent the burdens on the ratepayers are very much lessened. I think the principle a remarkably good one, and that it might, with very great advantage to the country, be extended a good deal further than this Bill proposes to do. I must say that this Bill is a remarkable improvement on the defunct Act for which it is a substitute—the Roads and Bridges Construction Act—under which that part of the colony about Cook Strait where political influence was wanted was so favoured that an amount equivalent to one-half the sum for the year under this Bill was divided between two districts—Manawatu and Wairarapa—greatly to the annoyance of that portion of the public who did not share in those advantages, and yet shared in the repayment, and payment of annual interest. I do not think that any objection can consistently be urged against this Bill. I might mention, for instance, as a citizen of Dunedin, that it appears very hard that boroughs with above four thousand inhabitants are exempted: in other words, you lay the burden of the annual 1 per cent. that is applied as a portion of the sinking fund on one-third of the people not receiving any direct benefit. Yet I think, on the whole, they ought to contribute the small quota which is required of them under this Bill. The cities and towns cannot live without a prosperous surrounding of country settlers. I have no doubt that in the days of old the building of bridges was accounted a work of piety. In Scotland you find that the bridges were built by the bishops; and in the old Roman Empire the chief religious functionary, the high priest, was the *Pontifex Maximus* or chief bridge-builder. I may at least ask honourable members to go so far in the work of piety as to assist those who are anxious to assist themselves, by giving this Bill an easy passage through the Council.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Sir, I do not think I have a great deal to reply to; but there are one or two remarks that have been made which may require a little explanation. For example, it has been stated that this Bill gives too much power to the Treasurer. Now, in reality, it gives no power to the Treasurer. The conditions are that, if the local body applies for a loan, and funds are placed at his disposal by Parliament, he must give them the advance. If the funds are not sufficient to give them the full amount, then, when all have applied, he must give it *pro rata*.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—To the first applicant?

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—No; to the whole of them.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—But suppose he has not got the money?

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—If Parliament supplies him with money he can lend to the extent of that money. If he has not got the funds he cannot lend.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—The question is, Who will get the priority?

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—There will be no priority. They must have their applications in by a particular day, and all applications in must be considered. If he has only £200,000, and applications are received for £400,000, and a particular district is applying for £50,000, it would only get £25,000.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—I do not see that that is so in the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—It is perfectly clear that it is so. Then, the objection has been raised that the Colonial Treasurer is bound to pay the principal, but is not so bound to pay the interest. Under the Local Bodies' Loans Bill provision is made for the payment of interest. The local bodies have to levy rates; and if they do not do so, and are defaulters, a Receiver is appointed, who has to collect the rates. If this were left to the Treasurer, pressure might be brought to bear upon him in Parliament, and the rate might not be levied.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—That was not my objection. My objection was that the Treasurer is responsible for the repayment of the principal; and I could not understand why he should not also pay the interest, and collect it from the local bodies.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Seeing that the bonds will be held by him unless he sells them, the local bodies will have to pay. If they are negotiated, the local bodies would have to pay the interest to the parties holding the bonds. I do not see any difficulty in that at all. Then, an honourable member called my attention to section 25, providing that, in case the borough does not exceed four thousand inhabitants, they may obtain aid for the construction of a wharf, or bridge on a main road; and the question raised was, Who was to decide whether it was a main road or not? It would be referred to the Minister for Public Works, who would decide it.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—That was not the point.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—That is what I understood.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—The point was——

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I respectfully submit that we are getting into a Committee discussion.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I submit to your ruling, Sir; but I thought it desirable to give the fullest information. The question was also asked whether any of the trust funds were to be used for this purpose. There is no question that the Bill provides that trust funds may be so used; but the persons in charge of these funds will have a perfect right to refuse to grant them to the Treasurer unless they are satisfied with the security. At the present time the trust funds are invested somewhere—it would never pay the Public Trustee or the Savings-bank authorities to retain these funds in their hands: at the same time it is entirely optional in the Bill whether they refuse to make the advances or not.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—It is clear that the Treasurer can do what he likes with the Board.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—That may be the experience of the honourable gentleman, but my experience is that it is a matter of the greatest difficulty to get advances from these bodies. Another question was, Why does the Bill make provision for the municipalities to borrow? There is no such provision. It only provides for counties, Town Boards, Road Boards, and River Boards. Indeed, the granting of loans to municipalities is prohibited except in the case of a borough the population of which does not exceed four thousand, and then only for a particular work such as a wharf, or a bridge on a main road. Again, the question has been raised whether local bodies can borrow otherwise than under this Bill. Well, they can borrow in any way they please; but I do not suppose they would be so foolish as to borrow outside the Government if, by coming to the Government for aid, they could get their money at 5 per cent. for twenty-six years, and no principal to pay. Then, with regard to clause 6, which has been quoted, I may point out that this is subject to being repealed at any moment, and if it were repealed a district would be able to say, "We borrowed on the strength of that; and, seeing that we are not able to pay the interest, the colony must pay it." With regard to another objection, it is very possible that the Native population are becoming more civilized, and are progressing in knowledge in their ordinary business affairs, and as they do progress in that knowledge it is possible the colony will make them pay the ordinary rates. I hope in my day to see that come about. In that case it is far better that we should not pledge any funds arising from the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act in order to enable the local bodies to borrow money. I trust I have explained all the points raised to the satisfaction of honourable members, and that the Bill will now be read a second time.

Bill read a second time.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes past ten o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 20th July, 1886.

First Readings—Third Reading—White's Maori History—Waimatuku Goods-shed—Longwood Bush Lands—F. D. Rich—South Canterbury Deferred-payment Land — Dreyerton-Mauriceville Telephone—Goldfields Counties—Government Contractors—Seacliff Asylum—Telephone Exchange System—Thames Drainage Board—Nelson Harbour — Nominated Emigrants — Seal Fisheries Bill—Lake County Accounts—Pukekohe-Mauku Telephone—Waimarino Block—Native Disturbance on the West Coast — Natives on Electoral Rolls—Lectures in Mining Centres—Blind Children at School in Melbourne — Harbours Bill—New Zealand Loan Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Wairau Gas Bill, Deeds and Instruments Registration Bill.

THIRD READING.

Hutt and Pitone Gas Company's Bill.

WHITE'S MAORI HISTORY.

Mr. ALLWRIGHT asked the Native Minister, What is the total amount paid to Mr. White for the compilation of Maori history; and when such compilation will be completed? He was under the impression a considerable time ago that the item to which the question referred would not appear on the estimates again, but he saw that not only had it not been done away with altogether or decreased, but that it appeared again and was increased. He would like to know the amount paid for the work, and when the work would be completed.

Mr. BALLANCE had to inform the House that this work was very far from being completed. The amount of money expended upon it to the present time was £1,775 2s.; and Mr. White said that the work would be completed about the year 1890; 128 pages of the work had been printed, and there were forty more pages in type. The first volume, which was estimated to contain 450 pages, would have been printed at the present time but for the Printing Office being otherwise engaged. Mr. White was entitled to receive £500 at the end of the term—when the work was completed. As he had explained to the House last session, the Government had received a vast pile of manuscripts, and it was absolutely necessary, in order to make anything of it, that Mr. White should be engaged in their translation. He was engaged on that work, and received for it £1 per day, exclusive of Sundays.

WAIMATUKU GOODS-SHED.

Mr. H. HIRST asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will erect a goods-shed at Waimatuku? He desired to say that the settlers in the district suffered very greatly for want of accommodation.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said there was no doubt that additional accommodation would be a great convenience; but there were a great many other railway-stations in the country where similar accommodation was required. The Government, when they found funds available, would provide accommodation wherever it was most wanted.

LONGWOOD BUSH LANDS.

Mr. H. HIRST asked the Minister of Lands, When he will have inquiries made as to what bush lands shall be opened for application in the Longwood Survey District, the whole district being declared State forests under the Act, thereby deterring settlement? As the Minister himself no doubt knew, the whole of the Longwood District bush had been declared a State forest, thereby stopping settlement. He would express the hope that the Minister would have inquiries made, and that a certain

amount of the land would be thrown open to settlement.

Mr. BALLANCE said it was the intention of the Government to have the State forest at Longwood resurveyed, for the purpose of cutting out those portions of it which might be available for settlement. The land was available for settlement under the 20th section of the State Forests Act; but he was aware that under that section it was only available in limited areas. However, it was to be resurveyed, with a view to classification if necessary.

F. D. RICH.

Mr. MACANDREW asked the Government, What steps, if any, they propose to take to give effect to the recommendations of the Waste Lands Committee in respect of two petitions from Mr. F. D. Rich? This question affected not only the interests of an individual, but also the interests of the railway revenue, and the interests of a very large and important district in the colony. Of course, in asking a question one must not introduce debatable matter; but he might say that the Waste Lands Committee last session, and this session, had made recommendations with regard to one petition, and a similar report regarding the other had been made for four or five sessions; but, still, no effect had been given to them. He hoped that the Government would be pleased to give a favourable answer, and that they would take action in the matter.

Mr. BALLANCE, with regard to this question, said he found that the report of the Committee last session had been partially acted upon, but he was not aware that the question had not been finally settled. It had been understood that Mr. Rich accepted the granting of the extension of the lease for fifty years as a settlement of the whole claim. Had the Committee been unanimous upon this question the report would have been entitled to greater weight than it had been, considering the fact that the Committee was about equally divided upon it. He was not prepared to say that the Government were willing to go beyond the terms of the letter to Mr. Rich, which he believed had been accepted by him as a final settlement of the matter. However, the matter would be reconsidered by the Government, and if the honourable gentleman would put the question on the Order Paper at a later period of the session he would be able to give him a definite answer. He understood the honourable gentleman desired the opinion of the House upon the question, and he had no objection to that; but the Government were not prepared, without further consideration, to do more than they had done about the extension of the lease.

Mr. MACANDREW.—What about the other question?

Mr. BALLANCE said they must wait until the matter had been returned from the Public Accounts Committee before an answer could be given respecting it.

Mr. MACANDREW said the question had been decided by the Waste Lands Committee on three or four occasions, and need not be referred to the Public Accounts Committee. The decision of the one Committee was surely as good as a decision of the other.

Mr. BALLANCE said the matter was being inquired into, and he thought the honourable gentleman might postpone his question for a day or two.

SOUTH CANTERBURY DEFERRED-PAYMENT LAND.

Major STEWARD asked the Minister of Lands,—(1.) Whether, in view of the fact that the petitions of settlers in South Canterbury, praying for the opening-up of a block or blocks of land for deferred-payment settlement under clauses 162 and 163 of the Land Act, have been referred to the Government for consideration, the Government will direct that inquiry be made as to what suitable land is available for the purpose, and whether any particular block or blocks would be readily taken up? (2.) Whether, if satisfied upon these points, the Government will be prepared to open up the same for settlement in the manner desired by the petitioners? Some weeks ago he asked the Hon. the Minister of Lands a question relating to the same matter. Since then a number of petitions had been presented, which had been considered by the Waste Lands Committee. The Minister had desired him to take the opinion of the Waste Lands Committee, and he had taken the only step open to him to do so by communicating to those interested and suggesting that they should petition. The petitions, he understood, had been referred to the Government for consideration, the question being one of administration. It was now, therefore, necessary for him to ask the Minister whether he was prepared to take any steps in the direction desired by the petitioners.

Mr. BALLANCE thought he had given the honourable gentleman an answer to this question. He had informed him that the opinion of the Law Officer of the Crown was not very decided in this matter; but that opinion was given more upon technical grounds than upon the broad merits of the case. He believed, upon inquiry, that there was no agricultural land there, and he believed the honourable gentleman would concur in the opinion that the land was only fit for pastoral purposes, for which it was now being used—being held under leasehold tenure. Under the Land Act the land must be sold—the land could not be taken from pastoral tenants and disposed of under lease again to other pastoral tenants. His opinion was that pastoral land should not be sold at all, but should be leased; and an opportunity of re-leasing this would arise in 1889, for the present leases would then expire. He was not satisfied that the clauses of the Land Act referred to were intended for this purpose, his impression being that the clauses were intended to apply only to agricultural land. Considering all these facts, the opinion of the Law Officer of the Crown, and the undesirability of selling pastoral lands, he could not

see his way to open the lands in the manner desired by the petitioners.

DREYERTON-MAURICEVILLE TELEPHONE.

Mr. BEETHAM asked the Postmaster-General, If the Government will provide telephonic communication with Dreyerton and Mauriceville? He had already this session asked a similar question to this; but after the first question was answered the Postmaster-General made a statement that the telephone, in many instances, returned 20 per cent. profit to the colony. The settlers in North Wairarapa would consider that he (Mr. Beetham) had not done his duty in this matter, because they understood that when the railway was completed this telephonic communication would be established. He had drawn attention to the matter in the interests of the settlement, and he also thought that the matter should be attended to, so that the 20 per cent. profit might be added to the funds of the department.

Sir J. VOGEL was afraid that there was not 20 per cent. to be made out of this line. It was true that some of the telephone communications paid very well; but, of course, they had already made the best of the lines. There was no more money to be devoted to fresh telephone works this year beyond those already adopted by the department. With regard to this one, he might say that the Telegraph Department was in communication with the Railway Department, and, for railway purposes, provision would be made to carry the line from Masterton to Mauriceville. It would then pass through Dreyerton.

GOLDFIELDS COUNTIES.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Colonial Treasurer, Whether the Government will place counties on goldfields on a fair footing with similar local bodies in settled districts by making provision on the supplementary estimates for this financial year, and for renewing the vote of £5,000 for last year payable to counties on goldfields who rate above ¾d. in the pound, exclusive of rates under the Crown and Native Lands Rating Acts, 1882 and 1883? When the Treasurer last session introduced the Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Bill he provided in the schedule that £2,000 each should be given to eleven of the goldfields counties, so as to place them on a fair footing with other counties in the colony. That schedule was not agreed to; but, in lieu thereof, on the supplementary estimates he brought in two amounts of £5,000 each—one being out of the Consolidated Fund and the other out of the Public Works Fund. One of these amounts was struck out. The local bodies were under the impression that the subsidies would be payable up to the 30th June, and that their applications would be in time if sent in before that date. Accordingly several applications were made. He saw that the amount was not placed on the estimates again, whilst liabilities against it had been incurred. He wished to ask the Treasurer if he would put those local bodies on the same footing as regarded subsidies.

Sir J. VOGEL replied that only a small portion of the sum placed on the estimates last year had been claimed. He thought the Government would renew the amount placed on the estimates last year, but certainly they would not put on a double amount.

GOVERNMENT CONTRACTORS.

Mr. DARGAVILLE asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will inquire into the alleged grievances that contractors for Government works in this colony labour under in respect of the conditions of their contracts, and modify the conditions where reasonable causes for discontent are found to exist? The Minister would probably be aware that petitions had been presented from contractors, north and south, praying for relief in this direction. Those petitions had been carefully inquired into by the Public Petitions Committee, and referred to the Government for their consideration. At the same time, the attention of the Minister had been drawn to what appeared to be the much more equitable conditions under which contracts were entered into by the Crown with contractors in Victoria, and a suggestion had been made that the conditions in New Zealand should be assimilated to the Victorian conditions. The conditions in New Zealand were grossly one-sided and unfair, and he hoped the Minister would do what was right in the matter.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that this question was raised last session, and for some time past the general conditions of these contracts had been under the consideration of the department. Already several very important alterations had been made in them, and the matter was still under consideration.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND moved the adjournment of the House. He had a question on the Order Paper to the same effect. He presented a petition signed by William Cameron and forty-seven contractors, and he brought down all the information about the Victorian rules and regulations. When he attended the Committee it was thrown in his teeth that the Auckland people were the only contractors who felt themselves hurt in this matter. He then found out that a petition was coming up from Dunedin, and he thought it wise to defer taking any action until that was heard. The honourable member for Dunedin South presented a petition; they conferred together, and arranged that they should wait until that petition was reported on, so that they could take united action. But the very day that that was reported on the honourable member for Auckland West saw fit to go round and inquire from the Committee what they (himself and Mr. Gore) had done, before they had time to take action in the matter. There was a great deal behind this matter. The chairman of the Contractors' Association had very intimate connection with the honourable member for Auckland West, and probably that honourable member would hear more of this at the

next election. The honourable member for Auckland West, after finding this out, came into the House and immediately wrote out a question before they had time to put one on the Order Paper. He did not know whether it was parliamentary etiquette to jump another person's claim, and for another member who poked his nose into other people's business to put a question on the Order Paper before other members who had the business in hand, and were conferring together, had time to take action. The honourable member, no doubt, desired to gain a great deal of *kudos* among the Auckland contractors, although he had nothing to do with the subject. Before these petitions were presented, a deputation of contractors waited upon him and asked him (Mr. Buckland) to undertake the duty; and he went into the matter fully. The honourable member for Dunedin South did the same thing. This was the first time he had seen such a thing occur. He was very sorry that, for the sake of a little popularity, the honourable member should have been led away to act in this manner. He (Mr. Buckland) did not wish to gain any particular credit for moving in this matter, as the matter did not affect him. He did not stand for an Auckland City constituency, and he did not suppose that he had a contractor in his district. He was asked as a favour to bring this matter up, and he had done so; but, after bearing the heat and burden of the day, the honourable member for Auckland West stepped forward and tried to rob him of all the credit in connection with it. He did not grudge it to the honourable member, who would be quite full enough of contractors before the next election was over. He understood from the Minister for Public Works that he intended to take some action in this matter, and he felt quite certain the honourable gentleman would do so; and from the way in which Mr. O'Connor spoke—he referred to the Under-Secretary for Public Works, not to the descendant of ancient kings—he felt quite certain that that gentleman intended to do justice to the contractors. He would not make any further remarks, except that he thought there should be a certain amount of good-fellowship among members, and he was sorry that on this occasion an attempt had been made to do something not often done in this Parliament.

Mr. DARGAVILLE said that this was a matter which had been in his hands before the honourable member for Franklin North was in the House. The contractors of Auckland had intrusted the matter to him (Mr. Dargaville) previously, and he had been endeavouring for years to have this matter adjusted in their interests. Not one session had passed without his doing so. When Mr. Johnston was Minister for Public Works he made certain promises to him (Mr. Dargaville), which were only to a moderate extent carried out. With reference to his action this session, before he left Auckland a gentleman connected with the Contractors' Association waited on him, and again asked him to endeavour to get those conditions amended. He said he would when the opportunity presented itself, and even then he waited this session until he received by post from the association a circular again calling his attention to the matter. Knowing that petitions were before the House, he waited until the petitions were presented; and, when he found that no one else was taking action, he felt it his duty, in fulfilment of his promise, to ask the Minister a question. Under these circumstances he could hardly be accused, in the choice phraseology of the honourable member, of "jumping his claim." He did not envy him any popularity he would gain, and would be well pleased if he or any other honourable member would only succeed in having this injustice removed. He denied that he was instigated by any desire to deprive the honourable gentleman of any popularity he might think he was entitled to.

Mr. GORE said, as the subject had been raised, he should like to make a few remarks regarding some of the grievances which contractors with the Government had laboured under for many years. The Government subjected contractors, as business-men, to conditions which no other business-men in the colony were called upon to submit to, and which they would not tolerate for an hour. Take, for instance, the arbitrary power of compelling a contractor to do work whether it had been specified or not. The specifications distinctly showed how a cutting was to be made. For example: the sections gave the depth, and the specifications the slope; but if, owing to the slope being insufficient or to any other cause, a slip should take place, the contractor was called on to remove it at his own expense, though that might be hundreds or even a thousand pounds. There had been such cases. That, he thought, was a most unjust and arbitrary clause, and it had caused many good contractors to refrain from tendering for Government work. And the Government had certainly to pay a higher price through imposing these stringent conditions; for contractors, in tendering for works, took these risks into account, and tendered at a higher price. Surely it was not right or just that there should be such one-sided conditions: the Government should give a little ordinary fair-play to the contractor, and not oppress him in this extremely harsh manner. The contractors' associations in the two Islands had drawn up sets of fair conditions, which he believed had been submitted to the Government. These conditions gave the Government all they could possibly expect: they stringently prevented the contractors from working by the truck system, and they provided that wages should be paid in cash or other good consideration. One of the Government conditions which he thought was most arbitrary was clause 39, which read thus:—

"In case of any dispute arising between the contractor and the Assistant Engineer or overseer as to the quantities or quality or value of materials or workmanship, it shall be referred to the Resident Engineer; and, if the contractor fail to refer any such dispute at the time it

arises to the Resident Engineer, the decision of the Assistant Engineer or overseer shall be binding on the contractor."

He thought it was a most monstrous provision that, in case a contractor neglected to appeal at once to the Resident Engineer, the arbitrary decision of some inspector or overseer —perhaps a working-man who might have ill-feeling against the contractor, and who might have little or no knowledge of the matter—was to be binding and final, and the contractor was to suffer any loss he might be so caused, and to have no redress whatever. He had not even the ordinary resource of any person engaged in any other business; for the conditions of the contract prevented his going into a Court of law. Clause 40 read,—

"Should any dispute arise as to any matter or thing connected with the execution of the work, or as to the intent or meaning of these conditions, or any part of the contract, it shall be referred to the Engineer-in-Chief, and his decision, interim or final, shall be finally binding and conclusive on all parties.

"But it shall be lawful for the Engineer-in-Chief to refer to the Resident Engineer, for his decision, the settlement of any dispute which may arise as to the quality or quantity or value of work or material; and in such case the decision of the Resident Engineer shall be finally binding and conclusive on all parties, and, when necessary, shall be adopted by and acted on by the Engineer-in-Chief."

This was a most arbitrary clause. The Engineer-in-Chief had the power of saying that a contractor should have no redress if he had suffered loss at the instance of an overseer. It was one of the first principles of justice that any man who suffered a wrong should have a remedy. The proposed conditions to which he had referred provided that in all cases of disagreement or doubt the matter should be referred to arbitration in the usual way; and no fair-minded person could object to that. He hoped the House would fairly and impartially consider the case of these contractors. At any rate, he hoped the Government would give their grievances very serious consideration. The present system was certainly driving a number of good contractors from New Zealand to the other colonies. The new conditions he had referred to would be fairer to all parties concerned. There was another clause to which he would direct the attention of the Government, although to alter it would be altering a practice which had been followed for many years. In Victoria and New South Wales, work, instead of being paid for in a lump sum, was paid for at schedule rates, and therefore the Government paid for the exact amount of work done. But under the present system here, if a contractor made a mistake in his calculations, and over-estimated, say, the amount of earth to be removed by one-half, the Government had to pay double what it should pay. There had been such cases. The schedule-rate system worked most fairly and successfully in Victoria and New South Wales, and he hoped the Government would consider its adoption here.

Mr. W. D. STEWART had had a good deal to do in connection with disputes in these Government contracts, and had invariably found that, whatever the merits of the case might be, they were always of a one-sided character. The contractor always found himself out of Court at once, under some condition of the contract which gave the Government a one-sided power. He thought there was no analogy between the case of an architect in a private contract and that of an engineer under the Government. The architect had his reputation at stake, and his professional status was dependent on his exercising fair judgment and a sense of justice in case of dispute. A Government engineer, on the contrary, was a servant, and was subject to all the pains and penalties of that position. It might be true that an engineer would resent interference, and any interference attempted might be very unfair. But to place all the risk of error, and accident, and arbitrary change of plans on the contractor, especially in large contracts, was very great injustice; and, in practice, it did tend to keep many from tendering who otherwise would tender. That could not be doubted. Men of means, and in every way well fitted to take up large contracts, would hold aloof for the reasons stated, and the tendering would be often left to men of no means; and the result was often increased cost to the country. Many of the most stringent conditions required relaxing. A system so one-sided in its operation as this was must be a vicious system, and its amendment should receive the attention of the Legislature at the earliest possible moment.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said he had already stated, as to the points raised by the honourable member for Dunedin South, that they were under the serious consideration of the Government. He would not have said another word but for the remarks of the honourable member for Dunedin West. He objected altogether to the statement that the reputations of the Engineers of the Public Works Department were not at stake just as much as those of any architect engaged by private individuals. Their professional status was just as dependent on their exercising fair judgment and justice as that of any architect. The department had a class of very highly qualified officers, and as capable of acting fairly as any professional gentlemen in the colony; and he objected to the fact of a man being a Government officer being held to constitute a ground for putting his professional status in an inferior position to that of those outside the Government service.

Mr. FERGUS hoped the House would not regard this matter as a mere question of which of the two members deserved *kudos* for something or another. It was undoubtedly the fact that the unfairness of the conditions of Government contracts had deterred many good contractors from tendering. It had not only had that effect, but it had driven many good men out of the country, and many of the principal contractors in the other colonies now

were men who had left New Zealand owing to the impossibility of their taking contracts from the Government with prudence. Some of these men, he knew, had said that they would not for a moment think of tendering in New Zealand for a Government work under the system in vogue here. He would give the House an illustration of how things were sometimes worked in this colony in the matter of Government contracts. One of the best contractors in Wellington, a man of considerable experience—he believed it would be no breach of confidence to say it was Mr. Lockie—had told him that under the specifications for the contract for the Manawatu Gorge line the contractor was to do the work, irrespective of what the specifications said, to the satisfaction of the Supervising Engineer. This meant that, if a cutting was to be done with a certain specified slope, and it was found that, through some defect in the character of the ground not previously ascertained, or any other cause, a less steep slope was necessary, the contractor was to make it at his own cost. The Inspecting Engineer had the absolute power of making the contractor take out every particle of loose material, and to go as far back in the hillside as he liked; and for all this work the contractor was to get no remuneration at all. He agreed with the honourable member for Dunedin South that the system of paying by schedule rates would be very much fairer, for then, if it were found that a "batter" might be less or must be more than specified, the Government would pay for exactly the amount of work done. If a less "batter" were found to be enough the Government would get the benefit of it; but if it were found that the engineer had made a mistake, or if the formation of the ground was worse than expected, and the contractor had to do a largely-increased amount of work in consequence, then, in the name of all that was fair and just, let him be paid for it. He knew contractors in the colony—good, true, honest men of the highest character—who had taken contracts, and when they were in progress slips had occurred covering the line for a considerable distance; and yet they were told that, through the mistake of the engineer in not giving slope enough for the state of the ground, the contractors had to remove the slip and make a fresh slope at their own cost, though it might be ruinous in amount. It was a gross injustice. Then, as to another matter—the acceptance of tenders—he would like to see the system adopted here which was in force in Victoria. There, there was a Board of Works, and at twelve o'clock of the day on which tenders were sent in the Board met and opened them. The contractor could be there himself, or have an agent there, and it was at once declared which was the lowest tender; and if it came at all within the estimate of the engineer it was accepted. He might say that, having done work in three of the Australian Colonies, there were in no colony any conditions of contract so arbitrary as those in force in New Zealand. He hoped, after the strong representations of the honourable member for Dunedin South, who could speak as an expert in the matter, the Government would take seriously into consideration the alterations proposed by the Contractors' Associations of Auckland and Dunedin, and also those suggested to honourable members by contractors in Wellington.

Mr. PEACOCK was glad to hear the Minister for Public Works state that these conditions were being considered, with a view to their modification. He had also had representations made to him in the matter, but did not consider it necessary to take independent action, as it had been taken by other honourable members. There was no doubt that the conditions under which contractors worked for the Government were arbitrary and unfair in the extreme; but he need not go into the details, as the honourable member for Dunedin South had done so. There was no doubt that the contractors in this colony were quite as capable of carrying out work as those in any of the Australasian Colonies; but the result of the conditions being so hard might be that the Government would have to pay a higher price for the work undertaken than they otherwise would. He hoped the result of the Minister's consideration of the conditions would be that the contractors would be relieved of the grievances under which they at present laboured.

Sir R. STOUT hoped the debate would now come to an end, as the Minister for Public Works had stated the matter was under consideration. He hardly thought it would be right to allow the contractors to make their own conditions: in fact, he had always heard that the Government came off worst in these matters. There was no doubt that the conditions were stringent; but he did not know that they were any more so than those made by private individuals with contractors. In the case of private individuals the matter was left generally to the architect, and in Government contracts it was left practically to the Chief Engineer, who stood much in the same position as an architect did in private contracts. Another thing which must be remembered was that contractors under Government always had an appeal to Parliament; whereas contractors for private individuals had no appeal. It was not at all likely that the Engineer-in-Chief would act unjustly. He hoped the House would not misunderstand the conditions when it was said that contractors had lost anything through hard conditions being imposed. He did not believe such had been the case at all. As for the case of Miller Brothers, they had never been contractors in New Zealand; and as for Mr. Mackay, those who came from Otago knew that he had, unfortunately, to seek the protection of the Bankruptcy Court in Sydney: and therefore it was wrong to say that contractors had been compelled to leave the colony on account of the hard conditions imposed by the Government.

Mr. T. THOMPSON thought the Premier was in error in saying that the Engineer-in-Chief had only the same power as archi-

tects; for, through the exertions of the Builders' Association of Auckland, the conditions with regard to buildings had recently been altered, and now any matters in dispute were settled by arbitration. That was a point which the Minister for Public Works should consider. He was sure, from the representations of the contractors of Auckland whom he had had the honour of introducing to the Minister for Public Works, that that honourable gentleman must see that great grievances existed which ought to be remedied. He was glad to hear that the conditions were about to be altered.

Mr. O'CONOR did not think it should be forgotten that the present conditions with regard to contracts in New Zealand had grown up gradually, and had been rendered necessary to protect the interests of the colony against the wrongs which were being inflicted upon it by contractors, who, as a rule, were well able to take care of themselves. Those who had had anything to do with conducting the affairs of the country must know that contractors had often drawn it into Courts of law, and made it pay very heavily. It might perhaps be shown that some of the conditions were rather hard; but, still, there remained the fact that there was no lack of contractors to carry on any necessary work. However, there were some matters in regard to which it might be well that the conditions of contract should be revised, and one in particular—contracts for the supply of fuel. There was no doubt that there was a great difference in the quality of coal, and yet large quantities of a very inferior coal was now imported by the Government from outside the colony. The Government appeared to consider nothing but the price, and had refused tenders at the same price—or a very little higher—for New Zealand coal, which was infinitely superior to the stony and useless coal from Newcastle. He did not say this because he came from a coal-producing district; but honourable members could see, from the consumption on their own premises, how impossible it was to get any heat from the imported coal. He would also suggest to the Government that they should use the small native coal in engines and ironworks, because they could get it cheaper, and the smallest New Zealand coal was superior to the largest Newcastle. He had no interest in the supply of coal, but, having seen how these things were done, he thought it his duty to mention the matter, as one of importance.

Mr. BRADSHAIGH-BRADSHAW had intended to say something on this matter, but as it had been said by other honourable members he would not repeat it. He would, however, point out one matter which had not been alluded to, and that was, that if the Government would make their payments more punctually they would get their contracts taken cheaper. He knew from experience that the question of interest was one of importance, and therefore, under the present system, contractors had to tender higher than they would otherwise do.

Mr. GORE would like to correct the Premier, who said that the Engineer-in-Chief stood very much in the same position as an architect in private contracts. That was not so, for two years ago an alteration was made in building contracts by which they were subject to arbitration.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON was much surprised to hear honourable members blaming the Government for the stringency of the conditions of their contracts. If honourable members would only look back to what had taken place two or three weeks ago, they could not fail to acknowledge that the Government had seen the error of their ways. It was an entirely new departure; and he could say, without the least fear of contradiction, that if the Government adopted the Midland Railway contract as a model there would be no complaints from contractors in the future.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND was pleased that he had been the means of a debate taking place on this matter. He would like to point out to the Minister for Public Works that contractors would be content if the same provision with regard to arbitration were in force here as was in force in Melbourne, where the Board of Works had two voices to one as against the contractors. In reply to the honourable member for Auckland West—who said that if he had known that some one else was going into the matter he should not have done so—he would only say that it was very strange that the honourable member put his motion on the Order Paper on the very day the petitions were reported on.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

SEACLIFF ASYLUM.

Mr. BRADSHAIGH-BRADSHAW asked the Government, If they intend to take any further steps to investigate the charges of alleged neglect of duty on the part of Dr. Neill, Medical Superintendent of the Seacliff Asylum? He had put this question on the Order Paper because a very serious charge had been made against the Medical Superintendent of this asylum, which charge appeared in the *Otago Daily Times*, and was signed by two ex-warders, A. Sutherland and M. Dundas. To make the question more clear he would read the charge:—

"John Cook was a patient in the asylum for some time previous to February, 1886. At the latter end of that month he took to his bed, and Dr. Neill instructed Warder Dundas that he was to get up. Cook refused, and Dundas did not insist, as he was clearly in a low state of health. After a day or two he was ordered out of bed by Dr. Neill himself, in presence of Dundas, the doctor saying to Dundas that it was 'a lazy fit.' Cook remained up for a few days, during which Attendants Wolley and Pullar remarked that he was dying on his feet, and ought to be in bed. John Cook at last went to bed of his own accord, saying he was unable to be up any longer. He was last visited by Dr. Neill on Thursday, the 25th February, 1886, when the doctor told Dundas

to give him a dose of castor oil, but afterwards said, 'Never mind.' On Friday, the 26th, Dr. Neill's attention was especially drawn to Cook by Dundas telling him that Cook was much worse than the preceding day, when the doctor replied, 'He is more knave than fool; give him a dose of salts, and put him up.' Dr. Neill did not visit Cook at all on the 26th. On Saturday, the 27th, Dr. Neill passed through the larger ward, where the attendants were on duty, but did not enter the room opening off this larger ward, in which smaller room Cook lay dying. To this we can both positively testify, as we were both on duty throughout the whole day, and no one could go into the smaller room without our seeing them. John Cook complained to Dundas at not being visited by Dr. Neill, and said to another attendant that he was being 'done.' He died the same Saturday evening, at twenty minutes to ten. Dr. Neill was sent for, and came fifteen minutes later, remarking, 'Heart disease, as I thought.' On the 10th May we respectfully notified Dr. Neill by letter that we were going to lay the matter before proper authority for investigation. Twenty minutes after receiving our letter he came to the ward, asked us if we had written the letter, and at once ordered us to leave the service. On asking him for a reason, he said, 'This impertinent letter. I would not have two blackguards like you about the place.' We answered that he had better be careful what he said. Dr. Neill then went away, and returned with Mr. Watt, and said, 'I immediately order these two men away, for insubordination.'"

Mr. SPEAKER said he must interpose. The honourable gentleman had now far exceeded the latitude that was granted to members in putting questions. The reading of lengthy extracts from newspapers, full of debatable matter, should not be brought before the House and into the pages of *Hansard* under cover of asking a question.

Mr. BRADSHAIGH-BRADSHAW would only add that these two men came to him before the session, but that he had referred them to the Inspector of Lunatic Asylums. He believed that they had communicated with that gentleman; but these were their statements after the inquiry. He might say that he knew Dr. Neill very well as a medical man of high attainments, and was convinced that he was a most humane man; but, for Dr. Neill's own sake, it was very desirable that these statements should be further inquired into, and the matter put at rest.

Mr. TOLE said that he had a memorandum from the Inspector of Lunatic Asylums, which he had better read to the House, after the statements which had been read to the House by the honourable member for Dunedin Central:—

"This matter has already been inquired into three different times—(1) At the inquest, where Messrs. Dundas and Sutherland ought to have made their complaint; (2) by the Deputy-Inspector, Mr. W. P. Street, of Dunedin, who thought the charges were not made good; (3) by myself, as Inspector of Asylums. I carefully examined all the persons concerned, and found that the whole matter turned on a simple matter of fact. The complainants alleged that Dr. Neill did not visit the patient, John Cook, for some time—from the time when he finally took to his bed, on Thursday, the 25th, till he died on the Saturday, the 27th February. Dr. Neill, Chief Attendant Macdonald, and Warder Pullar (and Warder Wolley, who was not so definite) swore that Dr. Neill saw and examined Cook at twenty minutes past four o'clock p.m. on the 27th, and had also seen him previously, which the case-book corroborated. There was thus a direct conflict of testimony, and I accordingly was obliged to conclude that there was nothing proved. I was further led to this decision by the fact that Dundas was under notice to leave before the complaint was made, and Sutherland and Dundas could give no satisfactory explanation why they allowed nearly two months to elapse before moving in the matter at all, instead of appearing, as they ought to have done, at the inquest."

Under these circumstances the Government did not see any need for further inquiry.

TELEPHONE EXCHANGE SYSTEM

Mr. JOHNSTON asked the Postmaster-General,—(1.) Why the annual cost for maintenance, repairs, and working expenses of the telephone-exchange system has not been stated in the report of the Post Office and Telegraph Department lately laid before this House? (2.) What is the amount of the said expenditure for the past year?

Sir J. VOGEL said that the return had been prepared, and would be laid on the table in the course of a few days.

THAMES DRAINAGE BOARD.

Colonel FRASER asked the Minister of Mines, Whether, under the pressing necessities of the Thames Drainage Board, to which his attention has been called, he intends placing a sum of money on the supplementary estimates for their relief? The Minister would be aware that the Government constituted a Drainage Board at the Thames, under the provisions of the Gold-mining Districts Act, and that, that Board having been constituted, members were elected, an area was circumscribed, and contributions were levied upon the different owners of mines within that area; but purchases of machinery had to be made, and there was no money available, nor any means by which the Drainage Board could acquire machinery; and therefore it was that he asked the question which stood in his name.

Mr. LARNACH replied that this was a matter connected with the Big Pump, which had so frequently been brought before the House; and, in order that honourable members might understand the question, it was necessary for him to reply at some length. The facts of the case were as follow: Section 18 of "The Immigration and Public Works Loan Act, 1874," authorized £50,000 to be

advanced to the Provincial District of Auckland to aid works on the Thames Goldfield. An agreement was subsequently entered into between the Superintendent and the Imperial Crown, Tookey, Caledonian, and Golden Crown Gold-mining Companies for an advance of the £50,000 for sinking a main shaft to test the low levels, and for pumping operations; the Superintendent taking security over the plant and property of the associated companies for payment of interest at 5½ per cent. and 1½ per cent. sinking fund, the principal sum being repayable in seven years—namely, 1881. The whole amount—£50,000—was expended between April, 1874, and February, 1877. Interest to the amount of £2,866 4s. 5d. was paid, leaving a balance due in February, 1877, of £992 10s. 9d. Sinking fund to the amount of £1,061 6s. 11d. was also unpaid. Section 10 of "The Immigration and Public Works Appropriation Act, 1876," authorized that the securities referred to be transferred to the Thames County Council, which was accordingly done, by agreement dated the 5th May, 1877, the county and borough to maintain the pump for two years—namely, to the 31st January, 1879. This was done, at a cost of £12,000—£4,000 contributed by the borough and £8,000 by the county. By section 13 of "The Immigration and Public Works Appropriation Act, 1877," the property became vested in the county, whilst section 14 empowered the county to sell the securities and deal with them as private property. The pump and plant were eventually sold to a company for a very small sum—under £3,000, he (Mr. Larnach) was given to understand—to the United Pumping Association, to recoup the county for money advanced. A Drainage Board had then been formed, with power to levy rates and to work the pumping-machinery for the benefit of all concerned; and certainly these works had now no further claim for consideration by the General Government, if local government was ever to become a practical reality.

Colonel FRASER said that, the adjournment of the House having been moved, he had no opportunity of replying to the Minister. Had he been in a position to reply he could have shown the honourable gentleman where he was in error.

NELSON HARBOUR.

Mr. LEVESTAM asked the Minister of Marine, Whether the report on the Nelson Harbour, as promised last session, is completed; and, if so, when it will be laid before this House? Last session the Government promised that they would get a competent officer to report upon the Nelson Harbour. During the recess he wrote to them on the subject, and was informed that a survey had been made, and that the report would be issued shortly. As some considerable time had elapsed since that promise was given, and the report had not yet been forthcoming, he should like to know something about it.

Mr. LARNACH said the report was nearly ready for publication: the plans, in fact, had been so far advanced that they were being copied. He hoped that before the end of the week the report would be available for the honourable gentleman's information.

NOMINATED EMIGRANTS.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Minister of Immigration, If he will consider the expediency of reducing the proportion of passage-money now required to be paid by the friends of nominated emigrants? In explanation of the question he might read the following extract from a letter which he had received:—

"Bluff, 12th July, 1886.

"SIR,—I shall feel very much obliged to you if you can do anything in assisting me to get out my wife and five children under the nominated-immigrant system, as I am keeping two homes. I am a fisherman here at the Bluff, and have to work very hard, as I have been trying to save money enough to bring my family out here. Now I find that I cannot get them out under £10 per adult and £5 each for the children. As my family is large, it will cost me more money than I can command. I have been out here over two years, and I have not been able to raise the sufficient sum, through having to send Home money every chance I get for the support of my family at Home. Now, I think it is very hard on a poor man like myself. Having to send them money keeps me a long time in getting the required amount. I have worked both night and day to try and get it, but in my position it takes time to save a few pounds; so I have to wait, unless I could get a reduction."

Mr. BALLANCE replied that there was no doubt that the case referred to by the honourable gentleman was an exceedingly hard one; but the regulations had to be carried out in their entirety, so that no exception could be made. He was afraid, in the present mind of the House, that there was no hope of the vote for immigration being increased. If £50,000 or even £100,000 were voted it would all be absorbed by nominations, but he saw no chance whatever of getting any increase to the vote, though he thought that a much larger sum than was now spent should be applied to the purpose.

SEAL FISHERIES BILL.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Minister of Marine, If he intends to proceed further with the Seal Fisheries Bill this session? He put this question at the instance of the Mayors of the Bluff and Invercargill, and the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce at the latter place; and he might say that there was a unanimous feeling in the South that this Bill should be left over until another year.

Mr. LARNACH replied that the gentlemen to whom the honourable gentleman referred had had this measure under their consideration ever since the early part of May, and the Government were impressed with the necessity for this measure, so that they hoped it would be dealt with this session. It was his intention to go on with the Bill.

LAKE COUNTY ACCOUNTS.

Captain SUTTER asked the Government, If their attention has been drawn to the Provincial District Auditor's report on the accounts of the Lake County Council; and, if so, what steps they intend taking in the matter? His attention had been called to this matter by a newspaper, which had no doubt been sent to him for the purpose; and from that paper he should like to read the report of the District Auditor, and remarks made thereon:—

"Dunedin, 23rd November, 1885.

"The Chairman, Lake County Council.

"SIR,—I am unable, for want of two vouchers, to forward your accounts in time for the meeting on the 28th instant; but, as I furnished you when in Queenstown with an unsigned copy of the balance-sheet, I may now place my report in your hands.

"The reservations to my certificate are the following:—

"1. 'County Conference'—that is, delegation to Wellington—£160.

"2. Salaries of clerks to Licensing Committees.

"For neither of these is there any authority in the Counties and Licensing Acts.

"3. A portion of the expenditure for travelling expenses of members.

"The Counties Act authorizes only 'travelling expenses of members coming from a distance.'

"4. That several of the license-fees were not received within the time specified by the Act, and the certificates were therefore void.

"Besides these, I have to direct your attention to several irregularities in the keeping of your accounts.

"Your clerk has overdrawn his salary by one month. You will see by the ledger that only six instalments have been drawn; but, nevertheless, this statement is correct. I have again and again, in past years, brought similar irregularities under your notice.

"I have specially to direct your attention to one of the still-awanting vouchers (Trotter, £33 7s. 9d.), as bringing up a class of very grave irregularities which I have repeatedly before reported to you. Even so recently as the 31st March, 1885, I took exception in the certificate on your balance-sheet to a transaction of the same nature, but of even a worse form. In the present instance the cheque was cashed a considerable time since, but the money apparently not paid over to the owner, who, at all events, has not yet signed a voucher for it.

"On your last balance-sheet I noted that there was still due from the collector of dog-tax for the years 1883 and 1884 the sum of £85 15s. No portion of this was paid up to 30th September last, though, strange to say, the same collector has paid in a part of the current year's receipts, and furnished corresponding returns. I must ask for a special examination into this, and that the collector be asked to explain. I have also to point out that the collector should, under the Act, pay his collections into bank—not to your clerk.

"I observe that during the half-year ending 30th September last there were written off your books uncollected rates, 1881–82, £392 17s. 6d.; and 1882–83, £488 4s. I trust that before authority for this was given the Council acted on my recommendation, and obtained and examined detailed lists showing these totals. I regret to say that past experience of the conduct of your business impels me to bring this subject specially before you.—I am, &c.,

"H. LIVINGSTON,

"Provincial District Auditor."

There was another year when the circumstances were even worse than those he had just related. He thought that all would agree that there had been a great scandal, and that some steps should be taken in the matter.

Mr. SPEAKER said that members must not swell the pages of *Hansard* by reading lengthy extracts from newspapers when asking questions, which were required to be put concisely, and without involving topics open to discussion. If members desired to bring forward debatable matters, it must be done by motion.

Sir R. STOUT admitted that the report of the Provincial Auditor, who was a very able, careful, and thoughtful man, disclosed a very scandalous state of things regarding the Wakatipu County Council accounts. If any of the ratepayers petitioned the Governor, the Auditor-General would investigate the matter, and, should it be found that anything wrong had been done, that officer could proceed against those concerned. If the new Counties Bill became law it would provide a more speedy remedy than that at present in existence in dealing with an extraordinary case of thi character.

Mr. FERGUS would have liked to move the adjournment of the House in order to refer to this matter; but, as this could not be done, he only wished to correct a mistake of the Premier. The County Council in question was not the Wakatipu County Council: it was the Lake County Council, which embraced a portion of Southland and his (Mr. Fergus's) district. He concurred with the remark of the Premier that the matter was a most disgraceful one, and should be remedied as soon as possible.

NATIVE *HANSARD*.

Mr. PERE asked the Government, Whether they can give any information as to the cause of the delay in the issue of the Native *Hansard*? With regard to the delay in the issue of the Maori *Hansard*, he wished to say that last year the whole of the translating was finished immediately after the close of the session. Notwithstanding this, it was nearly six months before the Native *Hansard* was issued: in fact, the present session was almost at hand before the Maori debates were sent to the Maoris. Last year he prepared a list of persons to whom he wished the Native *Hansard* sent: these persons did not receive copies. He would be very glad if the Maori *Hansard* were issued as speedily as possible, as was the European *Hansard*.

Mr. BALLANCE said the publication of the Maori *Hansard* was not in the hands of the Government: it was in the hands of the officers of the House. He understood that the Interpreters were so much engaged during the session that it was impossible to undertake this work till the end of the session. With regard to the delay last session, he understood that there had been no unusual delay—that the Maori *Hansard* was published at the usual time. All speeches with regard to Native affairs had to be interpreted, and that required a great deal of time. The Maori *Hansard* could not be put in the same position as the ordinary *Hansard*, for that would necessitate a large staff.

PUKEKOHE–MAUKU TELEPHONE.

Mr. HAMLIN asked the Postmaster-General, If he will extend the telephone from Pukekohe to Mauku?

Sir J. VOGEL was sorry to say there were not sufficient particulars in the department to enable a decision to be come to in this matter. The Inspector had been asked to report on the cost of the line, and as to the possibility of its being remunerative.

WAIMARINO BLOCK.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Government, When they expect to acquire the whole of the Waimarino Block, adjoining the North Island Main Trunk Railway?

Mr. BALLANCE said he could not give a positive answer as to when the block would be acquired. The process with regard to the purchase of Native land was this: When the Government had acquired all the shares they possibly could in a block, an application was made to the Native Land Court to have these shares cut out. The progress of the purchase was going on satisfactorily. The Government had acquired two-thirds of the block. There were over a thousand owners in this block, living in all parts of the North Island, and some in the South Island. It was very difficult to acquire the whole of the shares in a block, especially in the winter-time. The Land Purchase officers had sometimes to camp out in the snow in order to carry on their work. He had no doubt that in the course of two or three months the Government would be in a position to go into the Native Land Court and have its share cut out.

NATIVE DISTURBANCE ON THE WEST COAST.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Before proceeding to the Orders of the Day I should like to make a supplementary statement with regard to the Maori troubles on the West Coast. I have received a telegram from the Inspector of Police stating that all is quiet, and that there has been no repetition of an attempt at forcible entry, or to carry on the practice of ploughing on European lands. I have stated that a warning had, on Saturday last, been given to Te Whiti that the responsibility would rest upon his shoulders if any breach of the peace occurred. I may now state that it was distinctly intimated to him that, if any breach of the peace did occur on the West Coast, he would be immediately arrested as being the inciter of that breach of the peace. We have positive information, on which we can place the utmost reliance, that the people who made the forcible entry on the land were acting upon his instructions and upon his advice; and this morning, in accordance with what has taken place, and after the troubles which ensued on Sunday, we proceeded to have him arrested, and the arrest was duly made this morning by the Inspector of Police. Te Whiti has been brought into Opunake, and is now there under guard by the military stationed at that post. He will be brought before the Magistrate in due course of law, and we believe that the criminal law of the colony is sufficient to meet the case. Information has also been received from officers up the coast that there is not likely to be any further trouble.

NATIVES ON ELECTORAL ROLLS.

On the motion of Mr. DARGAVILLE, it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a return showing the number of names of aboriginal natives on the electoral rolls of the colony, the number within each district to be shown separately.

LECTURES IN MINING CENTRES.

On the motion of Mr. HAMLIN, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House showing, in detail, the amount paid to Professor Black and others for lecturing at the principal mining centres of the colony, and for the travelling expenses in each case, under the vote of £1,700 granted for that purpose last year; also a statement, as far as practicable, of how it is proposed to expend the vote of £4,000 submitted for the same purpose this year.

BLIND CHILDREN AT SCHOOL IN MELBOURNE.

On the motion of Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON, it was ordered, That there be laid on the table a return of the number of blind children now kept at school in Melbourne either wholly or in part at the cost of the colony, said return to give names, ages, and parts of the colony from which such children were sent.

HARBOURS BILL.

Mr. LARNACH, in moving the second reading of the Harbours Bill, said,—The object of this measure is to enable Harbour Boards to acquire steam-tugs, boats, and barges for the purpose of carrying on their works. It also enables Boards to be dissolved—that is, such Harbour Boards as are unable to carry on their functions for want of funds, or such as have no work to do. It also provides for the manner in which Harbour Boards shall keep their accounts. It excludes the Harbours of Westport and Greymouth, and removes any doubts that might have existed as to the power of the Westport and Greymouth Boards to construct breakwaters. It also empowers local govern-

ing bodies authorized to build wharves to expend local funds for so doing. The House may require some information with regard to the Harbour Boards which it is proposed to close by the Bill. I propose to make a short statement in respect to each of the several harbours it is proposed by this Bill to extinguish, what they are doing, and in what manner they have performed their functions since they were created. Firstly, there is *Castlepoint* (on the east coast of the North Island, about half-way between Wellington and Napier): This Board is composed of the members of the Castlepoint Road Board. It has no funds, except those derived from the rent—£1 per annum—received from a small reserve which it was proposed to vest in the Board, but has never been legally so vested. Their receipts and expenditure for 1885 were nil. The assets were—Bank balance, £5 17s. 11d.; and eighteen months' rent due, £1 10s.: and the liabilities (amount due to Secretary), £1 15s.: leaving a balance of £5 12s. 11d. of assets over liabilities. The Board, so far as I am aware, has never in any way exercised any of the duties or functions of a Harbour Board. Secondly, *Foxton* (Manawatu, west coast of the North Island, about thirty miles south of Wanganui): This Board consists of the Chairman of the Town Board of Foxton, two members to be elected by that Board, the Chairman of the Manawatu County Council, and three members to be appointed by the Governor. The last balance-sheet received from the Board is for 1882, although repeated applications have been made for those for subsequent years. According to that statement all their funds are derived from the rent of the Signal-station Reserve, amounting to £20 per annum. This 1882 balance-sheet shows that they cannot have performed any executive function in relation to the harbour. They brought forward a balance of £76 15s. 7d., received £20 rent, and a subscription of £7 towards cost of telephone. They spent—Salary of clerk, £5; stamps, 15s. 11d.; printing and advertising, £2 1s. 4d.; stationery, 5s. 6d.; rent, Athenæum, £3; law-costs, £1 12s. 10d.; rubber-stamp, 15s.; and cost of telephone, £90: leaving a balance of 5s. Their assets were—Rent uncollected, £3 6s. 8d.; balance at bank, 5s.; their liabilities being—Salary due clerk, £3 15s., and stamps, 3s. 4d.: thus leaving a balance of 6s. 8d. of liabilities over assets. The harbour staff is administered by the Government, and paid out of funds voted by Parliament. Thirdly, *Kakanui* (east coast of the Middle Island, about six miles south of Oamaru): This Board consisted of two members appointed by the Governor, and one member elected by each of the following bodies: Waitaki County Council, Town of Kakanui, Totara-sub-Kakanui Road Board, Incholme-sub-Kakanui Road Board, and Chelsea-sub-Otepopo Road Board. This Board asked to be relieved of its functions, and has now practically ceased to exist. In December, 1883, the services of the Harbourmaster—who was paid by the Government—were dispensed with, and he was compensated for loss of office, and the plant was sold. I understand that few if any vessels now go to Kakanui. Fourthly, *Moeraki* (east coast of Middle Island, about twenty-five miles north of Otago Harbour): This Board consists of seven members appointed by the Governor. The funds of the Board consist of a fixed deposit of £1,800, being the balance of a grant of £3,000 made by the late Provincial Government of Otago. Last year's accounts show that they received as interest £103; and they spent—For secretary's salary, £83 6s. 8d.; stationery, 2s.; insurance, £2 17s. 6d.; interest on overdraft, £1 0s. 8d.; repairs to jetty, £10 17s. 2d.; rent of office, £2. They carried forward a balance of £1,700 at fixed deposit, and £77 16s. 11d. at current account. Their assets, besides the deposits, are—Stores and office, £260; coal-buckets, £10; boat and punt, £5; two hand-cranes, £70; and miscellaneous, £12: their liabilities being unpresented accounts of £6. The secretary's salary has since been reduced to £26 per annum, but under the present circumstances of the Board it is difficult to define his duties. The following extract from a report made by the Provincial District Auditor, Mr. Livingston, shows clearly that no necessity exists for the Board; all it is doing is spending the balance of the grant:—

"From an inspection of their minute-book the Board appear to perform scarcely any functions beyond the routine connected with the expenditure of their income. I believe no vessel has visited the port for several years, and the branch railway which formerly connected it with the main line has been lifted. The duties of the Harbourmaster consisted in looking after the plant, and in keeping the minute-book."

Fifthly, *Whangarei* (about sixty miles north of Auckland City): This Board is composed of the Whangarei County Council. Their revenue last year consisted of—Wharfage, £36 7s. 7d.; port charges, £70 1s. 3d.; pilotage, £1 13s.; and rent, £1. Their expenditure was—Salaries, £52 10s.; repairs to wharf, £7 1s. 10d.; collection of dues, £12 5s. 10d.; printing and advertising, £4: leaving a balance of £49 9s. Their assets are stated to be—Cash in bank, £49 9s.; wharves, £2,720; goods-sheds, £63 15s.; buoys, £140. Their liabilities were—Balance of £49 6s. 4d. still due for advances from the Whangarei County Council. Of their assets, one of the wharves was vested in the County Council, and the others, I understand, have not been legally vested in the Board. The buoys were provided and laid in the harbour by the Government.

Mr. W. D. STEWART said there was one part of the Harbours Act of 1878 to which he wished to call attention. Section 227 of that Act contained a very extraordinary provision. It provided that, if, under certain conditions, an action was discontinued, or judgment given against the plaintiff, the defendant should recover "treble costs." Why should there be any exception made in favour of Harbour Boards? He could not understand this. It no doubt

emanated from some old penal statute where a certain class of actions existed, and when a plaintiff bringing such actions under certain circumstances was visited with certain costs, that being the only penalty the Court could inflict. The provision, he submitted, was unadapted to modern circumstances. If a defendant succeeded he was of course entitled to costs; but he should not get treble costs. Of course the term "treble costs" had a technical meaning; but there was no reason why there should be exceptional legislation in favour of Harbour Boards. He would suggest to the Minister of Marine that this provision in the Bill should be abolished. He also thought that the notice of action should be abolished, though he agreed that it was desirable to limit the time within which actions might be brought to probably six months. No undue advantages should be conferred upon the Harbour Boards to the detriment of commercial men and others who might have dealings with them. He supposed the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill would agree to an amendment to do away with this provision with reference to costs, as it was likely to work injustice without benefiting the Board: the Harbour Board would not get the money—the solicitor of the Board would get it, and the public would have to pay it.

Mr. WILSON said that no doubt honourable members thought, from the report which the Hon. the Minister of Mines had just read, that the Foxton Harbour was a charge on the colony; but that was not the case. A considerable amount went to the Railway Department, which worked the wharf there, and the whole expense was borne out of that fund, so that the colony did not pay anything.

Mr. LARNACH would be glad to consider the clause referred to by the honourable member for Dunedin West, and see whether any alteration was desirable. He would also be pleased if the honourable member for Foxton would, before the Bill went into Committee, make some inquiries in his district with reference to what he (Mr. Larnach) proposed to do; and, if good reasons could be shown for it, Foxton might be left out of the schedule.

Bill read a second time.

NEW ZEALAND LOAN BILL.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I was somewhat undecided whether I should not move the second reading of the New Zealand Loan Bill without remark, leaving it to my reply to meet any questions that might be raised upon it. But I thought that, on the whole, it would be more convenient if I made some explanations in moving the second reading, in order, perhaps, to forestall discussion, which may be unnecessary if I make these explanations. The Bill is in accordance with what was proposed in the Financial Statement—namely, to authorize a loan of a million and a half for stated railway purposes. I know honourable members will be sure to raise the question as to differences between the proposals in the Financial Statement and those in the Public Works Statement regarding the margin left in the present Public Works Fund for what I will call, for convenience' sake, miscellaneous purposes. In the Financial Statement I showed that there was left to the Public Works Fund at the end of March last £768,780, and that, when that fund was repaid out of the North Island Trunk Loan the amount advanced for the purpose of expenditure on that line, there would be something in excess of £800,000 available for miscellaneous purposes — that is to say, for purposes other than the construction of railways. Now, honourable members will recollect that the honourable member for Egmont raised a question about the liabilities, and I have no doubt that, unless I forestall him, he will try to raise the question again. I may tell him that the necessity which arose for increasing the amount which will be available for miscellaneous purposes cannot properly be said to have arisen on account of "liabilities," and, as I have explained before, we have always dealt with the question of public works expenditure including the liabilities and the new votes. I showed to the House that, although there was over a million of liabilities last year, the honourable member himself came down with a proposal that the expenditure on public works should not exceed a million. Therefore it is not a question regarding the liabilities especially: it is a question of how much is required to be spent on purposes other than railways. Now, I am going to be very frank with the House. I should not be surprised if, in the "penny dreadfuls" which will appear throughout the colony to-morrow, we see some such heading as "Cabinet Secrets," "Extraordinary Revelations," and so on — for I shall tell the House exactly how the matter stands. Therefore I think it may prove unnecessary for honourable members to consume the time of the House by pointing out discrepancies which I am perfectly willing to admit, as far as they exist. When the Financial Statement was considered by the Cabinet—and this is secret No. 1 I will disclose to the House—the Cabinet considered, without going into details of expenditure, that, if there was an amount of over £800,000 left for miscellaneous purposes, that would meet the requirements for two years of the several Ministers who would have the expenditure of the votes for miscellaneous purposes. As honourable members may suppose, from the long time that elapsed before the Public Works Statement was made, there were no public works estimates made at the time the Financial Statement was delivered, when it was thought that £800,000 would and should prove sufficient for miscellaneous purposes for two years. When it was examined subsequently, and we had to take into account the working-off of some past obligations under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act, and for the completion of defence works, we came to the conclusion that £800,000 would not be sufficient for two years for miscellaneous purposes; and then it was decided to adopt a course which has been adopted, and I will

tell honourable members exactly the difference between the proposals in the Financial Statement and those in the Public Works Statement. So far as affects the North Island Trunk Loan, the repayment by that loan of the amounts expended on the North Island Trunk Railway is nothing new, and was always intended: in fact, it has been ratified by law. But the introduction of the charge of £100,000 for Native lands acquired along the line was and is a new feature, and of course it burdens the North Island Trunk Loan to the extent of £100,000, and places £100,000 more at the service of the miscellaneous purposes to which I have referred. As regards the hundred thousand pounds' worth of Native lands, it is proposed that it should be constituted an estate which shall belong to the railway specially, and be serviceable for its extension, or for making branches, trams, or roads in connection with the railway. Honourable members are probably aware that the North Island million loan will be somewhat insufficient to complete the railway, and when that railway is nearing completion no doubt some extra sum will have to be found. Still, the amount will very nearly complete it and provide for expenditure until, at any rate, the railway is in sight of completion. Now, the next change is that out of the new loan it is proposed to purchase rails and rolling-stock already in stock and purchased from the old fund. In other words, between two and three hundred thousand pounds' worth of rails and rolling-stock already in the hands of the Public Works Department are transferred to the charge of the new loan, and that amount will be available to increase the miscellaneous purposes of the present Public Works Fund. All this has been well explained by my colleague the Minister for Public Works; and, since I have seen assertions as to my having prepared portions of that Statement, and so on, I may say that that is not so, although it may not be necessary to contradict such allegations. I do not think that the matter affects my colleague; but it rather shows that our plans are quite clear, and that there is no difference of opinion upon them. The statement was made by my colleague without any advice on my part. I did not write a line of it. The honourable gentleman was fully cognizant of the whole of the financial effect of the proposals, and he summed up what I had already stated. It amounts to this: that, the £800,000 supposed to be enough for miscellaneous purposes for two years not being found sufficient, a sum of £300,000 odd was added to the amount by charging £100,000 to Native lands for the North Island Trunk line, and between £200,000 and £300,000 for rails and rolling-stock we had in hand and not used. Then, I wish to say that this Loan Bill is drawn up as it was explained to be intended in the Financial Statement: that is to say, the loans are so fixed and charged that it will not be possible to divert them unless there is an express repeal of that portion of the Act by which these amounts are made chargeable only to the objects stated in the schedule. There will have to be an absolute repeal. It will not be competent to deal with the amounts, as hitherto, by fresh votes that will supersede the schedule already enacted. That schedule provides for the expenditure of a million and a half, of which £63,000 is put down as the cost of the loan and for contingencies. No doubt the sum is larger than will be required for raising the loan. For rails and rolling-stock £270,000 is put down for the whole of the lines previously mentioned, instead of its being divided amongst them separately. It will be found more easy to deal with the rails and rolling-stock on a principle of that kind than by charging the amounts separately to the different railways. That is the principle upon which the Bill is constructed. I should like to say a few words upon the question as to the amount of the loan. So many false statements have been made, and so much mischief has been created by those statements, as to a supposed intention of the Government to come down with proposals for a large loan, that I should like—and this is perhaps secret No. 2 that I shall be revealing to the House—to put the matter perfectly plainly before honourable members. The Government did not propose, nor did I, that we should raise a vast sum of money during this present or any particular year. The proposals I made were in the direction of fixing our railways for a term of years to come, and providing authority to borrow a sufficient amount to carry them out, without intending to borrow any larger sum this year than we now propose to borrow. And proof of that is to be found in documentary evidence, because, if honourable members have had time to look at the papers which have been laid on the table concerning loans and the conversion of debentures, they will have seen that before I spoke at Auckland I had stated that the total amount of loans we should negotiate this year, including the North Island Trunk Line Loan, would not exceed one and a half millions. These are the words I used in a telegram to the Agent-General, dated "Waiwera, 27th January," before I spoke at Auckland:—

"Reluctant negotiate North Island Trunk April. Prefer borrow on short-dated debentures until Parliament authorize new loan, which we should negotiate soon after August, to probable extent million and a half."

That shows honourable members what our intention was then; and it will be found that that intention has been continued. We ask for power to borrow this year up to a million and a half, including the North Island Trunk Loan: that is, if we have to borrow part of this loan and part of the North Island Trunk Loan, the total of the two borrowings will not amount to more than a million and a half. Now, I would call honourable members' attention to further documentary evidence of the same kind. In the same papers I have already quoted from there is this telegram from the Agent-General to the Colonial Treasurer, dated the 11th March:—

"Letter *Times* you intend proposing new

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loan eight to ten millions. Strongly advise permission contradict immediately."

To which I replied,—

"Have spoken favour deciding railways for eight or ten years authorizing loan negotiable as required. Objects—avoid yearly capricious changes, altering purposes, delaying returns, and spending money unproductively. If borrow this year, not exceed a million and a half, including Trunk Loan. Above outline my views, which English lenders should prefer to present desultory operations. Other colonies adopt similar plans. Inform me further course correspondence."

And the Agent-General replied,—

"Thanks prompt message. Had understood and frequently explained your intention exactly that sense."

Later on the Agent-General wrote me pretty fully on the subject, thus:—

"7, Westminster Chambers,
"London, S.W., 12th March, 1886.

"SIR,—A letter signed 'Mercator' appeared in yesterday's City article of the *Times* imputing to you the intention of raising a loan of eight or ten millions for three new lines of railway. It being necessary to take immediate notice of this statement, I wrote a letter to the *Times*, which you will find annexed. But I telegraphed to you strongly advising you to let me contradict 'Mercator's' statement, as if left uncontradicted it would certainly do the colony great harm; for I did not feel justified in making public, without your leave, what you had telegraphed to the Stock Agents some time ago, about the amount to be raised when Parliament should have considered your financial proposals.

"I had the satisfaction to receive your answering message this morning, and beg permission to express my thanks for so prompt a reply. You will see from to-day's City article that the *Times* expects 'Mercator' to take up my challenge; and your message will enable me to make a statement which I feel sure will be well received by the market. I had interpreted, and, indeed, had frequently explained in a private manner, your intended policy in exactly the sense you describe; and I hope I shall not be stepping beyond my province if, in the further letter which I shall no doubt have to write to the *Times* presently, I say that personally I entirely concur with it.

"Copies of the telegrams are annexed.—I have, &c., "F. D. BELL."

The fact of the case is—there is no disguising it, it seems to me—that in some quarters political hostility is carried to such an extent as to operate against the interests of the colony. Now, a statement was fabricated and telegraphed from Wellington simultaneously to three or four papers to the effect that the Government were going to borrow ten millions of money; and this statement—in the same way as other statements that have been sent out—professed to be inspired or partially inspired. And the papers took up that, and not my statement afterwards as the foundation on which they built their reflections, and it was repeatedly stated that the Government were going to negotiate a very large loan immediately. But all that we had intended to propose was submitted by me and discussed by the members of the Ministry from time to time. We agreed it was most undesirable that, under the pretence of constructing certain works, considerable sums should be borrowed, and that then those works should be set on one side. When we came to look into the facts we found that out of the last three-million loan, authorized three years ago, a large sum had not been devoted to the purposes stated in the schedule of the Loan Act. We considered it would be better that the schedule should be tied down; and, when proposing such a thing, it seemed also desirable to state in advance the course of proposed railway-construction for some years to come. There is nothing very novel in that. When the colleague of the honourable member for Egmont brought down his three-million-loan proposal he said it was for part of what would ultimately cost at least ten millions. Well, the Government thought it would be desirable, as I have stated, to map out the plans of railway-construction for a certain term ahead longer than we are now proposing; and I am free to admit that we had also then to contemplate what appeared to be the certainty of the colony having to engage in the construction of the East and West Coast Railway, for at that time it seemed almost hopeless that it would be undertaken under the contract made with the syndicate. Subsequently the attacks upon New Zealand were renewed so strongly at Home that, acting under advice, the Government thought it better to make provision for two years only, and bring down the present proposal to borrow only a million and a half. Now honourable members have all the facts before them. If I have been unwise in revealing Cabinet secrets, I must take the consequences of it; for I think it better that these things should be known than that persons should, unchecked, exercise their ingenuity in stating things that have never taken place and that have never even been thought of. Honourable members, therefore, will understand, and it is understood in London except by those who make it their business to try to injure the credit of the colony, that our proposal was to do as other colonies have done—to take authority to borrow as required a given sum, extending the borrowing over a considerable term of years, for the purpose of continuing the construction of railways authorized in advance by Parliament. But we have adopted a different course, because we have been advised that it would be more consonant with what would be desired under the circumstances of the remarks I have spoken of having been so strongly circulated. Notwithstanding the colourless nature of those remarks, we have still thought it desirable to do as I have explained. I had intended to read a letter subsequently written by the Agent-General to the *Times*, but it is to the same purport as what I

have already read. He stated that we did not intend to raise more than a million and a half this year, including the North Island Trunk Loan. I have explained the nature of this Bill, and how our intentions have been misrepresented, and the change between the proposals made in the Financial Statement and those made in the Public Works Statement; and before I conclude I should like to say that, if honourable members think too large a sum is proposed to be diverted from railway-construction purposes to miscellaneous public works—using that term as a convenient one—they must recollect this: that the fund proposed for that purpose is, like every other fund, strictly subject to the votes of the House—that nothing can be spent from that fund except on votes passed by the House; and it only amounts therefore to placing a larger sum at the discretion of the House. We still keep the new loan entirely apart for railway purposes. It is very hard on the colony that it should be subject to the statements that are made both as to its condition and its prospects. I assert most positively that, whatever hard times the colony may have had to pass through during the last three years, they do not compare for intensity or severity with the very hard circumstances which the neighbouring colonies have had to contend with. The losses made by private individuals in this colony are mere bagatelles as compared with the enormous losses which have been made in the neighbouring colonies. Then, as to the cry that is raised about the private borrowing in this colony, and the attempt that is made to add the private borrowing to the public borrowing, and to make them a joint liability of the colony, I contend that these attempts are not only baseless in themselves, but they are exceedingly mischievous. I would ask honourable members on what plan the colonization of the Australasian Colonies has been founded excepting this: that the spare capital and the spare population of Great Britain would find in the colonies a means to develop the new lands that were to be colonized. The loans made to private individuals are in no sense loans for which the community is liable. They are loans much in the nature of a partnership account; and when honourable members talk about this, that, and the other amount which private individuals have borrowed, surely they must be unaware of the fact that transactions, between private borrowers and the money-lending institutions, private capitalists, and others who lend large sums, are constantly liable to adjustments and compromise—that there are constantly going on such things as reductions of interest and other alterations of terms to meet varying circumstances which may from time to time arise. The borrowing of private individuals is a convenient method by which persons at Home or at a distance, who have spare capital, may find investment in a sort of sleeping-partnership with those on the spot, who can give personal attention to the business in hand. The colony may to some extent suffer from the rush to Kimberley should it prove to be a large one; but then it will be only a temporary loss, because after a time the large population which will be concentrated in the Colony of Western Australia will overflow again, as has been the case before, and the result will be the bringing-out of a larger population from Great Britain, and the creation of new sources of demand for our supplies. Therefore, whatever dimensions the Kimberley rush may assume, and to whatever extent it may for a time injure the colony, I do not look upon it otherwise than as ultimately destined to greatly benefit not only New Zealand, but the other colonies. As far as at present appears, it is by no means certain that the rush is justified by any great discovery of gold, and I rather doubt whether it will assume such dimensions as some persons anticipate. Notwithstanding the great reduction in the prices of our staple articles, and some private losses, it is gratifying to find that the value of property on the whole has increased. I have laid on the table to-day a statement of the new triennial valuation of the Property-tax Department, and the result is that there is an increase in the value of properties in boroughs of £4,769,000; and an increase in the value of country property, including the value of pastoral land let on lease, of £1,380,000. So that within the three years there has been an increase in the value of property of no less than £6,650,000. Considering the hard times and the low prices of produce, that is not very bad; and it bears out what I think honourable members may more or less recognize to be the case—that we hear a great deal more of the losses people make than of the gains of those who are plodding along and gaining money. Those who make money say little about it, while those who are losing are not very silent. At any rate, here is undoubted proof that the value of property has increased, as a whole, in the colony. I hope there will be a larger increase before the next triennial valuation is taken, but I think honourable members will agree with me that it is gratifying to know that during the last three years there has been an increase in the value of property to the extent of six and a half millions. I have only one other point to add; and it is this: With reference to our railways, it is not for honourable members to judge of them by the returns they yield to the revenue. Honourable gentlemen must bear in mind that our railways are essentially not worked for revenue purposes. They are worked in such a manner as to give advantages to settlers. Were the railways used for revenue purposes alone, there is no doubt we could obtain a larger return from them. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. BRYCE.—Mr. Speaker, the Colonial Treasurer, in moving the second reading of this Bill, addressed himself not only to the Bill itself, but also to the Public Works Statement, in accordance with the understanding which was arrived at. No doubt the Bill itself is of very serious import to the colony, but there are many things beyond the Bill in the Public Works Statement which deserve very serious consideration. The honourable gentleman com-

menced his speech in that dramatic manner which is so dear to his soul, and declared that he was going to make some startling revelations, which might almost be called the discovery of Cabinet secrets, and surprise all and sundry. I listened carefully to the honourable gentleman's speech, knowing that I had to follow him, and waited in vain for these startling disclosures he had alluded to in so dramatic a manner. It is true, indeed, he said the Government had come to a certain conclusion with regard to the £800,000, to which he alluded—namely, that it would be sufficient for miscellaneous expenditure—and that afterwards they changed their minds on that subject, and came to the conclusion that it would not be sufficient. But, Sir, a change of front on the part of the Government is no matter for surprise at all. What is there on which they have not changed their front? Is there any article of the policy they started with when they assumed the government which they have not changed upon? and how on earth can the honourable gentleman expect us to be surprised when he simply announces a change of front on so comparatively unimportant a matter as the disposal of £800,000? The honourable gentleman went on to say that they had added to the votes for certain works or to the money for certain works by a sum of between £200,000 and £300,000, which they had got from old stock in the hands of the department—that is to say, old railway stock. The honourable gentleman did, indeed, I think, show clearly enough that they would nominally add to these various votes he referred to; but he altogether failed to show from what source similar railway stock was to be supplied. While taking it away from the department in that manner, and putting it on various votes, he fails, as I say, to show how the supply was to be kept up which he had taken away, or he did not think it necessary, at any rate, to show it. The honourable gentleman went on then to complain very seriously that money had been voted in this House for railway purposes, and had been diverted to other purposes. He seemed to think that very wrong indeed; and yet he went on, almost in the same breath, to show that the North Island Trunk Railway Loan was to be applied to the purchase of Native land; and certainly it is to be applied to various other expenditure which he did not specify. The honourable gentleman laughs at the House. He makes the mistake that many able men do. He undervalues the intelligence of his hearers, and, in making such statements as these, he is really laughing at the House. Why, he has told this House that it should "ear-mark" this North Island loan, and I believe there is to be a Bill introduced for the purpose, so that it may not be devoted to any other purpose than that for which it is intended; and yet, manifestly, if such a fund could be taken for the purpose of acquiring Native land, it can, and, I may say, ought, to be taken for almost any other purpose for which it might be required. If you can do that you can do anything you like with the fund. It is also perfectly manifest that other works in connection with that line have been paid for out of that fund: so that, if that is the honourable gentleman's idea of ear-marking loans, I can only say that it is a very peculiar one at least. The honourable gentleman has got into a habit of late of denouncing in unmeasured terms—terms which, if they came from any other honourable gentleman, or from a gentleman occupying a less high position, might almost be called abuse—any people who differ from him. Now, it is perfectly true, I believe, that there has been a good deal of feeling expressed, both in the colony and in the Old Country, that we have been going too fast in this matter of borrowing, and predictions have been made that the colony will have to suffer for it. Many people, I am aware, amongst old colonists do hold that view; and, holding that view, it surely must be conceded that if they did not proclaim it they would be failing in their duty. It may be that the Treasurer is wiser than all those people; but he has no right to denounce them for expressing their honest conviction, and no right to be continually saying that by the expression of that honest conviction they are doing the colony harm. If it is true—as I, for one, believe it to be true—then I say its exhibition to the whole world cannot do us ultimate harm, but may do us a great deal of ultimate good. Sir, he appeared to be particularly angry at some charge that was made against him that he was going to borrow a vast number of millions for the purpose of carrying on works in the colony. I had not the advantage of being in the colony at the time, and know little of the discussion; but I have seen a summary of the honourable gentleman's speech, and I have heard a little about it since I returned. It appears to me that the honourable gentleman has no right to complain of that at all, but quite the contrary, for I think he said quite sufficient to lead up to that impression on the part of the public. Why, if my recollection serves me aright of the summary I am thinking of, he actually took considerable pains to try and remove the impression created by his own chief—by the Premier—at Invercargill, and he went on to say, unless I am mistaken, that the Premier was not deprecating large borrowing for railways, but deprecating borrowing in a much more limited sense for roads or for other purposes than railways; and the manner in which he dwelt upon that, and the manner in which he went on to say that the public works should be continued, and a large amount of money borrowed, and the insistency with which he pronounced the opinion that the colony ought to have "another chance"—surely it was enough to justify the impression that he, at any rate, desired to enter on a large borrowing policy. Well, Sir, I go a little further than that, and I say, not only did he desire to engage in a large borrowing policy, but that he is carrying out that desire; for we are even now in for a large borrowing policy, as it would not be difficult to show. The honourable gentleman himself says that

at that time it was in his mind that that railway—the Midland Railway, as we call it now—might not go on as a private enterprise, and that the colony might have to undertake it. If he considered that the colony might have to undertake a work of that kind, how can the honourable gentleman deny that he had it in his mind at that time that the borrowing policy must be a large one, and wherefore, I add, should he denounce those who merely gather the legitimate impression from his own speech? This question of excessive borrowing is, in my opinion, and in the opinion of many of the best colonists of this country, a very serious one indeed. The honourable gentleman would, I have no doubt, think it extremely wrong if any one ventured to say that interest was paid out of loan—he is extremely sensitive of such assertions as that; but, still, I would point out to him that certainly—not in the general sense, but in a limited sense—from the point of view of political economy and in consideration of the balance of trade, it would be right to say in that limited sense that interest is paid out of loans. It is in this way: If a sum of money were lent to the colony *per se*—a particular sum—that sum would not be sent out to the colony in cash, but in goods; and so, if we have to pay the interest in London, we should not send Home money in cash, but in products exported; and at the same time, if we are borrowing fresh money and paying large interest, then, in that limited sense, it may be fairly said that the interest on our loans is paid out of borrowed money. And it is in view of that particular aspect of the case that I am so much alarmed at any idea of stopping our borrowing abruptly; and to my mind the possibility of this occurring abruptly in such a manner is increased just in proportion as we go on and on in excessive borrowing. If we are to go on borrowing in this excessive manner we must assume something, and I think it will scarcely be denied that we may fairly assume that we cannot go on borrowing in this way indefinitely. If we do not commence to taper off our borrowing—or edge off, as the Premier says—and if we go on borrowing in this way till the bulk of the public works contemplated are completed, I say that any sudden stoppage in that full flow of borrowing expenditure would be most disastrous to the trade of the country, for it would mean that, if that money is not got at Home, to pay our interest in the limited sense to which I have alluded, then either a lessened amount of imports will have to be sent to the country or a greater amount of products will have to be exported, or something of each; and such a disturbance in the trade of the country, coming suddenly, would produce a catastrophe as great as any of those predicted by those prudent people whom the Treasurer is so fond of denouncing. I have heard it said that there are not three people in this House who know to what extent we are being committed even this session in the borrowing direction, and I believe it, because every proposal you hear coming from those benches hinges on borrowing. If you want any Bill to have effect, borrow. If you have any proposal to make in any direction whatever, borrow. Borrow, borrow, borrow! That seems to be the one thing in the mind of the Government with the idea of producing prosperity. It is, in my opinion, a very dangerous idea, and it is one which I should hope some members of the Government, at any rate, have some little dread of as well as myself. However, I am at a loss myself—I am not one of the three who understand the amount of borrowing that is proposed, but I can see plainly that it is going to be for a very large amount. If you look at the amount that is required in the summary of the estimates you will find that the estimated amount required to be authorized—and for the most part expended, I presume—within two years, as distinguished from the second column, which contains the estimated amount required for actual expenditure this year—the amount required to be authorized is £2,350,400. Now, the amount required for actual expenditure this year is over a million and a half. Taking the second column from the third column you will find that the balance remaining is £811,000. Now we come to the question of liabilities, to which the honourable gentleman has referred. The first column shows these liabilities to be £892,000, exclusive of those contingent liabilities for the purchase of Native land. I have always been accustomed, roughly speaking, to think that from year to year there would be the same liabilities; but when I see this sum here as liabilities for the present year, then I see that next year a sum will appear in a somewhat similar column as liabilities remaining over from the preceding year, unless there is special reason to suppose otherwise. There is special reason to suppose that the liabilities will be larger next year, and no special reason to suppose that they will be smaller. The reason why they should be larger is supplied in the following foot-note: "These amounts are exclusive of £202,145, prospective liabilities on account of Native-land purchases, which do not enter into the question of this year's transactions." What I am coming at is this: that, if next year the liabilities are about the same as shown this year, then there will be for expenditure over those liabilities less than nothing. It appears to me, therefore, that that fact is incontestable. There will not be a sixpence left for new railways. What does that mean? It means that next year the Treasurer will have another dramatic declaration to make. He will come to the House and say, "I am going to reveal a Cabinet secret. I do not know what will happen to me, but I am prepared to take the consequences. Last year we thought we should have enough expenditure for this, but now I have to tell you that the Government has changed its mind, and we have to ask you to consent to a new loan in order to carry on further expenditure." That is what will and must happen, because it is nonsense to suppose that the House, next year, will be prepared to go on, when there will not be enough balance in hand to discharge the liabilities. It appears to me, at any

rate, that our expenditure upon these public works must be going on at a rate very considerably over a million and a half a year, which will be increased by next year's proposals for borrowing, which must inevitably be made. If so, in my opinion we are going on much too fast. In the Public Works Statement there are many things to criticise—so many that one hardly knows where to begin or to leave off. There are things absent from that Statement that one would wonder at, if one had not lost the faculty of surprise at a change of front on the part of the Government. But may I ask the Minister for Public Works if he remembers—it is not so very long ago—how strongly he insisted that the Government had made up its mind to establish a non-political Board? I should like to know what has come of that proposal. I see no proposal here to give effect to such an idea. It is one of those changes of front on the part of the Government which no longer create surprise, but, considering how strong a plank that was of their platform, I do think that common reason would have required that some sort of explanation should have been given for that very grave change. Now, there is another little matter, which I address myself to with a considerable amount of emotion, in my way: that is, the reversion to that former system of paying the Constabulary partly out of loan. I know how it was explained, and I did not believe the explanation then, any more than I do now. What I said last year is undeniable. At one time, of course, there were war loans, and contingent defence votes out of loan, and it was necessary to pay that Force out of those loans at that time, for the simple reason that it was impossible to do otherwise. But as the country progressed into a better state it was felt, four years ago, it was no longer justifiable, and that that Force ought to be paid out of the consolidated revenue. Well, in spite of that, the old system, which ought to have been regarded as exploded, was reverted to, and £25,000 was put down for payment of this Force out of loan. The reason given for that was, that that was really a calculation of the value of the Constabulary work upon the permanent defence of the country. It appears to me that that will not hold water at all, because no amount of calculation will show that amount of work to have been done by the Constabulary. And there is this difficulty to be got over: that there was a large sum upon the estimates for the purpose of making these works, and, if the Constabulary labour had to be paid for, it undoubtedly ought to have been paid for out of this larger sum. Putting £25,000 down on the estimates for the payment of that Force was, I believe, wrong altogether—certainly wrong in appearance, and to a large extent wrong in reality. This year it is only half as bad, because the sum is divided, and £12,500 is proposed to be expended; but it is equally objectionable. Then, again, looking at this summary, I find that for the purchase of Native lands the estimated amount required to be voted for actual expenditure this year appears to be £100,000. That is quite comprehensible; but in the third column, which gives the estimated amount required to be authorized, and understood to be sufficient to carry on for two years, it happens that the same sum is down. Certainly there ought to have been another £100,000 there, if any regard is to be had to liabilities, which would have increased the amount at the foot of the column, and would leave, of course, a smaller amount, to that extent, as a balance available next year for carrying on public works. I admit I do not understand how it can be that the sum required for two years is the same as the sum required for one year; but there it is. Now, as I have said, the Colonial Treasurer was somewhat emphatic in reference to the evil of spending money intended for railways on other public works. He has frequently alluded to that; and he now proposes, I understand, to ear-mark the trunk-line loan. But, I say again, it is a curious way of ear-marking any particular loan when out of that loan so ear-marked you can take amounts for, of all things in the world, the purchase of Native land. It is shown that there is a very large contingent liability on account of the purchase of Native land—here is a sum of £200,000 cut out and set aside. But it must be evident to every one who knows anything about it that a very large portion of that must fall in for payment before long. And many of these liabilities have existed for a very long time, and they must be in respect of lands outside any near neighbourhood of the route of the trunk line—many of the liabilities began before there was any attempt to buy land on account of the trunk line. Yet we find that in respect to all these other purchases it is only proposed to take £17,000 on account of the liabilities, whereas £80,000 *plus* £3,000 is to be taken in respect of liabilities on land dealt with on account of the trunk line. It must be manifest that the £17,000 must be altogether insufficient in regard to the general liabilities on account of land-purchase; and, in fact, the Government have used the trunk-line loan as a convenient source under which to smother up payments upon lands away from that line. There is another thing that I may as well speak of here. It appears to me that efforts are being made to take "the power of the purse" out of the hands of this House, and to put it in the hands of Ministers. Whereas in former years—I am not sure, though, about last year—the amount voted for the purchase of Native lands was allocated to the different districts, this year it is put in a lump sum, and its allocation remains, apparently, in the discretion of the Minister. I can see no other reason for that, except the one I have already hinted at—that it is thought desirable to utilize the North Island Trunk Loan for the purpose of charging these sums to it, at the Minister's discretion. There is another thing that the members of the Government, and especially the Premier, have spoken on, both in the House and outside. The Premier has always expressed his disapproval of the large sum taken from loan for roads, and has said that very shortly that sum

will have to be curtailed, or, indeed, the taking of loan money for that purpose put an end to. With respect to that particular expenditure I do not take quite the same view as the Premier, because I think there is a considerable amount of folly—I do not use the word in a disrespectful sense—in the idea that railways are to do everything in opening the country.

Sir R. STOUT.—I have not said that.

Mr. BRYCE.—"To do the principal work in opening the country:" I do not think the honourable gentleman will dissent from that. I say it is not so. In my opinion roads will, for many years, be the principal means of opening the country. There are many districts where railways would be, at least partially, a failure if unaccompanied by the making of roads, whereas if so accompanied the expenditure on railways might be productive; and therefore I do not quite agree with him, but think that so long as we borrow money it is well to spend part of it on the making of roads. It is true I agree with the Premier in some respects even in that, if he condemns the practice that prevails, even at the present time, of spending money on opening up Crown lands, the proceeds from which lands are now, and have been for years—shall I say?—*nil*. As to that, I agree that the expenditure is unwise, and that it ought not to come out of borrowed money. The Premier knows there are such cases, and I need not specify them. Another thing the Premier says in relation to this matter—and here I am more disposed to agree with him. He deprecates the spending of so much borrowed money on public buildings. I agree with him fully in that. That has been my contention for years, and I have in this House, in former sessions, given some rather curious illustrations of that practice, and of the manner in which borrowed money is spent on our almost immediate necessities. I agree that that is carried to an extent which is perfectly unjustifiable. But, while I agree with the Premier's professions in regard to this matter, I do not agree with the practice of the Government in the very same matter. Despite these professions the expenditure is still very large indeed, and if the honourable gentleman's professions had had much effect on the minds of his colleagues such reductions as have been made would have been very largely augmented. Now I wish to say a word in which I think I shall have the sympathy of the Minister for Public Works. It is with respect to the expenditure on open lines. I am sure that that is a thing which requires the most careful watching. Several honourable members have pointed out with perfect justice—or, at any rate, with a great amount of justice—that the Working Railways Department and the Construction Department are working very frequently at cross-purposes—that the Working Railways Department will change a station from one side of the road to another almost capriciously, and it really makes alterations in the lines which appear to me to be quite unjustifiable. Now, we are spending a very large amount of borrowed money on the opened lines in the colony; and I say this to the Minister for Public Works: that, so long as the Under-Secretary, or the Manager, or whoever he is who has charge of the working railways, has the power to dip his hands into a full purse of borrowed money for the purpose of improving the opened lines, so long will the expenditure be excessive. I am sure it will be so. I have observed the matter closely myself, and I believe that that is how it is. The Manager naturally desires to have railways of very great excellence, and he goes on improving and improving, because, from his point of view, there is no scarcity of money, and it does not, as it were, impair the appearance of his balance-sheet of the expenditure and receipts of the railways. I would say this in respect to these railways: that we are only a small country, we do not number our population by millions as some countries do, and I think it unreasonable to suppose that we in this country should push our railways to the point of excellence that can be obtained in countries where the traffic is very much greater. I would say this: that, where a railway has been formed and is working fairly well, with safety to the public at any rate, and is doing pretty good work, until the traffic justifies it I would not go to a considerable expense in improving it.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Hear, hear.

Mr. BRYCE.—I was sure I should have the sympathy of the honourable gentleman on this point, and I have made these remarks more for the purpose of showing that I would give him my support in cutting down the expenditure in this direction than with a view of criticising the thing. In the section of the public works estimates referring to the purchase of Native lands there are some very curious items. There are items which I know something about, and I do not in all cases condemn the expenditure; but there is one item of £4,000 for fencing Native reserves. I do not condemn the expenditure: I know it was recommended by the West Coast Commissioners, and I have never condemned their recommendation, and I am not going to do so now. But it seems to me very curious to take it out of this vote. It might have come out of "Unauthorized," or might have been obtained by a special vote of the House; but how it should come out of the vote for the purchase of Native land I do not know: and I must make a remark now which I shall have to make with regard to some other items—that I do not know how the Minister in charge has managed to get the expenditure past the Audit. It is taken from money voted by the House for the purchase of Native lands, and I cannot understand how the charging of it under that heading was passed by the Auditor-General. Then, another very curious item is that for the rents of the Himatangi Block. Now, thereby hangs a tale. I never, myself, believed in this item or the justice of it. It has been before a Committee of the Legislative Council, which had sympathy with the Native claimants, and reported in their favour. It has also been three

times at least before the Native Affairs Committee of this House, and twice that Committee reported against it; but last session—almost at the close of the session—they brought in a recommendation in favour of it. Now, I have said that thereby hangs a tale. Dr. Buller gave evidence before that Committee that he had orders for the money, and that, in fact, the money was to be paid to him. He made no concealment of it, and if he were here now he would acknowledge it at once. Honourable members who are able to carry their memory back to last session will recollect that at one time of it the Government were, if I may say so, in the agony of their fate, and were saved by the votes of the Maori members. Well, at that very period Dr. Buller pervaded the precincts of the House, and he stuck to the Maori members like a Government whip, but much more effectually than any Government whip could do. He made no secret of the matter, but said that if it came to a question of removing the Government from office he was bound to do everything he could to keep them in. The way in which he did that was to pay very great attention to the Maori members, spending half his time, while the House was sitting, in their room. I have always doubted whether he had a right to frequent that room; but, at all events, as long as he was at liberty to do so he frequented that room. Great efforts were made in the Native Affairs Committee to get this through, and ultimately it was got through. But here comes in the peculiar part of the matter. The Government did not wait for the succeeding session to put this sum on the estimates, although it had been twice refused by the Committee, but they actually put it on the supplementary estimates that session, and passed it through on almost the last day of the session. It is very well known that the supplementary estimates come on when honourable members are impatient to get home, and those estimates generally pass with a very slight amount of discussion. Where on earth was the hurry to do this, unless it was to let Dr. Buller have the money, under the pretence that it was going to the Maoris for services rendered? I would say that even that £1,000 is a doubtful item to pass the Audit, although I conceive it might pass, because it was connected with the purchase of the Manawatu Block in former years. Therefore I do not make as strong an objection to that item passing as I do to the other. And, now, here is another thing—the purchase of the Ngaire Swamp, £1,000. This was a leasehold held by a private individual from the Maoris, and the Government purchased the lease from the European. I thought the idea of taking leases on behalf of the Government for the purpose of settlement had been exploded. It has been well understood in this House for years that in no single instance has settlement been promoted by leases held on behalf of the Government. But what happened in this case? I have heard a great deal about this swamp. It is rich, apparently; but it has come to the knowledge of people lately that it is, in truth, a submerged forest, and, when drained, leaves a perfect outcrop of timber. I presume the gentleman who had the lease of it could not face the responsibility of draining it; and what more natural than that it should occur to him to sell it to the Government? So he sold his lease to the Government, and got £1,000 for it; and I am sure he ought to receive congratulation for his enjoyment of that £1,000; but that is more than the Government ought to receive, because, in my opinion, it was a perfectly useless transaction, and the money was completely thrown away. But here comes in this point, and I must lay stress on it: Again a vote is taken for the purchase of Native land, and the Government with £1,000 of that vote purchase a lease from a European, and not Native land at all; and yet that expenditure passes the Audit! How that was done I do not know. I can only say it would never have occurred to me to ask the Audit to do such a thing, and I say now, in the presence of the House and the Government, that it ought to be accounted for how it passed the Audit, and I hope it will be accounted for. Sir, I put a question to the Native Minister the other day with respect to the purchase of two sections on the Waitotara River from Mr. Henry Churton, and the honourable gentleman was good enough to answer me at considerable length and give me information which I had not possessed before; and I felt obliged to him for doing so. Nevertheless the transaction was a peculiar one in the highest degree. These sections have been for a considerable time in a very peculiar position, and I may say that they have cost the Government a great deal of money already. They are two four-hundred-acre sections of fairly good land in the confiscated block, and the former occupant was in occupation, or attempted occupation, but the Maoris so annoyed him and at last they made it so "hot" for him that he left, and the Government gave him land elsewhere. I may say that the chief at the head of the hapu which occupied it was Tapu te Waero, and he was told by the Commission that he might depend upon it that he would have to leave the sections. Sir William Fox interviewed him, and he also told him that he would have to leave, and that he would not recommend his getting another piece of land further up until he had left this land and given peaceable possession of it to Mr. Churton. Then, as the honourable gentleman said the other day, he sent Mr. Mackay up to make further inquiries into the matter. Mr. Mackay, who, I suspect, knew comparatively little about it, recommended that the land should be purchased, and that the services of a certain gentleman should be employed in the purchase of these two sections. The services of the gentleman were employed, and he got £200 for those services; and he bought the sections for £4,600, or at the rate of £6 an acre, including his commission. I say that is a very tidy price for the land: indeed, it is twice the value of the land; and I will show it in this way: Honourable members will bear in mind that

the price paid for the land was £6 per acre, including the £200. In 1882 these two sections of eight hundred acres were valued at £1,800, and in 1885 they were valued at £2,000, but then the land was bought for £4,800, being £4,600 for the land and £200 for commission. In my own mind I have no doubt whatever that if the honourable gentleman had chosen not to employ a commission agent, but had intrusted the matter to the regular officer of the department, he would have got this land for half what he paid for it; but he took this exceptional course, and the colony has suffered for it. I say the purchase was altogether unjustified, for it shows the Maoris there that they have only to persist long enough in defying the law and in the end they will get what they want. Now, Sir, I ask, again, how did that large sum pass the Audit? It is not Native land purchase at all. It is paid for out of the vote the honourable gentleman told us of the other day; but it is not Native land, for the honourable gentleman bought it from Mr. Churton, a European. The moral of this story is this: that if these things are to be done, and such extraordinary items are to be crammed on to the Native-land-purchase vote, that vote will, at any rate, have to be distributed as it was formerly, and not be voted in one large sum as it is now. That is a very moderate and proper conclusion to draw. But now I come to a very much more serious matter, and it is in regard to the purchase of Native land by commission. What occurred in this colony some nine or ten years ago in connection with the purchase of Native lands is within the knowledge of a good many of us in this House, and it would be accepted without proof that the purchase of Native lands under any such system is essentially vicious, and must end in disaster to the colony. Why, members of this House ten years ago were never tired of harping on that theme and showing beyond dispute that the Government, under such a system, was sure to get bad land at a high price, while the Maoris retained the good land for themselves. That was a matter of public notoriety, and it will require no argument to show that the system had almost become fatal to the Government. It was so blown upon and exposed that it had not one defender, and this Assembly actually passed an Act which caused its discontinuance. That measure passed this House almost without debate, and through the other House with only a few remarks. I will read what the Act says, so that the House may see that this essentially vicious system, in defiance of the lessons of history, is being reverted to in its worst form, but it is being reverted to unlawfully, and in the face of an Act of this Assembly. This is a portion of the title bearing on the subject: it is an Act "for discontinuing the system of purchasing Native lands on behalf of Her Majesty by commission." Then, here is a portion of the preamble:—

"And whereas agents have been employed by the Government to purchase Native lands on commission, and there are a number of such purchases under negotiation and incomplete: And whereas it is expedient that that mode of purchasing Native lands should forthwith be discontinued."

And so on. Then, in clause 6 we have it imperatively set forth that purchases under that system shall cease. The word "may," which is sometimes read as "shall," is not employed; but the absolute word "shall" is employed. The clause says,—

"The Native Minister shall, as soon as conveniently may be, make arrangements for the discontinuance of the purchase of Native lands on commission, and, for that purpose, may discontinue the services of any agent so employed, upon such terms and conditions as the Native Minister may think fit."

Now, it was forthwith discontinued, on such terms and conditions as the Native Minister thought fit, and arrangements had to be made with those people who had transactions incomplete—and a pretty penny the colony had to pay to satisfy them. There are three names that are present to my mind now as those of agents who had to be settled with. There was Mr. James Mackay, who received £8,413; there was Mr. Brissenden, whose name was pretty familiar to the public then, who received £1,773, and also a further sum of £892; and there was Mr. Mitchell, who received £825. Mr. Mitchell had been employed by Sir Donald McLean in connection with leases. I have already stated that, in my opinion, the Government has never got any benefit from any lease that it has ever entered into, and, of course, the thing has long ago been exploded; but Mr. Mitchell had these claims. I, however, refused to recognize them beyond a certain extent; and I will explain how that was, because it was a matter of principle. They got so much per acre as paid commission agents. A very large number of Natives are sometimes interested in certain blocks, and it is generally the case that one-half the names are got very easily, but the further you go on the more difficult it is to complete the transaction; but these agents insisted on being paid *pro ratâ* on account of the signatures that they had got. This had been recognized to a considerable extent in the case of purchases; but I did not recognize it in the case of the leaseholds. However, the matter came before a Committee of this House, and it was referred to the then Government, which at last authorized, as I say, the payment of a sum of £825 to Mr. Mitchell. Now, I again ask this House, is that a system that ought to be revived? Yet it is being revived in its worst form, and unlawfully, as I have shown. The honourable member has told us that land is being purchased along the trunk line, and also in the Taupo district—the district represented by the honourable member for Tauranga. Now, in the district represented by the honourable member for Tauranga there are sellers who are connections of that honourable gentleman by marriage. There is also another gentleman of the same name as the member and his brother, I believe, who has been appointed a regular purchase agent for the Government. I offer no objection

to that—that is right enough; but there is a third gentleman, a Mr. Grace, who is a commission agent; and, in my opinion, that is the sort of thing that ought to be looked after by the House. This gentleman, as I understand it, is to receive a commission of 2d. per acre from the Government; and he is, at the same time, I am informed, employed by the Native Land Court to act as an interpreter in cases of title that come before the Court. Now, I think that is not an arrangement that honourable members will be disposed to acquiesce in. However, that gentleman is employed to purchase at 2d. per acre, and there is associated with him, I understand, Mr. Mitchell, to whom reference has been previously made. Now, there is another point in connection with this matter which I ought to mention. I am informed that they propose to purchase at 1s. 6d. per acre. I do not know what particular land is being bought there, but I know that there is plenty of land there that would be dear at any price; but what I want to point out is that, assuming that the land is worth 1s. 6d. per acre, still 2d. per acre is a very considerable percentage; and you will observe that the regular purchasing agents of the Government are to assist these commission agents to get the land, so as to secure the fullest terms—which does not seem to me to be an improvement. Why this is so I do not know. There is a still further peculiarity about it, if I am rightly informed. That is, that these commission agents are now getting 30s. a day advance—to meet current expenses, I suppose—and to be afterwards deducted out of the accumulated twopences. I do not regard that as any improvement. I see that £520 has already been paid to commission agents. I am not quite sure whether this payment to the agents was regular or not; but this sum has been paid, and if honourable members will look at the amount of land purchased they will see that this sum amounts not to 2d. per acre, but to 3½d. per acre. Then, there is a regular agent appointed to purchase Native land on the Wanganui side of the Upper Wanganui. I do not object to that—I do not object to the regular agents; but with this agent there is also associated a commission agent, a gentleman who will be remembered as a member of this House—Mr. John Stevens—and who has announced himself as a candidate for a seat in this House at the next general election. This gentleman is employed to purchase a large quantity of land in the neighbourhood of the main trunk line, and I understand that the remuneration which he, too, is to receive is 2d. per acre for any quantity that he can buy. I simply say this again: that this system has not stood the test of experience, and that we may expect now, as we realized on a former occasion, that under its operations the Government will get the bad land, while the Natives will retain that which is good. In this very Waimarino Block, to which I am now alluding, I understand that the Natives are to have the privilege of reserving to themselves fifty thousand acres in various localities; and I have no doubt that there are similar provisions as to a considerable number of blocks. The land in this block is very various in quality. It consists partly of heavy bush, partly of pieces of very good land for settlement, and partly of very bad land; and what I am afraid of is that the Maoris will include in their fifty thousand acres the best of the land, leaving to the Government the bad land. The reason I fear this is, that you cannot expect commission agents to look very closely after the interests of the Government in such a matter. No doubt what they will do—they have done it in the past: I am now speaking of them as a class, and not in reference to any particular individuals—is to make things as pleasant as they can for the sellers, in order that they may be induced to sell, and that the commission agents may collect as large a number of twopences as they can. My regret is very great indeed that the Government should have reverted to a system which has been proved to be disastrous in the past, and which is likely to be disastrous in the future, and that they should have done so in defiance of the law which has been passed by this Assembly. What I have been saying has been mostly directed to what I conceive to be bad administration of the Government, and I have spoken as I have done because I have heard this frequently from the public: "Well, here is the Stout-Vogel Government. We say nothing in defence of their policy—in fact, they have abandoned their policy, and they are ready to abandon everything in the shape of a policy. But you cannot say anything against their administration." Well, Sir, if I thought that their administration was as good as the public thinks it to be, I should not care much about their abandonment of policy. But I do not believe that their administration is good. I see nothing but a breakdown in their policy, and I cannot see that their administration is good. It is, of course, for members generally to say whether they agree in that. Possibly a majority may think that the best thing that could be done is to support the present Administration. Of course, if they think so, they are at liberty to act on their opinion; but I have my opinion. With respect to the Bill itself I shall only say a few words. I think that the amount proposed to be borrowed is too large. The Premier, on one occasion, challenged me to say what items in the public works estimates I thought should be omitted. I did not respond to the invitation, nor shall I do so now. I shall only repeat the remark I then made—that some of these lines need not be gone on with. Then, I say this: that, even if we assumed that the whole were justifiable, still there would be no difficulty, in one sense—a good many members would not be pleased, a good many localities would not be pleased—in making a smaller expenditure. Now, I have already indicated that I think the expenditure is too large: I mean, the expenditure of borrowed money is too large, which, of course, involves the necessity for borrowing; and I am very much mistaken indeed if the Premier

does not in his heart agree with me in that. It is not for me to indicate where the reductions should be made; but, if the amount to be borrowed is excessive, then I think the Government ought seriously to apply themselves to the reduction of that amount, and, consequently, the reduction of the works to be gone on with.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Sir, the House has had a most elaborate criticism from the honourable member for Waitotara of the public works proposals of the Government, and of the administration — questions of administration which depend to a very large extent upon the opinions — the unsupported opinions — which have been formed in the honourable gentleman's mind, and without any regard whatever to the necessity of supporting those opinions by references to facts. Sir, I never before heard in any speech so much distortion, so much colouring, or so much misrepresentation. I cannot say that the honourable gentleman has understood the loan proposals of the Government, for he has really not attempted to deal with them. But he indulged in one piece of criticism, and only one, so far as figures were concerned; and it is this: He arrived at the conclusion that at the end of the present year there would be liabilities of a corresponding amount to what existed at the end of last year, and that there would be nothing to meet them—absolutely nothing. The loan would be gone, there would be the necessity for further borrowing, and there would be nothing to meet the liabilities, which he estimated would be the same as at the end of last year. Now, if any one will take the trouble to look at the Public Works Statement he will see that the amount available for this year is £2,768,700; and, allowing £1,400,000 for expenditure, that leaves £1,368,780 for next year, which is £568,000 more than would be requisite to cover the liabilities. That is a sample of the honourable gentleman's minute criticism of the figures in the Public Works Statement. Now, the honourable gentleman referred to the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer and to his dramatic manner. Well, I do not think the Colonial Treasurer could possibly be more dramatic than the honourable gentleman is upon some occasions, and I venture to say that, when the honourable gentleman puts on that appearance of pathos and melodrama, he assumes it so well, so artistically, that no honourable gentleman in this House is likely to surpass him. The honourable gentleman says that the Colonial Treasurer had no right to denounce the anti-borrowers — the people who are opposed to a borrowing policy. He ought to have used the word "criticise" for "denounce." The Colonial Treasurer has not denounced the anti-borrowers; he has criticised them, and has shown that a moderate borrowing policy is absolutely necessary to carry on the public works which are essential to the progress and prosperity of the people of the colony. That is the position of the Colonial Treasurer, and I am not aware that he has denounced anti-borrowers. I think there is a great deal in what the anti-borrowers put forward with regard to public expenditure and the constructing of lines of railway. The difficulty, however, is this: that the anti-borrowers, like the honourable gentleman, go the whole length of allowing no modification of borrowing, and say, "Stop it at once."

Mr. BRYCE.—I say the contrary.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Then it appears to me that there is no difference between us. The honourable gentleman will say, "Borrow just so much as may be necessary for the purpose of carrying on beneficially the public works of the colony." That is what every honourable member says; but the difference is, that some say the money should be borrowed for certain works, and others say it ought not to be borrowed for those works; and when the question is examined, it comes to this: that honourable members favour borrowing such money as can be got for their own districts, and oppose borrowing for other districts. Then, we are told that interest is paid out of loan. How does the honourable gentleman prove that? Why, the honourable gentleman attempts to prove it by saying that, when we borrow money in the English market, instead of sending out the cash borrowed they send out goods, and, the goods being sent out, we do not require to send goods in exchange from the colony, and that that is really taking the interest out of borrowed money in order to meet the charges on loan. Now, I think that is a very wide stretch of the imagination. I do not know that there is anything whatever to support it. It may be true in a certain sense that, when we are borrowing money from a foreign creditor, there will be a flush of prosperity at the time and more cash available for all kinds of purposes—for parties carrying on all kinds of business as well as for the public service: that is a truism, but that is not paying interest out of loan; and it seems to me the most extraordinary piece of criticism I have ever heard—that because we borrow money from a foreign source it therefore follows that we are paying interest out of loan. On the question of paying interest out of loan the honourable gentleman seems not to be able to understand this simple operation. It has been explained again and again, and I am surprised that he cannot see it. Then, what did the honourable gentleman do? He took money out of loan for the purpose of paying the Armed Constabulary, and he says in so doing he was quite right. That is his position now. We showed that we were not taking the money for the same purpose, but that we took the money for the purpose of constructing permanent works in the nature of fortifications. But the honourable gentleman says, "Oh, but the Constabulary labour is not equal to the amount of money taken out of loan;" and he says further that a certain amount of money was put down for the construction of these fortifications, and that we took the money for the support of the Constabulary after the money was put down for these works. If the honourable gentleman had really looked into the thing he would have seen that there was

so much money less put down for the purpose of constructing the fortifications—namely, earthworks—because we anticipated using the Armed Constabulary. And now let me tell him that nearly the whole of the permanent force is engaged upon the permanent work of erecting fortifications, and that an amount of £12,500 will be saved in consequence of the employment of those men. It is as plain as ABC that we are using these people for the construction of permanent works—works as permanent as any works in the nature of fortifications can be. Then, he came to the question of Native lands, and the honourable gentleman attempted to show that we have done very wrong in employing commission agents. Now, I am prepared to admit that, if looked at in one light, we are acting contrary to the spirit of the Act; but, if it is looked at in another light, we are not going contrary to the spirit of the Act. I do not think it can in any way be said that we are acting against the letter of the law; but I admit that if it were an ordinary purchase of Native lands we might be held to be opposing the spirit of the Act. But what is the position? The position is that the colony requires an immediate purchase of a large extent of land for the purpose of the North Island Trunk Railway—for the purpose of settling the country to be affected by that railway. It is really a public work, and the House thinks it one of very great urgency; and the necessity for acquiring these lands within a reasonable time is a sufficient justification of what we have done. The honourable gentleman says, "Oh, but the land is valueless, or some portions of it are." How does he know it is valueless? Why, the evidence given before the Native Affairs Committee only a day or two ago was that the land was of excellent quality; and before the honourable gentleman says the land is valueless he should afford some proof of the fact, and he has afforded none. I say that the land-purchases which we now are making are not open to the criticism which the honourable gentleman indulges in. They differ essentially from former purchases. The blocks are defined, the terms of the engagements are limited, the amount of the cost is limited. If the honourable gentleman looks at the agreements—and I am prepared to show them to him—he will see that it is impossible for abuses to arise. The Land Purchase Agent at Wanganui is one of the most trusted men in the colony, and he said it was impossible to acquire the land without assistance, and he recommended this gentleman, who is paid a reasonable commission for his work. When the work is looked at, and the necessity for acquiring the land considered, I maintain the Government will be held to be perfectly justified in what they have done. At any rate, the agreements will show that the purchase agent has been carefully restricted in his operations—that it is impossible for him to go outside them, and almost impossible for any abuses to arise. The work is conducted by responsible officers—officers in whom I have confidence; and I think the work is being carried on satisfactorily, and will bear the utmost scrutiny. Then, again, it is said that when the allocation of the Native reserves comes to be made, the Natives will get all the good land and the Government all the bad, and that the commission agent is to allocate them, with the temptation that he should act in a certain way in order to get his commission as soon as possible. Let me tell the honourable gentleman, in answer to that, that he is wrong there again. The commission agent will have no power to allocate a single reserve. The reserves will not be allocated till the property is purchased, and it is not for the Natives to say where the reserves shall be, but for a trusted Government officer simply to confer with the Natives with regard to where these reserves shall be fixed. If the system of land-purchase is understood it will be seen that nothing else can be done: if reserves are to be left for the Natives at all, it must be done in that particular way, by agreement between the Government and the Natives after the Government has acquired the land. What I say is this: I have no wish, and no member of the Government has any wish, to enter into these land-purchase transactions, but it is necessary work, and work which has been forced upon the Government. Again and again the necessity of acquiring land for the purposes of settlement along this North Island Trunk Railway has been pressed upon the Government, and it is only for this that the commission agents have been appointed, and only for the purpose of purchasing this land that we have increased the number of Land Purchase officers. If ever there was a question forced upon the Government it was this question of acquiring land along the route of the North Island Trunk Railway, and I say it was not the desire of the House that, having entered upon this work, we should, as under the old system, extend the operation over a long period of time. If the Government were to begin this work at all, it was work to be done quickly. It was an opinion expressed by the honourable member for Egmont, and by many others, that the Government should acquire at least five hundred thousand acres before they went on with the construction of the North Island Trunk Railway. I say that the steps we have taken have been in accordance with the expressed wish of the House. We have gone about the matter in a business-like way, and the agreements we have made will bear the utmost scrutiny from honourable members. Now I come to the question of the purchase of two sections of land for the Natives; and here the honourable gentleman entirely distorts the case. The fact was that the Royal Commissioner set aside a portion of land for a Maori hapu, but they were not living on this land. They happened to be living from time immemorial on land which had in some way been acquired by a private individual. Now, what did we find upon our hands? We found upon our hands what the honourable gentleman had upon his hands in this matter. We had a Native difficulty. The Native chief said that he would not leave this land, and that

not one of his people would leave this land unless they were absolutely taken away by force. And it was recognized that it would be an act of sound policy to acquire this land, in order that this chief might live on the land of his forefathers. I may state that on this land there is a graveyard which has existed there for hundreds of years; and yet these people were actually to be moved, absolutely forced, from the land which they had held from time immemorial, and which they had never sold! What did we do? When the successor of Sir William Fox was appointed, we asked him to look into this matter and report upon it; and his report was to the effect I stated to the House a few days ago. He said that it was desirable to acquire this land, and that by doing so the Government would save money. The purchase was therefore made by the Commissioner, in the interests of the colony and in the interests of peace. The Commissioner reported that if we acquired the land at a certain price it would be cheap. Now the honourable member for Waitotara comes in, in his usual way, and puts a low value on the land. He says he puts on it the property-tax value. But that is not always the exact value. I know that the property-tax value varies in the most extraordinary way. Sometimes it is very much less than the real value, and some of those honourable gentlemen hold that in some instances it is much more than the real value. It is merely a matter of opinion, and here we have the opinion of a person well qualified to judge. The honourable gentleman's criticism on these points, I hold, bears testimony to the soundness of our administration. With regard to the Ngaire Swamp, that is considered by those most competent to judge to be a desirable acquisition. It is near a railway-station. I was told that, with drainage, it would carry a large number of farmers, and that there was very little land in the neighbourhood fit for farming. We did not acquire it for the lease, but I was assured that if we got the lease the freehold would follow. The honourable member tells us that these things have passed the Auditor, but that he cannot understand it. The honourable gentleman put that very neatly. But their having passed the Auditor shows that they are not irregular; yet the honourable member says it is a very extraordinary thing that they have passed the Auditor. We come now to the Himatangi case. The honourable gentleman, in his keenness to find something which he can impugn, does not attack a vote upon the estimates this year, but he goes back to the estimates of last year and finds out this Himatangi case. He says that the Native Affairs Committee had previously refused to pass this, but that last session it was passed by a special effort, and that Dr. Buller got the Maori vote for the Government. I think my Maori friends will say whether or not he got their vote. The honourable member for Auckland East cheered that sentiment; but I believe Dr. Buller was there not working for the Government at all, while the honourable member for Auckland East was at that time working very hard to get the Maori vote against the Government. Before Dr. Buller said a word to the Maori members they gave me a pledge that as they believed in the Government they would support it. The charge made against the Maori members of subjection to undue pressure is a charge entirely without foundation. With regard to this question, I would say that I was not on the Native Affairs Committee when it passed the resolution in favour of this vote. I did not attend one single meeting. I had nothing whatever to do with it. The Native Affairs Committee passed the resolution by a majority, and the Native Committee of the Legislative Council also passed a resolution in favour of the money being voted. When the matter came before me I looked into it, and I came to the conclusion that the Committee was right. What did we do? Did we conceal it, as the honourable member would lead the House to believe? Did we smuggle it through? No; we put the amount on the estimates; the House discussed it and divided upon it. I was told that there was not a single member of the House who was not lobbied against this vote. There was a vigorous system of lobbying and button-holing against the vote, and after the discussion honourable gentlemen came in mechanically and voted against the item. It was carried by a considerable majority in the House; and yet the honourable gentleman said it was smuggled through! I may say, further, that this vote was strenuously supported by a gentleman not accustomed to vote with the Government. I refer to the honourable member for the Bay of Islands. He very strongly supported it, and arrived at the conclusion simply from the evidence he heard before the Committee. It was true there was a battle royal before the Native Affairs Committee between Dr. Buller and the honourable member for Waitotara. There was a personal *rencontre*—a little skirmish—between those two gentlemen; and because the honourable member for Waitotara opposed it, and because, perhaps, he did not approve of it, he came to the conclusion that the thing was altogether wrong; but the honourable gentleman's criticism of the facts has entirely broken down. Now we come to the next point—about a sum of £4,000 upon the estimates for fencing Native reserves. Why, that is another recommendation of the West Coast Royal Commission; and the honourable member for Taranaki came to me and made representations that this was a right thing to do. I looked into the matter, and arrived at the same opinion, and that the report should be carried out. The fact that the Auditor passed this is an argument that it was a perfectly regular transaction. Then, the honourable gentleman says the vote for Native lands is not distributed. But it was also put down in a lump sum last session: and I do not know that it was ever distributed. So much was put down for every provincial district, and that was the only distribution that ever took place. Two districts in the colony received most—Wellington and Auckland. Then, with regard to the amount of

money available for the North Island Trunk line: it is true that the greater portion of the £100,000 is put down for the trunk line. Why? Because we are pushing this matter with the greatest celerity, so that we may acquire the land in a reasonable time. We hope to acquire it this year, and that is why this amount is charged to the railway. The proceeds will be credited to the railway, and the railway will not lose by it. I repudiate altogether the charge made by the honourable gentleman, that we will acquire land outside the area affected by the railway and charge it to this account. The insinuation is entirely unfounded. Then, the honourable gentleman raised another point. He says that the same amount of £100,000 appears in the second and third columns, and that that is strange. He evidently does not understand the classification of the columns at all. One column should not show double the amount of the other. One shows what is required to be voted, and the other what is required to be expended. We do not here require to vote more than we expend in the year. Any one can see that it is not intended to cover the two years; but the honourable member could not understand why the amount for two years was the same as the amount for one year! I have discussed now the various points raised by the honourable gentleman, and I think that, if the Public Works Statement and the public works estimates are to receive no more trenchant and no more destructive criticism than that which the honourable gentleman has applied to them, they will stand the test very well. As to the honourable gentleman's views about the rate of borrowing, they may or may not be sound; but I would point out that, as far as I know, the honourable gentleman never raised his voice against excessive borrowing during the term of office of the Government of which he was a member.

Mr. BRYCE.—I did.

Mr. BALLANCE.—We did not hear it, and we never saw the fruits of it. The honourable gentleman must have acquiesced in it; and there has never been a Government in New Zealand which carried on so large a public works expenditure as that Government did. If honourable members will look at the figures they will see that that is perfectly correct. When they left office they were spending at the rate of £1,800,000 a year, and I believe they were not aware of the rate at which they were going, but were entirely unconscious of what they were committing themselves to. And yet they talk as if they had been models of economy! The honourable member for Egmont laughs; but he feels it, nevertheless. I am perfectly certain that at the present moment he feels the truth of the remarks I have made. Sir, I have nothing more to say. I feel certain that the criticism of our administration by the honourable member for Waitotara has not damaged that administration in the opinion of the House.

Mr. ORMOND.—We are, of course, now addressing ourselves to the consideration of the Public Works Statement, although we are nominally discussing the second reading of the Loan Bill. As regards the Bill I desire to say that, for my own part, I do not question the policy of the borrowing proposed in that Bill. I consider that the amount the Government propose to borrow for railway purposes for two years is not an excessive amount, and not in excess of what I feel to be the necessities of the country at the present time; and I am prepared to agree so far that the policy of borrowing to that extent for railways is a correct policy. The Bill proposes to take a new departure in the direction of "ear-marking" the loans, and as to that there is one point that I desire to call attention to. It is that, in spite of what is professed to be done, there is, out of the million and a half, no less than £583,060—including the expenses and charges for raising loans—left to be dealt with by the Government as they choose, and to be distributed as they like, without the House being previously aware of the manner in which it is to be used. There is £150,000 for additions to opened lines; and for permanent-way and rolling-stock for the lines named, £370,000. I think the Government, when professing to fix the amounts to be spent on these different lines, should really ear-mark them—it should plainly allocate the various amounts for the different purposes, and let us see exactly how the money is to be spent which we are called on to vote. That, I think, is a departure at once from the new principle which is being set up. That, Sir, is all I desire to say now with regard to the Loan Bill. Now I wish to say a few words in regard to the public works administration and the public works proposals. The Public Works Statement is a Statement which, especially at a time like this, might be so framed as to have a material effect upon the condition of all classes in the country; and I think the Statement submitted on this occasion certainly should have been framed to meet the exigencies of the country. I am talking of this Statement as being the production not of any particular member of the Government, but of the Government. It embodies their policy, I take it, and its proposals are the proposals of the Government; and therefore the Minister for Public Works will understand that, in criticising that Statement, I am not referring personally to him—with whom I have been on the most friendly terms for a great many years—but to the proposals of the Government. And I wish to start by saying that I consider this Statement a most empty and unstatesmanlike Statement to be made at a time like the present. It appears to me to fail altogether in its conception of the requirements of the country, and it does not appear to have been considered by those responsible for it how a statesmanlike and judicious distribution of the large sums we are asked to vote might beneficially affect the colony at the present time; it does not appear to have occurred to the minds of those honourable gentlemen how much more advantageous to the colony generally the public works proposals might have been made.

Sir, what are the subjects which the Public Works Statement deals with? There are railways, roads, railway management, immigration, public buildings, Native land purchases, *et cetera*. I give these as the main subjects dealt with. I am quite aware that many of these subjects are spread over other departments as well as that of public works. Let us first take the question of railways, and I ask this House to recall what was the policy the Government said, when they took office, that they were going to pursue in regard to the construction of railways. What was the criticism the honourable gentlemen indulged in with regard to their predecessors? They blamed their predecessors for having frittered away the Public Works Fund on small and uncompleted lines instead of concentrating their means on the completion of the trunk lines and other larger works already begun—that they did not spend their funds in a way calculated to secure an early return to the colony, but, quite the contrary, that they frittered away the colony's money in a way in which it was practically wasted. But look at the schedule to this Loan Bill, and let any honourable gentleman ask himself where there is any new departure in the proposals of these honourable gentlemen! In no case is there any attempt to make the money to be spent reproductive at an early date. Very large sums are devoted to new works before old ones are completed. Before the trunk lines are finished large sums are taken for branch lines, and there will have to be considerable further expenditure than that proposed on these branch lines before they will be completed. Therefore the policy on which the Government professed to start, as the reverse of the policy which they alleged had been followed with very bad results by their predecessors, is not adopted in these proposals at all. On the contrary, the honourable gentlemen follow exactly the same policy that they so strongly blamed in their predecessors. Let me give an instance or two from the main railways referred to in the Statement. There is the Otago Central. I am unable to speak from personal knowledge of what the vote proposed for it will do, but nearly every honourable member who comes from that part of the country and with whom I have spoken has told me that the amount proposed for the line will not carry it to a point where it will be of any material benefit to the district itself or to the colony, that it will not facilitate settlement on the Crown lands there, and that it will not secure traffic which will make the line in any degree a reproductive one. If that be so, the Government have entirely failed in regard to that important line—entirely failed to give effect to what they declared should be their policy in regard to railway construction when they took office. The next line I shall instance is one I know a great deal more about, the Napier-Palmerston line, which is now, so far as it is made, the best-paying line in the colony, except a small line at Greymouth, which is a line under altogether singular and different circumstances—that is to say, it cannot be looked upon as an ordinary traffic line, but as a line for a particular purpose and outside the ordinary railway system. But of all the lines the Napier-Palmerston line is the best-paying in the colony in proportion to the expenditure. And because it is the best-paying line, I suppose, its continuation has gone on at a snail's pace for many years—I think in five years only eleven miles have been made—and there is no proposal here to carry on the construction of that line at an increased rate. Now, what is the position in regard to that line? Two years ago, when this Government took office and brought down their first railway proposals, I was a supporter of the Government, and I had an interview with the Minister for Public Works, whom I found ready to hear what I had to urge in regard to that line, and ready to push it on to completion, as it was a main and reproductive line. He said the line should be pushed on to completion, and promised that it should be completed by December of the present year. The honourable gentleman gave a most distinct promise that the line should be completed in that period, and he did so on the ground I urged and which he admitted—that it was a proper line to push on to completion; and he took a vote to do it. That was two years ago. Now, I had, as I say, very distinct statements from the Minister, first, that the line should go on, and, next, that everything was ready for pushing it on. But, knowing something of the department, before the end of the session I waited on the honourable gentleman with my honourable friend the member for Hawke's Bay, and asked him officially to give us the same promise which he had given to me when he spoke to me on the subject. We reported to him that the Wellington-Manawatu Railway was to be completed about the end of the present year, and we urged him to push the other line on, so that Napier might be brought into communication with the other lines of the colony. He met us very courteously, by again repeating the assurance which he had given to me, that everything was ready, and that the line should be made at once—that he would push it on, and that it should be completed at the end of this year, simultaneously with the other line. We were not content with that even, and we asked whether the Chief Engineer was of the same opinion as the honourable gentleman; and he sent for Mr. Blackett and asked him whether there was anything to hinder this being done, and Mr. Blackett said No — that everything could be completed in the time; and all that officer said was, "If you give me the order, it can be done." The honourable gentleman gave the order then, in our presence, saying, "You can take steps immediately to put this line in hand." I then returned home, and then some months elapsed without anything being done; and at last I applied to know why it was so. I was told that there was some temporary difficulty, but it was hoped that it would be got over, and then the line would be proceeded with; but still nothing was done prior to last session; and up to the present time the Gorge

portion of the line has not been commenced, although two years ago we were promised that it should be completed within a few months of the present time. But this is not all. The promise was that the line should be completed so that it should join with the other lines of the colony, and no difficulty was raised at that time on that score; but now the proposition is that we are to take the line somewhere into the Gorge, and there leave it: that is to say, so much is to be done as will render the line far less productive in proportion to its cost than it is at present. I ask, is that good administration? Is that carrying out the policy which the Government said they would pursue when they took office and cast the reflections to which I have referred on their predecessors? There are two main lines which are to end at places which will render it impossible for them to be reproductive, and they do not propose to take money to enable them to carry those lines to the places they promised two years ago. I say that shows that they have absolutely failed in giving effect to the policy they enunciated with regard to railways. There is no attempt to so direct the railway expenditure as to make this line productive in the two senses in which it ought to be productive—one, in completing the main trunk lines in such a manner as to give reproductive interest to the colony; and next, by either joining districts which are now settled, or opening districts in which settlement can be promoted. In the Otago line I am told the extension will not meet either of these proposals, and in the case of the Napier line it positively does not do it. The population has increased all round the district in which this line would terminate to an extent second to no other part of the colony; and therefore, if the Government had the interest of settlement at heart, they would have made some endeavour to give effect to the policy in regard to railways which they so distinctly enunciated when they took office. I therefore claim that I have proved my contention that the Government have departed from the policy proposed as to railways when they got into power: and that departure is not in the interest of the colony, but distinctly the contrary. I hope that when we go into Committee on this Bill and the schedule is considered the House will do that which is its undoubted right to do, and see that votes are so expended that they shall be reproductive to the colony and promote settlement. Those are the two things which a railway policy should aim at. And now, Sir, with regard to roads. The policy stated by the Government during the recess, and the policy which, I believe, has been theirs ever since they got on those benches, is that they were not to take any responsibility with respect to roads—that all expenditure in that direction should cease as quickly as possible, and that expenditure on roads out of loan is not justifiable expenditure. But effect is not given to that opinion in the proposals now before us. I find that the proposed votes in regard to roads are, for liabilities £254,000, and new votes £320,600, during the present year. I do not blame the Government for giving up their policy with regard to roads, for I say the policy they announced is an impracticable and impossible policy. Unless the country is to stand still roads must be made, and they must be made out of borrowed money. If the Government had thrown on the large divisions of the country the right of self-government they might have devolved on those districts the duty of road-making, and I imagine that that was in their mind when they enunciated the policy to which I have referred; but to carry out that policy under the present system of local government is impossible. I will explain why. The roads which are required in this colony, and which I, as a settler, would advocate, are roads that would open up territory which at present is lying waste in many directions in both Islands. Where is this territory? It is unoccupied land, at present outside settled districts; and is it to be supposed that counties are going to make the settlers responsible by rates to make roads to open up land which is practically outside settlement? We know they will not do it. There is, for instance, the land between the railway to be made in the North Island and the West Coast. There is in that part of the country an enormous territory, which is perfectly useless until it is opened up; and similarly there is a large territory on the East Coast: but where are the local bodies whom you can, in justice, ask to provide the money to open up those lands? And yet the future prospects of the colony depend upon having those lands opened up. Then, again, going from the King-country down to the West Coast you have the same thing. There is good and fine land there; and we know that, as the future of the colony depends upon the opening-up of all these territories, the colony must find the money to do so. I do not blame the Government for the policy they are now going to pursue, but I say it is something altogether different from that which they enunciated. Sir, the next subject which occurs to me, and on which I should like to say a word or two, is that of railway management. This is a subject which would take a long time to discuss if we had the time to devote to it, but, as we have not, I will try and make my remarks as brief as possible. What is the policy of the Government with regard to railway management? When they took office the Minister at the head of that department told us that he had an opinion as to how to improve railway management. There was to be a Board of Management. That was to be the policy of the Government, and they were to bring down propositions to the House to give effect to it. But we have never heard any more about it. Those honourable gentlemen have been a long time there, and yet we have heard nothing of it or of the subject generally, except that this session a Committee has been appointed to take evidence as to the proposals of a Mr. Vaile for the management of the railways and for carrying out the system generally. I am on that Committee, but, having

duties to perform in connection with another Committee, I have not had much time to attend the meetings, and therefore cannot say what may be the result of the deliberations of that Committee; but what I want to urge is, that the Government does not pursue its own declared policy. The Minister in charge of the department has given his opinion to the colony, and the colony has a right to expect that he will give effect to that opinion. It is a subject which excites great interest throughout the colony; we have had demands from all directions that there should be railway reform, but we get nothing except that the head of the department has an opinion to which he will not give effect. That is another instance of want of administration on the part of the Government. In all these things there is a want of dealing with them in a statesmanlike manner. Another item which is dealt with in the Public Works Statement is that of public buildings. I heard my honourable friend the member for Waitotara express his pleasure at having heard the Government say they hoped soon to be able to rid themselves of nearly all the responsibility for public buildings. I am not going to discuss anything under that heading except one item—the provision for educational buildings. Sir, before this debate is over I hope we shall have from the Government some statement as to the course they intend to pursue this year in order to provide sufficient funds for school-buildings to give effect to the Education Act. That they are bound to do. We have now a system of education under which every child is supposed to be able to obtain education free; and I say the Government will fail in their duty if they do not propose, and this House will fail in its duty if it does not vote, sufficient funds to erect buildings to give effect to an Act which, of all the liberal measures that have been passed in this colony, is the most liberal and gives the greatest satisfaction to the people of the colony. It is of no use for them to say that they have made proposals and that the House has not accepted them. They have made proposals, as they do day by day, which are rejected. They have made proposals to throw taxation on the local bodies, and so put the cost of these buildings on the people of localities: but that will not do. The House has refused to recognize that it was right, in an important matter like education, that the Government should devolve its own proper responsibility on local bodies such as Road Boards, Town Boards, and so on. The House held, when it rejected the Government proposals on that subject, that it was too large a subject to be left at the mercy of any small local body; and they have therefore refused to go into the unstatesmanlike proposals of the Government in regard to this large and important question. I may say this, however: that the sum which Ministers propose to vote for school-buildings is, in my opinion, absolutely insufficient; and that the Government ought to consider what is its duty in connection with this matter. I am afraid we shall not get anything done this session—I have no hope of anything being done; but we must, in the early future, provide some definite and satisfactory basis which shall afford proper provision for securing the moneys required for giving effect to the Education Act. The Government, in the meantime, have distinctly failed in their duty in offering such very poor proposals for making provision for this very important service, for it was their duty to have made proposals of a definite character. The next point that occurs to me to say a few words upon in connection with the Public Works Statement is the Native-land-purchase vote. I do not wish to go into this question at any great length, for it has been dealt with very fully by the honourable member for Waitotara, who also has been replied to by the Native Minister. I may say, at the outset, that I do not altogether agree with the attitude taken by the honourable member for Waitotara. I am not prepared, myself, to blame the Government for doing what I and other members have urged them to do—making purchases of land along the route of the main trunk line of railway. I have been one of those who have urged, and I still urge it, as a North Island man, that it is impolitic for the Government to push on that line beyond the territory where we have acquired land for settlement. I do not blame the Government for using measures to profitably acquire land upon that line. What I have to complain of is that, from the information I have, the land that is being acquired is not, I am afraid, likely to be of great value to the colony. I believe that the two large blocks which have been referred to consist of land which is not likely to be of any great value in the way of providing for settlement. I hope that, before the line is pushed further into the wastes into which it is going, the Government will use every exertion to acquire for the colony land for settlement of such quality as will secure that as the line proceeds it will carry settlement with it. I do not pretend that the information which reaches me leads me to believe that the purchases are being carried out in a satisfactory manner. Quite the contrary. But I do not choose to go into detail, because I have not sufficient data to be able to verify the statements that have been made to me. Still, I may say that I do fear that all the old evils that were complained of in the past are being re-enacted, and I think that the system of purchasing by agents paid an acreage rate, which the honourable member for Waitotara has shown us has been revived, is one that past experience has utterly condemned. Under that system it is to the interest of the agents to secure acreage, having no regard for anything else. I was quite amused with the reply on that point given by the Native Minister. He repudiated altogether the idea that these gentlemen would be allowed to make such arrangements—to permit the best pieces to be cut out; but immediately afterwards he told us in the most simple manner that it would be a matter of settlement between the agents and the Native sellers. But, the sellers having re-

ceived a portion of the money, the Government will have to agree to whatever they insist on. The business is one that requires a great deal of care, and, judging by the Minister's remarks, he is not fully alive to the difficulties of the case. I do not care to go into the question at further length, for I do not think a great deal is to be gained; but I wish it to be understood that I do not agree with the honourable member for Waitotara as to the purchase of the land along the railway-line. Generally, I understood him to express deep regret that the Government had gone into those purchases.

Mr. BRYCE.—The honourable gentleman has misunderstood me. I have advocated, and still advocate, the purchase of land along the line of that railway as strongly as anybody; but it is the method of the purchases that I object to.

Mr. ORMOND.—Then I misunderstood the honourable gentleman, and there is not that conflict between our opinions that I had thought. Now, I should like to say one or two words with reference to the former leasing and purchasing in the Taupo District which have been condemned, for I had a good deal to do with them, either as Minister for Public Works or as agent representing the Government. The object of these purchases or leases was this—perhaps honourable members will hardly realize the position now: that we might get a footing in the middle of the country, so that we might deal with the then Native difficulty from a legal position and on a legal footing. We leased large blocks of Native territory in the Taupo district. The lands were of little value, but the rentals were small, and in that way we acquired interests; and also by purchase we acquired territory for the purpose of settlement. I desired to give that explanation of how it was that these negotiations were entered into. It was considered at the time by Parliament that these purchases were justified, and I believe, myself, that the intention was good, and that it was to the interest of the colony that it was carried out. I do not desire to pursue the land-purchase question further, but I object strongly to the proposal which is made by the Government to take money out of this trunk-line loan for land purchases. What is the use of their "ear-marking" this loan, and then using it for some other purpose—entering into a speculative business with it? I suppose that the Government must mean to bring down some proposal to authorize them to divert moneys from railway-construction to land-purchase. I do not think that the two things will be entertained together, and I think that the Government should make separate provision for land-purchase. It seems to me, however, that the Government, judging from the provision made on these estimates, does not expect—I will not say does not mean—to do anything really practical in the way of acquiring the sort of territory I would like to see acquired for the purpose of settlement, and thereby justifying the construction of the main trunk line, and procuring the settlement of the North Island. There is another question which seems to me to require to be dealt with in connection with the Public Works Statement, and it is one of the most important matters that can come under the consideration of this House. I refer to the question of immigration. I heard an explanation to-day from the Minister of Lands to the effect, as I understood, that the Government would like to make some proposal for the promotion of immigration, but they did not dare—that this House would not agree to it. Now, is that the sort of way for the Government to act? It seems to me that it is the duty of the Government to lead the House and the country, and, if they hold the idea that it is necessary now to have at their disposal for immigration a larger sum than they have had hitherto, they are failing in their duty when they do not make the necessary proposals to the House. It appears to me that we require to have a much larger amount spent on immigration than we are spending at the present time. I am not referring to that class of immigrants which we formerly spent large sums of money in bringing out to this colony, but I think that some better terms than are being given now should be given to the class in this colony who nominate their relations to come out here; and I think we might spend with more advantage in that way some of the money which it is proposed to spend on lines of railway, according to the proposals of the Public Works Statement. I am sure that the expenditure of the money in that direction would bring us very much more profit than its expenditure on some of the objects proposed in the Statement. More than that, there is another class which the Government have entirely failed to consider, but which they ought to consider. I think that they should give every inducement to bring out here—and there is a great chance of doing it just now—people of that class who are in great distress in England at the present time. I refer to the farming class—persons possessed of some capital. They might and ought to be induced to come out here and invest their money. But as to these people what does the Government propose? They tell us that the Agent-General has had some letter written to him telling him to assist people of that class by giving them some small assistance in the way of passage-money. Do they think that giving this money will assist to bring out the class we want here? What such men want is not a little assistance in the way of passage-money, but they want to be assured that they can get land, and to be informed of the terms on which it may be taken up. In my estimation there is nothing that can be dealt with of equal importance to that of taking advantage of the present state of things in the Old Country in order to bring out some of those people—not bringing out two or three stragglers, but bringing out large numbers of them. They are the class we want; and unless we take steps to get them at this juncture we shall bitterly regret it in years to come. I venture to say that, on this subject, the Government have neglected a

most important duty, and that this proposed vote of £19,000 for immigration shows that the Government are altogether trifling with the subject, the importance of which they fail to recognize. The other day there was an opportunity for the Government to have done something to promote the bringing-out, or inducing to come here, people of this class. There was a gentleman here—with whom I have not been in political alliance in the past—formerly a member of this House—Mr. W. L. Rees. He was accredited by the labour societies in various parts of the colony to societies at Home; he was accredited by other bodies, such as County Councils and Chambers of Commerce, to people at Home; and he had, in fact, everything that was necessary to give him an introduction to the classes whom I am urging we should bring out here. I am told that he received from the Government the greatest encouragement when first he made the proposal to them to go Home and lecture, and to endeavour to promote immigration of this class. But when he came down here they turned a deaf ear to his proposals and would not give him the smallest hope of encouragement or assistance; and so the whole proposal has dropped. As I have said, I have not been in the past on politically-friendly relations with that gentleman; but I am not here to say that he would not have made a very valuable agent for promoting that class of immigration. Accredited as he was, I believe he would have done a great deal of good; and I cannot understand why a Government that should be in earnest in this should neglect to give a fair opportunity to such a man to render his services. I hope that this question is one that will be thought more of throughout the colony and insisted upon, and that, as no provision is made this year, in another year the colony will unmistakably declare that there must be steps taken to assist in bringing out here the very best class it is possible to aid in bringing out, to assist in bearing the large burdens which we are year by year heaping up. If we do not promote the settlement of the country, so as to help us to bear our burdens, our burdens will press most unduly upon everybody now in the country. I do not know that it is relevant to the Public Works Statement, but almost anything is relevant to that, and it has come into my mind now and I will say that I cannot help blaming the Minister of Lands for the manner, in one respect, in which the administration of the waste-land laws is carried on. There appears to me to be an infatuation on the part of the Government in pushing on settlement entirely of one class. When we passed the liberal land-law which is the law now, it was understood that different classes of settlement should be promoted together—land on deferred payment, land on perpetual leasing, and land for sale. Now, so far as I am able to judge from what I see going on around me, and from the notifications I see of land from time to time open for sale, it seems to me that the two first-mentioned systems are being promoted and the last neglected. I venture to say that this will be found to be a great and a fatal mistake. The men who are going on to land as deferred-payment settlers, or are taking up land on perpetual lease, are chiefly men without capital. In some districts they may, I know, get along for a year or two, while there are public works such as railways going on; but directly those works stop they will be the first to blame—and rightly to blame—the Government for not having provided for settlement of capital for their advantage and employment. That appears to me to be a great failure in the way in which the Waste Lands Act is at present being administered. It is pertinent so far to our subject, and, feeling strongly upon it, I choose to express my opinion. I have mentioned the general points which I mostly desire to say something upon, and I hold that I am justified in what I said at the beginning of my remarks—that the Public Works Statement is an empty statement; that it does not provide for the many large and important subjects to which I have referred; that when it does provide for them it provides for them on lines of policy different from those which the Government themselves advocate as being proper and right. I ask myself why it is that proposals which every member of the House, I believe, must agree are fairly characterized in the way I have characterized them are entertained, and why, as we know, they will probably be passed. I say that it is because the House is, in my opinion, absolutely demoralized, because we have no parties and no party government; and this is the curse—if I may be allowed to use so strong a word—the curse under which the government of this country and the administration of the public affairs of the country is suffering: and it is the Government that are responsible for it, for they have destroyed any possibility of party government during the present Parliament. When they took office, how did they take it? They took it pledged to give effect to a particular policy. They were pledged, if ever men were, to principles and a policy which they have entirely abandoned. Where are evidences of effect being given to the policy which they declared they went there to give effect to? Where is the Land Act they were pledged to? Where the local-government proposals they were pledged to? Where, I say, have they done anything material in the reduction of that expenditure they equally declared necessary to effect for the good of the country? As far as the last is concerned, there is no material reduction in the expenditure. Any reduction in the expenditure that has taken place is, as I have said already, effected by placing on local bodies the large charges which were before borne out of the consolidated revenue or loan, to be met by direct taxation on the people in a way they do not know, in many instances. There has been an absolute failure on the part of the Government to effect any material reduction in the expenditure; and therefore I say that I am right, and that if the House were not demoralized by its condition this state

of things would not be possible. How is it possible for there to be any reasonably good party government with things as they are in this House? There is a Government sitting there wearing the clothes of the Opposition, clothed in the property-tax, clothed in centralism, clothed in everything that they before used to hold up to derision, with effect given to nothing that they have pledged themselves to. Therefore I say this House is demoralized, and that nothing can be expected from this Parliament. In my opinion, if we did that which is right, we should take up a matter that is now before the House, and shortly to be dealt with — the readjustment of representation—and we should pass it, ignore our own existence in this matter, and declare to the people of the colony that we know we can do no good; that we are not likely to effect any good here. We shall come here next year and take the honorarium; and before we come here we know that we can do no good—we know that nothing can be done that could not be done now. The Government know, and the people of the colony know, that the only chance is to go again before the people, and to come back, I hope, with distinct party lines; so that in future there may be a return to parliamentary representative government. At present that is impossible, and the Government is responsible for it. If that were not so I say that proposals such as are made in the Public Works Statement would not be allowed by the House.

Mr. SUTTER. — I just want to say a few words upon this Bill. I may say that I agree with the last speaker that, in the circumstances of the colony, it is necessary to borrow; but I should have hoped the Government would have seen their way to endeavour to do with less than they are proposing to raise. It is said that this is a million and a half, and that it is to extend over two years; but I think the sum is much larger than that. There will be, within the next two years, half a million from the Sinking Fund, which used to be paid out of the consolidated revenue. Another thing is that out of the 1876 loan we have only something like a million remaining, and before the end of the year that may be inscribed or done away with in some way, and the whole Sinking Fund would go into the Public Works Fund—I believe something like £400,000; so that the possibility is that, instead of a million-and-a-half loan in the two years for Public Works Fund, we have half a million in short-dated debentures issued to pay Sinking Fund, and shall have more than two and a half millions. I do not say it will be so, but I think that it is likely to be so. Honourable members will not notice where this Sinking Fund money goes to, but I believe it goes to the credit of the Public Works Fund. If I am not right the Minister for Public Works can correct me. The Colonial Treasurer complained very much that he was slandered about the country, and that members took a pride in stating that he meant to carry out a large public works policy. Now, he made a brag, in two or three of his speeches—notably, in one at Christchurch, and in another at Auckland—that he was absolutely going in for a new public works policy; and now he says that he is slandered by any one mentioning such a thing. Why, the Premier absolutely went down to Invercargill on purpose to put a check to the statements he was making, and told the country that he had not adopted the borrowing policy of the Treasurer. As I have said, I should be pleased to assist in borrowing any reasonable sum for carrying on the public works of the colony, if I saw it would be likely that the policy would be carried on with safety to the country itself; but I think very few honourable gentlemen have considered the state of our finances, and the interest we are paying. There has been no increase of revenue, exports, or production of any kind; and the interest is accumulating very rapidly. I have gone to considerable trouble in preparing some tables here, which show our position. Honourable members may not care to hear them, but I think they are necessary in order that the people of the country may know our position; and I wish to have them "Hansardized," in order to show the state of the colony at the present time. The tables are as follow:—

TABLE showing—(1) Net Debt of the Colony in each Year, from 1879 to 1885, both inclusive (2) Accrued Sinking Fund; (3) Sinking Fund paid in to the Commissioners for each Year; (4) Interest on the Debt for each year; (5) Customs Revenue; (6) Exports; (7) Imports; (8) Population for the same Period.

Year.	Net Debt.			Accrued Sinking Fund.			Sinking Fund for Year.	Interest on Debt.			Customs Revenue.	Exports.	Imports.	Population.
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	£	s.	d.	£	£	£	
1879	21,513,303	14	5	1,709,007	5	7	116,176	1,083,943	6	3	1,237,259	5,743,126	8,374,585	463,729
1880	25,617,112	10	7	1,805,498	3	8	116,176	1,337,269	17	6	1,258,362	6,352,692	6,162,011	484,864
1881	27,108,269	4	11	2,057,241	15	1	120,052	1,353,492	0	2	1,421,609	6,060,866	7,457,045	500,000
1882	27,680,293	2	8	2,266,417	17	4	120,052	1,386,819	16	6	1,515,916	6,658,008	8,609,270	517,707
1883	27,785,281	14	9	2,571,829	5	3	120,052	1,396,220	0	0	1,414,182	7,095,999	7,974,038	540,877
1884	29,574,902	19	9	2,792,808	0	3	119,052	1,429,599	0	0	1,413,393	7,091,667	7,663,888	564,304
1885	30,649,099	2	5	3,041,922	17	7	119,052	1,474,640	0	0	1,428,809	6,819,939	7,479,921	626,517
1886	31,668,094	3	6	3,276,872	18	2	119,052	1,546,155	18	10	...	...	...	...
Totals	221,616,358	13	0	19,521,498	1	0	967,664	10,908,148	19	3	9,689,530	44,808,297	53,720,758	3,697,998

TABLE showing the Value of Pastoral and Agricultural Productions of New Zealand for Years 1879 to 1885, both inclusive.

Year.	Tallow.	Hides, Sheepskins, Leather, and Rabbitskins.	Flour, Bran, Sharps, Wheat, Barley, Malt, Oats, and Oatmeal.	Butter, Cheese, Pork, Hams, Bacon, Salt Beef, Preserved Meat, Frozen Meat.	Live-stock.	Wool.	Gold.	Silver.	Coal
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
1879	145,595	122,324	701,139	62,327	400	3,126,430	1,134,641	4,512	6,[illegible]
1880	146,535	143,324	957,796	52,010	3,101	3,169,300	1,220,263	4,550	5,[illegible]
1881	120,611	176,564	1,074,192	40,069	4,162	2,909,760	996,867	4,236	5,[illegible]
1882	165,938	212,117	1,134,711	150,150	50,577	3,118,554	921,064	1,986	2,[illegible]
1883	233,557	227,478	1,479,747	261,427	71,174	3,014,211	891,445	3,785	4,[illegible]
1884	234,829	227,118	901,998	527,941	89,290	3,267,527	968,953	5,125	4,[illegible]
1885	176,962	207,653	637,211	640,996	...	3,205,275	890,056	3,169	5,[illegible]
Totals	1,224,027	1,316,578	6,886,794	1,734,920	227,704	21,811,066	7,043,889	26,663	34,[illegible]

Honourable members may think this is a very dry subject; but it is of immense importance, because it shows us what we are borrowing upon. I have been corresponding with the Registrar-General with the view of ascertaining as nearly as possible what is the value of the pastoral and agricultural products required to satisfy the wants of the people of New Zealand; and that officer tells me that, as nearly as he can calculate, their value is from three to three and a half millions over and above our exports. That has to be added to the figures I have given, and then we see the enormous value of our agricultural and pastoral pursuits. The Minister of Mines made a statement recently from which it appeared as if we were existing on gold. In addition to that eight hundred and fifty thousand pounds' worth of gold, we actually raise, by our agricultural and pastoral pursuits, nine millions every year. Yet we do not give bonuses to our farmers, or make water-races for them.

Sir R. STOUT.—We make roads.

Mr. SUTTER.—We make roads for the goldfields, too. I say the goldfields get 50 per cent. more roads than do other districts of the colony. I ask the honourable gentleman to show me that I am wrong. What would the Government say if I were to ask for a water-race for the farmers in my district—what would the honourable gentleman say if I were to ask him to put down £10,000 or £20,000 on the estimates for that purpose? The honourable gentleman would tell me that the district must find money itself for a water-race. You have driven energy and independence off the goldfields by doing works which an industrious people would have done, and have done at less expense. I hope the Government will see their way to ease off borrowing. When I first became a member of this House the honourable member for Egmont, while Minister, borrowed one million a year; and I have shown to-night that the borrowing of the present Government in fact—with the North Island Trunk line, one million; the Loan Bill, one and a half millions; Sinking Fund set free, £400,000; and a half-million of short-dated debentures—has amounted in two years to nearly three millions. I have pointed out that the Government have been borrowing a quarter of a million a year for the payment of the Sinking Fund. The honourable member for Egmont paid that out of the Consolidated Fund. Honourable members may fancy that we have a large accrued interest which we can lay hold of some day. I think we shall find that we have as much in short-dated debentures that will swallow the whole thing up. The Sinking Fund has all gone, and we are putting that a loan which ought to be paid out of the Consolidated Fund. I felt it my duty to point out to the House the serious position we are drifting into by this excessive borrowing, and to say that the evil day will soon arrive when we must face increased taxation, if we are to go on borrowing.

Mr. DUNCAN.—Sir, I have a few words to say in connection with this debate. The honourable member for Waitotara condemned the proposals of this Loan Bill as excessive and extravagant; and, generally, all the proposals of the Government were condemned by him in that direction. He stated that, in his opinion, the Government gave for the Maori land that they bought double the price they ought to have given, and double the price that it was worth; and afterwards he was answered by the Native Minister, who gave satisfaction, to my view, and who showed that the honourable member was wrong in his opinion, as the land bought was what this House asked to be done in order to be able to have land for settlement along the line of railway. Then, we have the honourable member for Napier, who speaks directly in opposition to the honourable member for Waitotara, every word of it——

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. DUNCAN.—Yes. Every word of it was in opposition to the speech delivered by the honourable member for Waitotara. He said the Government had departed from their policy, and that they ought to pursue a vigorous policy by completing the railway-lines to a paying point; and he went on to mention the Otago Central line as one and the Napier and Palmerston line as another. Now, Sir, from what little I know of these lines,—I do

not know very much, it is true,—in order to bring these to a paying point, as laid down by the honourable member for Napier, it would cost nearly two millions of money.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Not to complete it to a paying point.

Mr. DUNCAN.—There is no paying point except to the Palmerston terminus: and he expected that this should be done within two years. In fact, he says that he and the member for Hawke's Bay had a promise from the Government that this should be done.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—But he says "to a paying point."

Mr. DUNCAN.—And I say there is no paying point but the terminus at Palmerston. From what I know of the Napier and Woodville line it is at the best paying point now that it ever will be at. The line has tapped a first-class forest, and there is no better forest to go to, so that every additional mile will add to the expense, for no useful purpose. The honourable member for Egmont says "Ugh!" and the honourable member for Gladstone emphasizes his argument in the same way; but I do not know how the *Hansard* reporter will express that. But this is what I gather from two speeches from very able men—no one in the House can doubt that; and they are men, moreover, who have the welfare of New Zealand at heart as much as any member of this House: When one condemns the proposals as extravagant, the other condemns them for not being proposals for a vigorous expenditure. Then, the honourable member for Napier goes on to characterize the Government to the effect that they have demoralized the colony. I can remember the time when the Government were ready to walk off those benches, and the honourable member for Napier was the very man who, with fifty-two others, asked them to stop there, and promised to support them, because he was not quite ready to take their place at that date.

Major ATKINSON.—He had not found them out then.

Mr. DUNCAN.—That was not it; but he is afraid they will stop there now longer than he cares to see them. Then the honourable member proceeded to refer to the immigration policy. He thinks that policy is not what the colony has a right to expect. I think, however, that an immigration policy is just what the colony should not expect at the present time, because this is not the time to flood the colony with immigrants when we have so much labour unemployed as there is, and so little work for them to do. According to the way he put it—and I took some of his words down—it would cost about £60,000 this year to carry out his proposals in the direction of immigration: so that, to carry out the proposals of the honourable member for Napier, they would have to spend about £3,000,000 this year. It is not likely that the House would consent to the Palmerston line being carried on and all other lines in the colony standing still; there should certainly be some proportionate expenditure on them. In order to carry out the honourable member's proposals altogether we should have to borrow ten millions. However, there is very little to answer in what has been said, as the honourable member for Napier answered the honourable member for Waitotara better than I could hope to do; and I think the sooner we go to a division the better. The speeches were not what I expected from the Opposition at all.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—Sir, I wish to say a word or two before this Bill is read a second time, and I think the present is a favourable opportunity to do so. I should like to say that the present is the occasion on which we shall have to take the discussion on the whole of the public works policy of the Government this year, at all events. I am not, however, going into the administration of the Government at the present time, because that has already been touched on, and we wish to spare our friends as much as possible. I should like to say, in the first place, that I could not quite make out from the Minister of Lands how he made out that he was obliged to pay an acreage rate of 2d. to the agents buying Native land on commission; because, if he wanted more hands to buy the lands, why should he not put on more at a fixed salary? He seemed to think it was the desire of the House that he should employ the relatives of members in this way; but I do not think he made his case out in that respect. Another opinion I have to give expression to is this: that either we were grossly deceived last year by the Government or we shall be grossly deceived this year. Last year there was put on the estimates a vote for the Helensville North extension, but by carrying Captain Russell's resolution for the reduction of the estimates by £500,000 this suffered. Afterwards, during the recess, the Minister of Justice taunted us before our constituents for our votes on that occasion; he said that by our votes on that occasion we had neglected our duty, and that if the people had not sent down such a miserable lot of men large contracts for public works would then have been going on, and there would be £20,000 being spent in that district at the present time. If that statement was true at that time, how is it that we cannot spend that money now? Members will laugh; but that will not explain it. This, moreover, was only one item out of the whole lot. After taunting us in this way, he went on to show our constituents what "duffers" we were. We were told in the Statement last year that a contract would be let to extend the Helensville line northwards to the extent of £20,000. In this year's Statement we see that, owing to no surveys having been made, no such contract can be let. That is what we are told this year, after being taunted in the manner I have indicated. Perhaps it will be quite warm enough for the honourable member for Waitaki, who spoke last, to reflect that we were either grossly deceived last year, or are being deceived this year. I do not wish to go into details, but we were lectured before our constituents in this way

for [illegible] which the Government could [illegible] they could do now [illegible] I do not know how many more [illegible] there may be [illegible] and it is a matter remarkable. Now, sir, what I was going to say was that this is a proper time to discuss the whole question of our position, what we are and our borrowing. Since I have had a seat in this Parliament I have not had the honour of [illegible] any particular Ministry for any considerable time. I have followed a Ministry for twenty-four hours, but as I did not approve their action for my vote, I cannot be accused of being an adherent to any party. I have spoken on this subject with a feeling that I have not spoken before. What I am now trying to point out is, that we have been [illegible] money and spend it, but the question is, What will be the future result? I have heard that when the Government were required to do an act for the present emolument of the country was to issue some scrip whereby we could tide over our difficulties and get into better times. I understood at the time that they were going to do so, but they have so frequently done that they have had an opportunity of [illegible] the [illegible]. They have issued part of it, and in the [illegible] we shall hear the fruit we are to reap, and to see. What I wish to show is that we have not profited as much as we might have done by the expenditure of thirty-odd millions of money we have spent—that the colony has not progressed any more than could be reasonably expected if there had been no borrowing at all. Last year our imports were £7,[illegible]; the imports for the year 1884 were £7,[illegible]. We imported more the year before last; we imported very large quantities of railway iron and material, and that makes a great deal of the difference. The exports last year were £[illegible], and the year before £7,[illegible]. That, of course, shows that the return of the Colonial Treasurer did not start the colony into fresh life. Our shipping fell off to the extent of sixty-six vessels, or a gross tonnage of 9,468. Looking generally at the trade of last year, our trade with Victoria fell off one-third, with New Caledonia more than one-half, and with the Pacific islands there has been a falling-off in imports but an increase in exports. The exports to America almost doubled, and the imports increased by £90,000. Our trade with India increased by £12,000, and our trade with China decreased. There was a falling-off in the Mauritius trade. In the imports the principal increases for the past year were as follow: Apparel and slops, £20,000; beer, £17,000; boots and shoes, £40,000; cement, £20,000; drapery, £100,000; fancy goods, £25,000; hosiery and dressing goods, £20,000; locomotives, £55,000; tea, £37,000; tobacco, £20,000; woollens, £25,000. Now let us look at the decreases for the same period. They were as follow: Coals, £44,000; copra, £13,000; iron rails and railway bolts and fastenings, £50,000; jewellery, £14,000; machinery, £85,000; railway plant, £148,000; specie (gold), £136,000; steel rails, £20,000; sugar, £360,000. The decrease in machinery is a bad sign, because it shows that we decreased in production. We know very well that we are not making the machinery here, because we know that our manufactures have been in a bad state. The principal increases in exports were: Live animals, £[illegible]; meat and hams, £7,000; beer, £2,[illegible]; butter, £[illegible]; cheese, £20,[illegible]; fish, £[illegible]; flour, £[illegible]; honey, £2,500; hides, £[illegible]; leathers, £10,[illegible]; preserved, £[illegible]; frozen meats, £18,[illegible]; [illegible], £[illegible]; minerals, £5,000; oysters, £[illegible]; pearl-shell, £4,000; specie (gold), £7,[illegible]. The decreases in our exports were as follow in 1885: Bran and sharps, £7,000; copra, £[illegible]; grain, £255,000; kauri-gum, £[illegible]; hops, £15,000; potatoes, £[illegible]; seeds, grass and clover, £7,000; silver, £[illegible]; tallow, £56,000; whalebone, £6,000; wool, £[illegible]. That shows that last year we decreased very largely in some of our most important products. The total increase in the amount of mortgages under the Land Transfer Act last year was £[illegible], and the year before £1,[illegible]. That shows that in the private mortgages there was an increase of nearly four millions in two years. That points to a very serious fact. Our indebtedness amounts to nearly eighty millions, taking it all round. The honourable member for Gladstone brought out a table for the last five or six years, but, for the purpose I have in view, I have made a few notes, showing our trade for the last twenty years. The total imports into the colony during that period were £134,132,188, and the total exports £113,643,516, so that it will be seen that we have imported during the last twenty years to the value of £20,488,672 more than we have exported. In 1870 our exports were £300,000 more than our imports: in 1871, £1,200,000; and in 1872, £50,000: this was immediately prior to our public works policy being felt. Our average population for the last twenty years has been 379,723 Europeans, and our average export £5,682,175: so that the average export per head of the population is about £15. Now, in 1866 our exports were £4,520,074; in 1870, £4,822,756; in 1871, £5,282,084; and in 1885, £6,819,989: so that we are now only £1,137,764 above the average, and £2,299,865 above 1866, and this with three times the population, twenty years' development, and nearly thirty-two millions of borrowed money. I will now consider the average export per head of population during certain periods of the last twenty years. In 1866 the average export per head was £22 10s.; in 1870, £19 7s. 6d.; in 1875, £15 10s.; in 1880, £13 5s.; in 1883, £13 0s. 6d.; in 1885, £11 12s. 6d. I have included 1883, because it is the latest year that I have been able to obtain Australian statistics to. From these figures we see that we have been gradually losing ground. Now let us compare these figures with the exports of other colonies. I have gone into a careful calculation with respect to the whole of the other colonies. The following is the table of average export per head of population:—

ABLE showing Average per Head of Export in Australian Colonies.

		Average Export per Head. £	s.	d.	Debt. £
New South Wales,	1883	22	17	6	30,000,000
Queensland.	"	17	10	6	16,500,000
Victoria	"	17	6	8	28,000,000
South Australia	"	16	0	9	15,500,000
Western Australia	"	14	6	0	861,791
Tasmania	"	13	15	0	2,333,333
New Zealand	"	13	0	6	32,000,000
"	1885	11	12	6	32,000,000

Thus, New South Wales heads the list of average exports per head of population. So, of these colonies, we stand absolutely at the bottom of the tree as regards exports. The average export per head of the whole of these colonies is £16 8s. 1½d., so we are a long way below the average. It is of no use to blink these facts; we must meet them face to face. If we keep on borrowing money we shall have to send Home a largely-increased export, without having a corresponding increased import, or else there must be a drain on the colony which it could not possibly stand. These figures show that about the time of the starting of the public works policy our exports exceeded our imports, but, since then, our exports have not increased nearly in proportion to our increase of population. The imports and the exports have kept pretty close together in amount all the time; and it has been so in the other colonies. In 1886, with a very small population, our average export per head was about the same as it is in New South Wales at the present time. When the public works policy was begun we were far better off than we are now. Since then we have steadily drifted in the matter of exports, and from all I can see we shall continue to drift. It is not now a question to decide whether we shall borrow or not—it is too late to talk about that—but the question for us to decide is, What ought to be our course in the future? We are sent here, as reasonable beings representing the country, to decide that question, and not for each man to scramble for what he can get for his district. We are living in a "fools' paradise," taking no thought for the morrow. I am afraid there has been too much of that in our management of public affairs, and that the slightest accident may at any moment entail disastrous effects in consequence. The slightest accident in the Home money-market—the slightest accident amongst the few who run New Zealand, and the whole of these colonies, in regard to borrowing; because it is they who take up our loans, and sell them out to smaller people—would bring us face to face with a position of extreme difficulty. The slightest accident might at any moment bring us face to face with our inevitable difficulty; and the only question, to my mind, at the present time is, Can we possibly carry on without borrowing an amount equal to our interest every year? It is a very close question whether we can do without this million and a half every year; but I am one of those who think we can—at any rate, that it is quite feasible for us to try the experiment, and see what we can do: we might find out that we could not. The reason why our public works policy has failed to have the effects it should have had is very simple. It is owing to our giving up the immigration part of that policy. The public works policy was always, at first, coupled with the policy of bringing in a large population; but, unfortunately, there are many who think, with the last speaker, that because we cannot afford to employ those who are here we should not get more. The honourable member forgets that the more population we have the better it is for all classes; because the lighter the taxation is, and there is a better chance of employment for all. If we had two millions of people here would it not be a more prosperous country than now? If we cannot, in this large colony, afford to have more than the half-million or so of people we have now, we had better all leave at once. The public works policy has failed, first, because while we continued immigration large numbers of people unsuited to the colony were brought out; and, secondly, because we stopped immigration altogether. Both were great mistakes, and both together have had the effect I state. I say that, instead of borrowing money now for more railway-lines, it would be better if we borrowed and spent two millions on bringing out people with means to go on our lands—if we offered a free passage and five hundred acres of good land for nothing to every man who, on landing, could show that he had £500. If that were done the colony would take such a start again as nothing else can possibly give it; and it would be spending our borrowed money to the best possible advantage, and in a way which would give us more return than we can possibly get from any railways we can make. That, indeed, is our only hope. If we brought out hard-working respectable small farmers, and not mere hangers-on of towns, as many of the immigrants formerly were, we should do the colony an enormous service. If I were the Minister of Lands I would come down with a bold policy of that nature, and I am sure its operation would put the colony on its legs. I think, indeed, that is the colony's only chance. We have been frittering and dribbling away our borrowed money for years; and what are we now the better for it? During the last two or three years in which I have been intimately mixed up in politics I have seen £200,000 or £300,000 squandered away in this House. I have seen support purchased in this House by the giving of useless and unremunerative public works to particular districts, and by billets given to public men when those billets were needless to the country. We have seen things of this kind done—we all know perfectly well it is done; and yet we come here and squabble about a fifty-pound item, and in the end we do not retrench at all. We support a Government that declare they will retrench, and we are sent here to retrench; but we do not do it. We do not do our duty—we scarcely even at-

tempt to do it; but we go back and tell our constituents that we have done all that was possible to be done. I agree with the honourable member for Napier that we have mistaken our vocation altogether in coming here, and that it would pay the colony better to keep us away from here instead of sending us here, if an Executive Government were left to carry on the business of the country. We are sent here at a very large cost to do business that we do not do; and we know the way support is obtained in this House. I hear an honourable member near me say, "Oh;" but when that honourable gentleman first came to the House he got the Government to let a contract for a railway in his district; but the contractor gave up the job, and then the honourable gentleman changed sides. It was fortunate for the colony that the contractor would not take up the job; but now, apparently, the Government are again going to take up that work, and we see that that line is to be made. I hope the day will come when the people will insist on those who come here trying to relieve the country. Now we do not do it, but we see a system of buying and selling support in operation by works and billets, and the ramifications and evil effects of this system go through the whole country. Sir, I was determined on this subject to speak my mind somewhat freely, and I have done so. We are just about now beginning to find out how the money of the colony is really spent, but we cannot trace exactly how it is spent. No doubt other Governments have been just as lavish and just as bad as the present Ministry, and it will become a question whether in the next few years we shall not find that our representative system has broken down, and whether it would not be better to have the American system of an Executive Government, and let them carry out the wishes of the country. I should really be almost inclined to adopt that system, as against the one we have now. Most honourable members, I know, think everything is going on very nicely and smoothly, and as long as they can keep their side in or their friends in they are satisfied. But the country will not be satisfied, and I venture to predict that, if not at the next election, then at the following one certainly, there will be such a "cry" in the country that a Parliament will assemble here prepared, like Alexander, not to try to untie the Gordian knot but to cut it. They will come down and simply settle the question of retrenchment once for all, and a great many other matters too. Perhaps it is right, as the Colonial Treasurer suggested, in effect, to go on borrowing as long as we have the chance; but, if at any moment, owing to trouble in Europe, the money-market were disturbed, or if England herself wanted to raise two or three hundred millions to meet some great emergency, where should we be as to borrowing money? We know that we should instantly be plunged into enormous difficulty. Suppose we were unable to borrow, say, for a period of three years, and yet were called on to pay interest all that time, in what position would the country be? This is a questi which the House ought to go into—it is one the contingencies that may arise; and I ve ture to say that the question has not arisen the mind of one of our leading politicia They say, "Sufficient to the day is the e thereof," and they put off any unpleasant qu tion. But it is a question that we shall ha to face within a short period, and the only w to meet it is by a system of rigorous retrenc ment—retrenchment greater than the colo has ever known—and if we do not carry it o we shall not be able to pay our way. I ho the day will not come when the contingen which may arise at any moment by the mere accident will occur, but when it does we shal not be able to rely on our British creditors I believe it would perhaps be wiser, while we still have the chance, to obtain, say, a three-million loan, saying, "This shall be our last; we will borrow no more," and then try to pay our way without borrowing. I am quite sure that the British creditor would think more of us if we made an honest attempt to stand on our own legs, and tried to get on for a time without this perpetual borrowing. If our population were rapidly increasing we might say we would go on borrowing; but, as the result of very large borrowing, we have seen that in twenty years—that is, since 1866—our export has only increased by two millions, while our population has trebled, and we have spent about thirty-two millions of borrowed money. I do think the time has come when those who know the position of the colony ought to speak in the plainest terms of what they do know; but we do not—we sit here not daring to speak of many things which are sufficient to cause us great anxiety. Members come here and enjoy themselves—we find time to go into the lobbies, Bellamy's, and the library; we have the electric light, the newspapers of the world, and every comfort and convenience provided; and we simply let things drift on. Members get what they want——

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—My honourable friend saying "No" shows that there is one disappointed man in the House. But he is apparently halting between two opinions just now. If he managed his cards properly he would not say so. I say, while we are doing all this living in this "fools' paradise," and borrowing all this money from the British creditor, and spending it all over the colony, the day will come when we shall find ourselves like the guests assembled at Belshazzar's feast, and in the midst of our enjoyment there will appear on the wall the handwriting, "*Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin.*"

Mr. MOSS.—Sir, although some honourable members appear to consider the debate this evening as somewhat useless, when the history of the time is written it will, I feel sure, be regarded as one of the most important debates that have taken place for some years in New Zealand. It has witnessed, I feel pleased to see, a disposition on the part of honourable members to speak out plainly—not merely that

which they think will be agreeable to their party, but that which they feel their duty to the country calls upon them to say. There are many honourable members who have spoken out to-night in a manner which will inspire those who, like myself, have hitherto been called "croakers" with a new hope, and a belief that we shall see better times. It is not those who are abused by the Colonial Treasurer and denounced from the Treasury benches as the scurrilous enemies of the colony who are its real enemies. They are not the men to blame for the present condition of affairs; but it is those who, provided they can carry themselves through a session, disregard all past promises and professions, and feel a greater regard for themselves than they do for the country whose destiny is in their hands. I say it is they who are to blame—they are the real "croakers." It is not we who exhort them to face the difficulty, to put our finances on a sound footing, and to give us that local government which they pledged themselves to give when they went into office. They are not the "croakers." They have the courage to face the difficulty; and I am delighted at the speeches which have been delivered by honourable members this evening, for they show that there are many among us who not only recognize the difficulty in which the country stands, but are ready to face it and do their utmost to remedy it. To honourable gentlemen who are repeatedly telling us of the proud position which New Zealand holds in the London money-market, I would say that I have taken the trouble of extracting from the *Economist* of the 15th May a statement of what was our financial position then, as compared with that of other colonies. The following are the colonies whose interest is payable in May and November as ours is, whose debentures would carry about the same amount of accrued interest, and would be, in that respect, on an equal footing. The first is Canada, whose 4-per-cent. debentures are quoted at £104 to £105. Then comes the small Colony of Mauritius, with 4-per-cent. debentures at £102 to £104; and then comes New Zealand, whose 4-per-cent. debentures are quoted at £99 10s. There are other colonies whose interest is payable in July and January, so that, I presume, there would be about two months' accrued interest—which would be 15s., at the outside—to be deducted from the quoted list to make the comparison complete. They are—New South Wales, whose debentures are quoted at £108 to £109; those of Queensland, at £102 to £103; those of Tasmania, at £103 to £104; those of Western Australia, at £103 to £104: while even the Cape, whose interest falls due in June and December, and whose credit has been rather shaken in consequence of the enormous sums she has had to borrow to carry on a native war, sells her debentures at £100 to £101. Victoria, with interest payable in April and October, has her 4-per-cent. debentures quoted at £104 to £105. These are startling figures, and they indicate that our credit is not so high on the Stock Exchange as we are led to believe. We were told in the Speech from the Throne, at the beginning of the session, that our finances were in a sound condition. I ventured to question that at the time, and I repeat that, whatever the Government may say, it is evident the people of England are not so satisfied as we are supposed to be here. I have always regarded with the keenest detestation what is called the public works policy. It appeared to me from the first to be rash, presumptuous, and unsound: rash, because we went into that policy without defining beforehand how the money was to be spent; presumptuous, because in calling it a colonizing policy it was assumed that there had been no colonization before in New Zealand; and unsound, because it was perfectly clear to my mind that, once started, resting upon no principle and having no check, it must run away with us and with the country, and that we should find it almost impossible to stop ourselves in the career on which it would thrust us. Holding these views, I may again say I feel highly pleased to hear so many honourable members this evening express opinions of a similar description. Now, referring to what has been said in the course of the debate on a question in regard to which the Auckland members feel very keenly—that is, the Native-land-purchase question—I may be excused if I even repeat what other members have already said. I was unavoidably absent for a short time, and do not know what was then said; but I would remind honourable members that this is a question on which the Auckland members must feel a great interest, because it is one in which that province is most largely interested. Out of the forty thousand Maoris in the North Island thirty thousand live in that provincial district, and out of the land to be purchased an enormous proportion is in that provincial district also. It is therefore of the greatest interest to us that Native affairs should be properly conducted, and that there should be a proper system of Native-land purchase. The points to which I take exception in the reply of the Native Minister to the honourable member for Waitotara are these: In the first place, he said the policy was justified on the ground that they want land for settlement. No one disputes that we want land for settlement; but the contention is that you are not going the right way to get it—the contention is that you are going a way that will surely land you in the same difficulties as your predecessors, and that, though you may fill you returns with millions of acres, you still will have none suitable for settlement, none which you can turn to good account. Are we not to profit by all that has happened in the past? Do we not see that we must have some very different system from that under which previous Governments have suffered? Look at the statistics of the Auckland purchases. You have purchased two and a half million acres of land, and you have nearly another million acres of land leased from the Maoris, making, in all, about three and a half million acres nominally at the disposal of the

Government, and which cost £600,000. I challenged the Native Minister on a former occasion to say how much of this land was settled, and how much of it was lying idle simply because it was unsuitable for settlement. The fact is notorious that the Maoris have sold you the worst land they have, and have kept the best for themselves. The honourable gentleman told me that he would give such a return as would refute the statement I had made; but that return has never been forthcoming. He did, indeed, speak of some land sold in the Wairarapa; but that had nothing to do with my question. I did not say that he had been unable to get some small quantity of good land for settlement. I asked how much of this three and a half million acres of land, which had in the past been obtained from the Natives under the system which is now really being initiated again, was suitable for settlement, and how much was settled in Auckland, and not in Wairarapa, of which I know nothing. I still wait for the reply. We all know that gross charges of corruption were made against previous Governments in connection with the purchase of Native land. We know that, whether true or untrue, those charges shook the faith of the country in various Governments at various times; and, although I do not pretend to say they were all true, I do say, from my own knowledge, that the Land Purchase Agents of the Government go about the country carrying with them, as has been already pointed out, itinerant Justices of the Peace, to take the signatures more readily at the different Maori pas. That system and its results produced amongst the Maoris the idea that the Government was corrupt in its dealings with Native lands, and therefore they would not deal with the Government for them, but preferred to deal with private individuals instead. But now, to revive the old evil, the Government ask us to give them nearly £100,000 to spend in the same irresponsible way. They do not give us a statement in detail of how it is to be spent, but they take the whole lump sum and spend it at the will and discretion of the Native Minister. To add to the evil, they have removed the only possible check upon them by dismissing the permanent head of this department.

Sir R. STOUT.—There is a permanent officer at the head of the department.

Mr. MOSS.—Yes; the Under-Secretary for Native Affairs. He is to replace the former head, who gave to it all his time and great experience, and is instead to devote to it his spare moments, and to get £100 a year for doing so. But how is he to go round the country and superintend the Native-land purchases?

Sir R. STOUT.—The other officer did not do so.

Mr. MOSS.—I know that he was continually travelling, and I never heard that his duty was in any way neglected. It is certain that the permanent head of the department is the only check on the Government, and in his absence the Minister of the day has the absolute and uncontrolled spending of this money; and I cannot think that is conducive to good government. Last year £325,000 was spent in that way in Native-land purchases and harbour defences. The Government spent £290,000 under the head of harbour defences, and another £36,000 for Native-land purchases. Of all this no statement is laid before the House, and the House knows nothing of it. It is so much patronage-money in the hands of the Government. I ask, is that a wise system? The present Government may administer it fairly and honestly; but such a system must lay the seeds of gross corruption. From the statement laid before this House as to land-purchases honourable members will see that in 1879 a large amount of Native land, as it was called, was bought from Europeans—that is to say, European claims were purchased. When the honourable member for Waitotara came into office he did attempt to stop it, and the years 1880 and 1881 show only one such purchase. In 1882 and 1883 there were none at all. Now, last year we have already had four such purchases. Does the House know anything about them? They may be perfectly fair; but who knows anything about them? Four thousand six hundred pounds was paid away for a small block of land. Can the House say the land is worth the money? What statements are there to show that the purchase has been a fair one? Can such a system be right? It is altogether subversive of good government. Can any one be satisfied who is acquainted with past purchases of worthless land, and with the corruption in the government of the country that was brought about by the old system? And what is the reply of the Native Minister? That the purchases must be right because the Auditor has passed them. What check has the Auditor, in a case like this, so long as you keep within the vote? Will the Auditor interfere with such purchases? Will he want to know anything more than that the money has been spent, and that it is available out of the proper vote? Such a system ought not to be allowed to exist, and yet we are told by the Native Minister that everything must be correct because the Auditor has passed the voucher. I will not trouble the House with many remarks, because the hour is late, but I should like to say that I share with the Premier his great admiration for American institutions in many respects. I believe that the Americans have had to go through an experience, a very bitter one, that we, under the same social conditions and under the same political conditions, shall probably also have to pass through; and it is for that reason that I often turn to American works, in order, if possible, to derive from them the experience which English works can hardly give, because they apply to a condition of life and a condition of society so different from their own. Now, if the honourable gentleman will turn to American history between 1836 and 1842, he will see that the American States went through identically the same course as that through which we are now passing. They spent millions in canals, railways, and other public works—

not so freely as we do, though their resources were even larger than ours; but they went on merrily until this point: that about the year 1839 their credit began to shake on the Stock Exchange in London, and they very soon found that their debentures were not saleable. Within a year or two from that shock they found themselves unable to pay interest upon their debt, and they had to go through a career of misery which I pray God we may never have to go through here. Some talk lightly of not paying the interest on our debt; but if they thought as seriously as I do they would talk less lightly. Do honourable gentlemen reflect on what it means? It means an utter shock to every institution, to every man, to every business in the country that depends upon credit. It means that business of all kinds would be prostrate; it means that you would have your working-men seeking work from people who have nothing to pay them; it means that the banks would no longer be able to accommodate you; it means that the loan companies would have to insist upon their mortgages being paid, because they would have to meet in England the demands made upon them. Do honourable gentlemen really reflect upon what it means, and upon the many years of hard work and hard trouble it would take to meet such difficulties, and the misery we should have to undergo in the meantime? Then, is it right that we should sit here, year after year, careless, and yet recognizing that, if we do not boldly face the position, some such disaster must come upon the country? We were told to-night that it is incorrect, when it is urged that we pay interest out of borrowed money. I do not say that we are doing so, but I do say that if we did not borrow we should find it a tremendous struggle to pay interest and to carry on the current work of the country. Therefore we should face the thing boldly while it is yet time. They are not the croakers who urge this course. The fear and the cowardice are on those who, seeing the evil, are too selfish or too timid to face and fight it. And let me recall to the House the pleasure with which they listened to a statement from the Government benches in the early part of the session—that for the future borrowing should only be for railways. It was not that the Government did not wish for roads and other necessary works: they wanted these, but they said that borrowing was to be for railways only. Some of us hailed that statement with the greatest delight. We thought that now the Government would devise some other resource for making roads; and I took the opportunity of moving an amendment, which, I am sorry to say, the House did not receive so favourably as I could have wished. The amendment was suggested to me by the speech of the honourable member for Egmont—that, if that policy were carried out, the Government must devise some other system for getting money for roads and bridges. To give the suggestion point, I moved my amendment, which honourable members did not receive very favourably, but upon which I hope they will yet insist. That is the financial policy we desire, and which the country as a whole desires; and I believe that it is a practical policy if the Government only had the courage to take it up. Why did not the Government take it up? It might cost them their seats; but what are their seats in comparison with a reformation of the finances of the country? Some Government will one day have to face this difficulty, if we do not. The necessities of the case will force them to do so. My strongest sympathies were with the present Government, and I should have been proud to see them attempt this. I should have been proud to go into opposition with them if they had lost their places—just as proud as I should have been to see them successful in the carrying-out of a great policy. They might have failed; but there is honour in failing as well as in success, provided that the cause be a good one. So great was the shock sustained by the people of America when they found themselves unable to pay interest on their debt,—in those seven States so great was the misery, so great the trouble caused,—that from that day they have kept a solemn obligation carefully to abstain from incurring any debt unless at the time that they incurred the debt they made special provision to pay interest upon it, and to provide for paying off the principal. There is hardly a State in the Union—I think I may say that there is not one—that has not embodied in its Constitution checks which prevent the State Legislature from incurring any debt except under the most stringent conditions. They have power, perhaps, to incur a small debt, of one or two hundred thousand pounds, but not one farthing more, unless, in some States, there is an absolute majority of two-thirds in both Houses of Legislature agreeing; while in other States a proposal to borrow has specially to be referred to the people for ratification before it can become law. The most complete checks are thus imposed; and the recollection of the misery through which they passed maintains those stringent conditions for prohibiting or for making difficult the incurring of debt and thus mortgaging to the foreigner; not only the property, but the bodies, of the people of their country. We talk of serfs in this House, and we declare that we are free; but we are slaves to a few syndicates, to a few rich people in London, and their displeasure would bring upon our people more trouble than anything we could do in this House. We should tremble if we heard that the Bank of England declined to inscribe our debentures, or if some great capitalists declined to tender for our loans. We are absolutely dependent upon them; and will any one say that this is a right position for a free nation? I wish I could say to the House all that I feel when I think of these great issues; but I rise to-night with more hope and pleasure than I have experienced for many a day in this House, for I feel that the disruption of party ties which has taken place, and which I have heard honourable members lament, is really a source of hope—of hope that

new parties will arise and devote themselves to the immediate and urgent question of putting on a sound basis the affairs of the country.

Debate adjourned.

The House adjourned at a quarter to two o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 21st July, 1886.

First Readings — Third Readings — Local Bodies' Loans Bill—Counties Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Hutt and Pitone Gas Company Bill, First Offenders Probation Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Cathedral Site (Parnell) Leasing Bill, Hakateramea Racecourse Reserve Bill.

LOCAL BODIES' LOANS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—Sir, it will be within the recollection of the Council that, when clause 38 of this Bill was under consideration in Committee of the Council, a certain amendment was effected by striking out the word "polled," and inserting "which can be exercised," thereby providing that, if the number of votes in favour of raising a loan is not less than three-fifths of the total number that can be exercised instead of the number polled, then the resolution in favour of the proposal shall be deemed to be carried. The House of Representatives has disagreed with the amendment so made by the Council, and the reasons are set forth on the Order Paper to-day under Order No. 4, as follow:—

"1. That the amendment will make it difficult to obtain the real opinion of the ratepayers.

"2. That the expression of opinion obtained will not be fairly representative of the ratepayers if the words after 'votes'—'which can be exercised'—mean the total number of votes on the roll, independent of the residence or existence of the voters.

"3. That the words referred to—namely, 'which can be exercised'—are ambiguous.

"4. That a vicious principle is introduced by the clause, by allowing the votes of persons who abstain from voting to be counted as opposed to the proposal.

"5. That by the clause voting-power is given to absentees, and to persons so indifferent to the management of local government as not to take the trouble to record their votes.

"6. That it is unfair to the resident settlers, who are by their improvements and residence increasing the value of the land, if the residents in the district are to be hampered in their colonizing efforts by the Legislature declaring that the votes of absentees shall count against them.

"7. That the clause as passed by the House provided ample safeguard against undue borrowing, and affirmed a principle that has been previously recognized by the General Assembly."

I know that the opinion on this subject is divided in the Council; but, in order to go through the ordinary form, I beg to move, That the Council doth agree to the amendments made by the House of Representatives in clause 38 of the Local Bodies' Loans Bill.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—The opinion of this Council, it is true, is divided on this question; but I venture to say it is very unequally divided, and that there is a very large majority of the Council who will insist upon the preservation of the principle to which they have agreed, and which it is desirable should be introduced in all measures of this character—that the consent of the majority of the people affected by a proposal to borrow money shall be obtained before the loan is permitted to be raised. The reasons which are given by the other branch of the Legislature for disagreeing with the views of the Council on the matter bear such remarkable evidence of having been drawn up in a hurried manner, and without sufficient consideration, that I think it would be almost unfair to comment upon them *seriatim*, or to say more than that, in my opinion, they are extremely feeble, and are capable of receiving a very complete and effective answer. I therefore move, as an amendment, That this Council doth insist on its amendments in clause 38 of the Local Bodies' Loans Bill; and that the Hon. Mr. Stevens, the Hon. Mr. Holmes, and the mover be appointed a Committee to prepare reasons to be offered to the House of Representatives for the Council so insisting.

The Council divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 10.

Barnicoat	Peacock	Reynolds
Bonar	Peter	Scotland
Buckley	Reeves	Shephard.
Lahmann		

NOES, 26.

Acland	Johnson, G. R.	Stevens
Baillie	Johnston, J.	Swanson
Bathgate	Mantell	Taiaroa
Brandon	Martin	Walker
Brett	McLean	Whitaker
Dignan	Menzies	Wigley
Fraser	Miller	Williamson
Hart	Pollen	Wilson.
Holmes	Robinson	

Majority against, 16.

Words omitted.

Amendment agreed to.

COUNTIES BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 157.—Special rate to provide for interest and sinking fund of loan.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES moved to insert, after the words "special rates," at the end

of the first paragraph, "not exceeding in all three farthings in the pound on the capital value."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 23.

Barnicoat	Mantell	Stevens
Brandon	Menzies	Swanson
Brett	Peacock	Taiaroa
Dignan	Peter	Walker
Fraser	Pollen	Wigley
Hart	Robinson	Williams
Holmes	Shephard	Williamson.
Johnson, G. R.	Shrimski	

NOES, 10.

Bathgate	Lahmann	Reeves
Bonar	McLean	Reynolds
Buckley	Miller	Whitaker.
Johnston, J.		

Majority for, 13.

Words inserted.

Clause 288.—Charitable aid.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES moved, That the clause be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be a clause of the Bill."

AYES, 12.

Bathgate	Martin	Swanson
Buckley	Menzies	Taiaroa
Dignan	Reynolds	Whitaker
Lahmann	Shrimski	Williams.

NOES, 8.

Barnicoat	McLean	Pollen
Hart	Miller	Wilson.
Holmes	Peter	

Majority for, 4.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 289.—May contribute funds for the establishment of agricultural schools.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI moved, That the clause be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be a clause of the Bill."

AYES, 5.

Bathgate	Lahmann	Taiaroa.
Buckley	Reynolds	

NOES, 19.

Acland	McLean	Scotland
Barnicoat	Menzies	Shrimski
Chamberlin	Miller	Swanson
Dignan	Peacock	Whitaker
Hart	Peter	Williams
Holmes	Pollen	Wilson.
Martin		

Majority against, 14.

Clause struck out.

Clause 291.—May establish libraries, &c.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON moved, That the first two words of the clause—"The Council"—be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 11.

Bathgate	Hart	Pollen
Bonar	Johnson, G. R.	Reynolds
Buckley	Lahmann	Whitaker.
Fraser	Menzies	

NOES, 16.

Acland	Martin	Shrimski
Barnicoat	McLean	Swanson
Brett	Miller	Wigley
Chamberlin	Peacock	Williams
Dignan	Peter	Wilson.
Holmes		

Majority against, 5.

Clause struck out.

Progress reported.

The Council adjourned at half-past nine o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 21st July, 1886.

Ann Robertson — Volunteers — Canterbury Unemployed — Kaitangata Relief Fund — Mortgage Debentures Act—Martin's Bay Communication —Queenstown-Glenorchy Telephone—*Hansard* —Kaihu Valley Railway—Grand Juries—Justices of the Peace—Stamp Duties—Subsidies to Local Bodies—New Zealand Loan Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

ANN ROBERTSON.

On the report of the Public Petitions Committee on the petition of Ann Robertson being read,

Sir G. GREY moved, That the report be referred back to the Committee, for the purpose of their reporting whether Mrs. Robertson ought not to be paid her expenses in coming down to prosecute the petition. It seemed to him that, as the seat of Government was a great way removed from Auckland, only persons with money could possibly bring petitions from Auckland and attend to support them; and if it was found that the prayer of a petition was just and the petitioner entitled to relief he thought Government might fairly allow costs to the petitioner of presenting the petition.

Sir R. STOUT did not object to refer the report back to the Committee; but he was afraid the Committee might lay down what might turn out to be a very troublesome precedent, if not a dangerous one. Had the lady succeeded in her suit it would have been a different matter; but, as he understood, she had lost both actions. If they were to pay the expenses of witnesses of unsuccessful suitors for every adjournment, the Minister of Justice would have to ask for several thousand pounds for the purpose on the estimates.

Mr. DARGAVILLE said it was true the petitioner did lose her action; but it was on some technical grounds — the merits of the case were entirely in her favour. But, apart from that altogether, it was on account, he would not call it of an irregularity, but of the

exceptional circumstances by which the Judges were not able to carry on the business of the Supreme Court in the ordinary way, that the petitioner had been put to extra expense; and, the Committee having found that she had a substantial cause of grievance, and having awarded her a substantial sum of money, he thought it was only fair and legitimate that she should be allowed her expenses of coming to Wellington and following up the petition. He agreed, therefore, with the proposal of the honourable member for Auckland East that the report should be referred back to the Committee in order that they might reconsider this matter. Mrs. Robertson's case was exceptional, and she had been hardly used throughout.

Mr. TURNBULL desired to state with reference to this case that all the circumstances had been taken into consideration, and the opinion embodied in the report had been arrived at. Of course it remained with the House to send the report back to the Committee if it thought fit; but the case had been fully inquired into and carefully considered.

Mr. FERGUS wished to know if the Chairman of the Petitions Committee meant that the Committee had taken into consideration the expenses the lady had been put to in coming down to Wellington.

Mr. TURNBULL.—No; but all other expenses.

Mr. ROLLESTON said that this case was a very exceptional one, and during the many years he had been in Parliament he had never heard of any case which was harder than that of this poor woman. He hoped that if there was any chance of doing anything in the way of relief for her it would be done.

Mr. MACANDREW said that all these cases would be exceptional. He knew of one case in which a petitioner had spent over £400 in connection with a petition before the House last session, and he had not the slightest doubt that that petitioner would come forward, and justly so, and apply to have these expenses paid. He thought that they would be establishing a precedent which might turn out very awkward. He knew nothing about the case itself.

Mr. FULTON said that this petition was before the Committee of which he was Chairman some time ago, and he thought it was a very hard case. It was owing to some technical objection that the petitioner was prevented from getting substantial justice, and he thought that the House and the Committee might fairly take this matter into consideration and see whether they could not grant her sufficient to cover her expenses.

Mr. BRUCE said that he was one of the Committee who considered this case, and he quite coincided with the remarks of the honourable member for Geraldine when he said that this was a case of an entirely exceptional character. He quite admitted the force of the Premier's remark when he said it would establish an exceedingly dangerous precedent; but it was such an exceedingly exceptional case that he, for one, if it were put to the vote of the House, would be exceedingly glad to give the unfortunate lady the expenses to which she had been put, because he recognized that it was merely owing to a technical error that she was unable to obtain justice at the hands of the Court.

Motion agreed to.

VOLUNTEERS.

Mr. W. D. STEWART asked the Minister of Defence, Whether the long-service medals for Volunteers which were promised last session have been ordered; and, if not, why not? also, when such medals are likely to be presented?

Mr. BALLANCE was understood to say that designs for the medals had been sent in, and that they would be presented in a month or two.

CANTERBURY UNEMPLOYED.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether there are any public works within the Provincial District of Canterbury, provided for on the estimates for public works, the contracts for which could be let at once, in order that a large number of men at present out of work in that part of the colony may be employed upon such works? This question concerned the colony at large. In the part of the colony to which his question referred they had a considerable amount of wealth in the shape of unemployed labour, and he was desirous of seeing it utilized for the benefit of the colony. If the Government could see their way to carry out any works which might be allotted to that part of the colony at once, it would have the effect of tiding over the present difficulty to a great extent, and he thought there was every indication that before many months this want of employment, which had continued so long amongst them, would be a thing of the past.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that when the estimates were put through the House any contracts that could be put in hand would be let. The matter of the unemployed was being carefully watched by the Government.

KAITANGATA RELIEF FUND.

Mr. DARGAVILLE asked the Premier, Whether he will consider the expediency of providing by legislative enactment during the present session for the application of a portion of the unused surplus of the Kaitangata Relief Fund towards relieving the distress caused by the recent volcanic eruption? There was now a large sum of money, amounting to £13,000 or £14,000, to the credit of the Kaitangata Relief Fund. This fund represented contributions from all parts of the colony in aid of those who were sufferers by the colliery accident there years ago. He was credibly informed that every legitimate claim upon that fund had been fairly satisfied in the past, and that the interest now derivable from the principal was more than sufficient to provide for those few persons who were fairly entitled to moderate annual contributions from it. The result was that the fund was annually increas-

ing, while the demands upon it were diminishing. If that state of things were to continue, in a number of years this fund would have accumulated to a very large amount indeed, and legislative enactment would be absolutely necessary in order to divert it to some legitimate purpose. Some time ago inquiry was made as to whether a portion of the fund could be applied to the relief of the sufferers by the "Taiaroa" disaster; but it was then found that legislation would be necessary before any part of the fund could be diverted from the object for which it was originally subscribed. In view of these circumstances, and of the disaster which had lately occurred, he hoped the Premier would be able to give an affirmative reply.

Sir R. STOUT did not see his way to propose legislation on the subject, and did not think it would be a right thing to do unless introduced as a private Bill, and with the consent of the subscribers. Unless that were done Parliament should not interfere with the disposal of money subscribed for a special object. It was for the subscribers to say how the fund should be disposed of; and, if they wanted to change its purpose, they could, after holding a meeting and applying to the Attorney-General, divert the fund under the existing law. But without the consent of the subscribers he did not think Parliament should do anything.

MORTGAGE DEBENTURES ACT.

Mr. HATCH asked the Colonial Treasurer, How many transactions have taken place under "The Mortgage Debentures Act, 1885"?

Sir J. VOGEL was unable to say how many transactions had taken place, but it was expected that the effect of the Bill now before the House, introduced at the solicitation of persons who wished to take advantage of the Act, would be to cause it to be much more used.

MARTIN'S BAY COMMUNICATION.

Mr. FERGUS asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he is aware that all communication with Martin's Bay has been cut off by reason of several landslips on the Greenstone Track; and if he will give instructions to have the road made passable as early as possible? This subject had been brought up many years ago, he believed, by the honourable member for Port Chalmers. These people were frequently cut off from all communication with the outer world, except once in six months by a steamer. There were only two tracks to the coast—that by Routeburn and that by Greenstone—and the former was always closed for months during the winter by snow. He had received a letter from the settlers in that district, asking him to use his influence with the Government to get the track opened, so that they might get supplies to keep them during the winter, and also to enable them to send their stock to market in the Lakes district. He trusted the honourable gentleman would be able to give a favourable answer.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said no definite information had reached the Government on the subject, and until he saw the notice on the Order Paper he knew nothing whatever about it. He had taken steps to ascertain what had taken place; and if the honourable member had correspondence which would give information, and would give the department the benefit of it, the Government might see their way to expend the £200 now on the estimates for the purpose suggested. Last year £150 had been voted, but it was not expended.

QUEENSTOWN-GLENORCHY TELEPHONE.

Mr. FERGUS asked the Postmaster-General, Whether he will place a sum of money on the estimates to construct a telephone-line between Queenstown and Glenorchy? Some time ago a number of residents in the district proposed to the department and guaranteed to pay 7 per cent. interest on the cost of the construction of the line, and there were some gentlemen now willing to give that guarantee for ten years. The district was growing very rapidly, there was a considerable number of small farmers in it, the mining community was prosperous, and the district was a great resort of tourists, both from within and without the colony.

Sir J. VOGEL said this question had been brought before the House in two previous sessions by the honourable gentleman. The line would be very costly—some £2,000—and it would entail the employment of an officer at about £150 a year. He could do nothing this year, but after this year he would be disposed to do the work, provided the County Council agreed to give a subsidy of £250 per annum for at least ten years; otherwise the department did not see its way to carry out this work, which would be a very expensive one, and at present would not serve a large population.

HANSARD.

Mr. MACANDREW asked the Postmaster-General, If he will make arrangements whereby *Hansard* may be transmitted beyond New Zealand at the same rate of postage as is payable on newspapers? *Hansard* was mailed free within the colony, and he should be glad if it could be sent beyond the colony on the same terms; but, if that could not be done, the next best thing would be to allow each number to be sent on the same terms as newspapers—1d. each.

Sir J. VOGEL said the *Hansards* of the other colonies and the Mother-country were not franked abroad, and to provide for franking the New Zealand *Hansard* abroad would have the appearance of conceit on the part of the colony, as if the New Zealand *Hansard* was entitled to superior consideration to the *Hansards* of other countries. The postage on *Hansard* to Europe was now 4d., and therefore to reduce it to 1d. would involve a loss of 3d. on every copy sent by the services paid for according to results. Of course the San Francisco service was carried on for a lump sum; but if the *Hansard* copies were sent by the

direct steamers at 1d. each it would involve a loss to the revenue, and to that he was not prepared to agree unless the honourable gentleman induced the House to carry a resolution in favour of it, when he would have no objection.

Mr. MACANDREW said he should take no further steps, but did not see, when newspapers were sent for 1d., why *Hansard*, which did not weigh so much, should not be sent at the same cost.

KAIHU VALLEY RAILWAY.

Mr. J. C. BUCKLAND asked the Government, Whether they have entered into any negotiations with respect to debentures authorized to be issued by the Kaihu Valley Railway Company owners under section 25 of "The District Railways Purchasing Act, 1885;" and, if so, with whom? On the 15th April, 1885, the Minister for Public Works, being then in Auckland, was interviewed by a number of persons interested in the railway, who asked to be relieved of certain disabilities, when the honourable gentleman said the Government could not agree to any proposals to grant further concessions. As reported in D.-5c of the Appendices—"The Hon. Mr. Richardson said he felt assured the Government would be averse to entertaining any proposals which would involve the granting of further concessions to the company." He asked this question because it was reported that special concessions were to be made, and some members of the House were directly interested in the matter. Had any concessions now been granted which were refused at that time? Possibly the honourable gentleman intended to lay further papers on the subject on the table.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said negotiations had been going on since the end of last session between the Government (through himself) and the directors, but no concessions at all had been made. The matter was now in the hands of the Crown Law Officers, and as soon as they reported that the company had complied with the terms of the Act he should authorize the Colonial Treasurer to guarantee the debentures in the manner provided by law.

GRAND JURIES.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Minister of Justice, Whether the Government intend to bring in a Bill to abolish Grand Juries?

Mr. TOLE said the Government did not intend to bring in a Bill on the subject this session. Considering the stage of the session and the condition of business, it would be useless to do so.

Mr. GUINNESS said his question was not confined to this session.

Mr. TOLE could only speak of this session; but he would be glad to submit the question to the consideration of the Government.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE.

Sir G. GREY asked the Minister of Justice, If the Government will allow members of the House to inspect the papers at the public offices containing the names of the several Justices of the Peace of the colony, the dates of their appointments, and the names of the persons upon whose recommendation they were so appointed? He was induced to ask this question because he had been told by members of the House that their recollection coincided with his own, that the Premier told the House on one occasion that members had the right to go down to the office and get this information; and he had been much surprised, therefore, the other day, on putting the question in another form, to be told that giving the information would be extremely irregular, as it was something unprecedented.

Mr. TOLE said that, speaking from his own recollection, he did not remember the Premier saying what the honourable gentleman alleged he had said, and he did not think it likely that he had made any statement of the kind. He had no objection to furnish the honourable gentleman with a list of the names and of the dates of the appointments, because they could be got from the *Gazette*. As to the other portion of the question, he had already given an answer a few days ago, and he thought it would be contrary to precedent if the Government afforded any further information in the direction suggested. He had therefore to reply that the Government could not accede to the request contained in the last part of the question.

Sir G. GREY moved the adjournment of the House. The honourable member for Waimea might laugh; but that would not prevent him (Sir G. Grey) doing his duty. He belonged to that side of the House which thought a very wrong thing had been done. He understood that, in consequence of the invitation given, one honourable gentleman did go down to the offices and inspect the papers.

Mr. MACARTHUR, in seconding the motion for the adjournment, said he had a perfect recollection of this matter. The Premier stated in the House that every Justice of the Peace who had been appointed had been recommended to the Government by a member of the House; and he said, at the same time, that if any one chose to go down to the Government Buildings he might see the recommendations on which the appointments had been made. In consequence of that, he went down and obtained the name of the member upon whose recommendation a certain Justice of the Peace — whose appointment he (Mr. Macarthur) considered disgraceful — had been made. He admitted that he could not find any record in *Hansard* of what the Premier had said. Why that was so he did not know. Perhaps the statement might have been made in Committee. But his memory was entirely with that of the honourable member for Auckland East in respect to this matter. The Government last session distinctly stated that any one might go down and get the information; and now, this session, the Minister of Justice refused to give the information. It might be a wise policy on the part of the Government not to desire to give the names of those persons

who had recommended the appointment of persons as Justices; but the policy of the Government ought to be continuous in this respect, and he did not understand why they should say one thing one session and another thing another session. It seemed to him that, if the Government were not ashamed of the appointments they had made, there could be no objection to giving up the names of those persons who had recommended the appointments. He did not say the information should be given where the recommendations had not been acted upon, because it was quite right that the Government should seek local information as to the qualifications of persons whom it was proposed to appoint, and it would be a most invidious thing to make public recommendations against any person; but in cases where the information had been of a favourable character—and it must be assumed that the information was favourable where the appointments were made—he did not see what objection the Government could have to allowing the names of the gentlemen who made the recommendations to become known.

Mr. BRUCE thought the honourable member for Manawatu was somewhat mistaken. He had a distinct recollection of the Government saying that each Justice of the Peace had been appointed on the recommendation of a member; but if his memory served him aright it was the Minister of Justice who had made the statement.

Sir R. STOUT said he could not charge his memory with having made the statement which had been attributed to him; but if any member of the House was certain that he had made the statement he could only say that it must have had reference to some special appointment that had been brought under discussion.

Mr. MACARTHUR.—No; it was a general statement.

Sir R. STOUT could only say that he had no recollection of it. This information was always treated as confidential. Of course the dates of the appointments were made public, because the appointments were gazetted; but he thought that if the recommendations on which appointments were made were to be open to inspection the Government would soon find that there was considerable difficulty in getting such information. The communications were generally regarded as confidential.

Mr. BRYCE said that the difficulty which occurred to him was this: He did not dispute that the position now taken up by the Government was a proper one, but he thought that on a former occasion they went too far in the opposite direction. He did not recollect what the Premier had said last session—perhaps he was not in the House when the honourable gentleman spoke—but his recollection was very distinct as to what the Minister of Justice had said this session. He said distinctly that no appointments had been made except upon the recommendation of members of that House. Now, the weakness of that was a weakness perfectly common to the Government. It was seeking to divest the Government of its responsibility, and to cast it upon members of the House; and that was where the honourable gentleman erred.

Mr. TOLE said that his remark was not at all made for the purpose of divesting the Government of responsibility; but it was urged that the appointments were not justifiable, and, to show that the Government had not acted without due care, he pointed out that the appointments were in nearly every case recommended by a member of the House. In reply to what the honourable member for Manawatu had said, he could only state that, so far as he was aware, the Government had never intimated that any one might go down to the Buildings and get information as to who had recommended the various persons who had been appointed. The honourable gentleman had not his authority to go down to the officers of his department and ask for this information; and if he had known that the honourable gentleman was going on such an errand he would have stopped him. It would have been much better, he thought, if the honourable gentleman had seen him on the subject before going down.

Mr. MACARTHUR said that the Premier distinctly stated that members might go and get the information.

Mr. TOLE said that the Premier denied it, and the honourable member for Waitotara said he did not recollect the Premier making the statement. He (Mr. Tole) certainly did not recollect the Premier making any such statement, nor had he made it himself.

Mr. MACARTHUR wished to say, in personal explanation, that he was certain the statement had been made; and he might add that he should never have dreamed of going down to the offices for the information unless the statement had been made in the House.

Mr. SEDDON was quite sure that the Premier did not make the statement attributed to him. He recollected the circumstances under which the question arose, and he remembered that the remark made applied to a specific case, and it was said that information would be given if asked for. He thought that the honourable member for Nelson could confirm his recollection in that respect.

Mr. LEVESTAM said that all he recollected was what the Minister of Justice had said this session; but, even if the honourable member for Kumara and he himself did not hear the statement that the honourable member for Manawatu said was made, that did not prove that the statement was not made. However, the Premier denied having made the statement, and his denial should be taken. For himself, he could not conceive that any Government would permit to be made public confidential communications of that nature.

Sir G. GREY said he had a perfect recollection of the statement having been made to the House; but which Minister made the statement he was not sure. He contended that he was justified in asking the question, and

that the Minister of Justice should not have characterized it as he had done. He thought the information ought to be given. It was a matter for regret to him that the Government had taken the course which they had taken in this matter.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

STAMP DUTIES.

Mr. HOLMES asked the Premier for an explanation of a return of stamp duties which had recently been published. From this return it appeared that the total of stamp duties for the Wellington Provincial District was about three times the amount collected in any of the other provincial districts. In Canterbury they amounted to £82,000; in Auckland, to some £40,000 or £50,000; in Otago, to £72,000; whereas in Wellington they amounted to £297,000. He could hardly believe that there was so much conveyancing and mercantile work done in Wellington that the stamp duties paid there amounted to almost more than those in all the other provinces put together.

Sir R. STOUT said the explanation was very simple. The sum referred to was not paid by the people in the Wellington Provincial District. Banks, public companies, and private individuals were in the habit of buying stamps in Wellington. The revenue derived from this source was put down to the Wellington District, although the sums were used in other parts of the colony.

SUBSIDIES TO LOCAL BODIES.

On the motion of Mr. SEDDON, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House showing the name of each County Council, Borough Council, Road Board, and Town Board subsidized last year under "The Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Act, 1885;" also showing the amounts received by each County Council, Borough Council, Road Board, and Town Board under "The Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Act, 1885," from the passing of the said Act to the 30th June, 1886.

NEW ZEALAND LOAN BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. MACARTHUR.—Sir, I understand that this debate, although nominally a debate on the Loan Bill, is really a debate on the whole of the public works policy of the Government. Unfortunately, when the Colonial Treasurer was moving the second reading of the Bill there was so much noise going on that I could not catch what he said. I should like, therefore, to know whether what I imagine to be the case is correct; for it will considerably modify what I have to say. I understand that the honourable gentleman said that the Government, in dealing with the celebrated £1,094,000 of liabilities so much talked of at the beginning of the session, altogether forgot it and left it out of account in the Financial Statement. I should like to know whether the Treasurer admits that he said that. I hear nothing from the Treasury benches denying that admission, and therefore I must conclude that it was made, and that the Government forgot the paltry sum of something over a million pounds in the Financial Statement they laid before the House. I should like a denial or admission of the fact, and, as I hear neither, I must take it that silence gives consent. Therefore I must assume that it was forgotten.

Mr. LARNACH.—He said nothing of the sort.

Mr. MACARTHUR.—Then the Government did not forget the £1,094,000 of liabilities as against £768,000 to the credit of the Public Works Fund on the 31st March last. Now we know what to go on with. The Treasurer distinctly asserted that there was £768,780 at the end of March last to the credit of this fund, *plus* £60,780 due by the North Island Trunk Railway for advances to that railway. This gives something like £800,000 available for works other than railways. I shall next proceed to consider how far the Statement which we are now discussing bears that view out; because I hold—and it has been asserted not once, but a dozen times, and it has never been fairly disproved by the Government—that there was no such surplus; that the liabilities swallowed it all up. The salient point of this Public Works Statement is that, instead of the Public Works Fund being to the bad, it is to the good. That statement is distinctly made; and I shall endeavour to show that these accounts are cooked, if that is a parliamentary expression. I do not want to weary the House by going through all the details of the Statement. No doubt every honourable member has done that for himself, and has been able to admire the way in which the pea goes from one thimble to another. However, the general result of the Statement, as it is shown to us, is that we shall have for undertakings other than railways a sum of £1,100,000 to vote during the next two years. How does the honourable gentleman make that out? First of all, without any previous warning whatever, there is a sum of £202,145 of Native liabilities set on one side altogether. It is put down as a liability in the table attached to the Financial Statement; but, of course, having found out a small mistake of nearly £1,100,000 in the Financial Statement, it had to be made up in some way, and this was a very easy way of getting rid of £200,000 of it. The Native Department is one which is not much looked into, and is not very well understood by honourable members; but it appears to me, as a matter of business, that it is very peculiar that a sum of £202,000 should be set down as a liability, which we are afterwards told can be set aside. If that is the case, we should have been told that it was so when the Financial Statement was brought down. It would have been very easy to append a note to the table saying that, although this was a liability, still the House need not regard it, as it was for Native liabilities, which probably would not require to be met during the currency of this loan. But, I say, to get rid of £200,000 in the way this has been got rid of is not fair to the House,

because we are told one thing in the Financial Statement and another in the Public Works Statement. In the Financial Statement we are told that it is a liability, and in the Public Works Statement we are told that it is not a liability at all for present purposes. Then, of course, the liabilities on account of railways were naturally thrown on the loan. It was very easy to do so, and I shall not dispute it; for, of course, if I did, the Government would, no doubt, be able to show good reasons for their having taken that course: still, I fully believe that at the time the Statement was brought down this £387,000 of liabilities for railways was never taken into account at all as being chargeable against the new loan, but was in reality forgotten altogether. However, there seems to be some justification for charging it on the new loan, and I shall say no more upon the matter. That gets rid of nearly £600,000 of the £1,094,000 of liabilities. We now come to the North Island Main Trunk Loan—that unfortunate loan which seems to be the beast of burden for the whole colony, and which has to be charged with all sorts of items in order to make up the defects in the Statement of the Government. In connection with this there is a sum to be recouped to the Public Works Fund of £60,780 when the loan is raised. In looking into that matter I find this peculiarity: that in the Statement the alleged expenditure is £60,780; but according to Table C attached to the Public Works Statement the contracts let are set down at £106,708. Now, if from that amount we deduct the liabilities, namely, £84,267, outstanding on the 31st March, there is left a balance of £22,441 actually paid on account of contracts for the North Island Trunk line up to the 31st March last. Deducting the £22,441 which was actually paid from the £60,780, we have a balance of £38,339. Now, I do not quite see how the Government account for that expenditure. I know there has been a considerable expenditure in the way of surveys, but that will not account for any considerable portion of this sum. It may account for about £7,000 of it, and that is about as much as it will do; and I should like to know what has become of the remaining £30,000 odd. Of course it is well known to the House and the country that a considerable expenditure has been going on in snagging the Wanganui River, and making roads from that river, ostensibly for the purpose of connecting it with the North Island Trunk line, and with the view, it is said, to help the construction of the line by enabling the material to be brought to the central contract, so that the whole line can be carried on together. I admit that, if the policy at first proposed by the Government had been carried out and if the whole line was to be completed in three or five years, there would be some justification for expenditure on highways, in order to enable the Government to finish the central contract while work is going on at both ends of the line at the same time; because they could not finish the line within three or five years unless they carried out some of the difficult works in the centre first. But, so far as I can see, the whole tenor of the policy of the Government, not only as regards this railway, but other railways, goes to show that there is no intention of finishing this line in anything like five years: I say five years, because I believe that was the outside limit the Government put for the construction of this railway in the session of 1884, when they took office. That is now over two years ago. Two years out of five have gone, and we have only a few miles of the line constructed, and if we are to go on at this rate it will not be ten or twenty years that will see the line finished. Setting aside all other difficulties that may prevent the construction of the line, at the rate of progress the Government seem to think proper it will take that time to construct. Whatever advantage there may be in snagging the Wanganui River, and in making roads there, they are, in a sense, local works, and works that have no right to be done out of the loan appropriated or to be appropriated specially for this great work—the North Island Trunk line. The money is being diverted to purposes it was never intended for when the line was authorized, and for which there is no justification, unless the line were being pushed on at a rate of speed that it is not being pushed on at, and that there is no intention to push it on at. I, of course, am dealing with conjecture a great deal in this matter, because I see there is this amount of money to be accounted for, less only the cost of survey; and I shall be glad to hear an explanation that it has been spent in some more legitimate manner than snagging the Wanganui River, and doing other works that are open to the suspicion of being done for a constituency and not for a main work. There is £100,000 set down for the purchase of Native land along this line. The Native Minister last night said, if I have taken down his words correctly, that it was only intended to cover the expenditure for the present year, although in the Statement it is said the amount is proposed to be expended during the next two years. I take it that the process of obtaining these lands will increase as time goes on, and that, if land worth £80,000 were obtained this year, it is natural to suppose that, with the greater progress made in the coming year, a great deal more than £80,000 will be required for buying land along the line; but it appears that £80,000 is to be sufficient this year, and one-fourth of that amount next year, if that amount is spent at all. I do not quite work out my figures in the same way as is done in the tables which the Minister for Public Works has submitted to us. No doubt the mistake is mine: I do not assume that I am correct in the matter; but I notice this, and should like to be corrected if it can be shown that I am wrong, in order that I may see where the discrepancy arises: It is a very small matter, but it appears to me that £16,455 of liabilities is charged upon the General Purposes Loan, while the Minister for Public Works' tables show that it is £20,000. It is only a matter of £3,000 or £4,000, but I should like to be shown that I am wrong in assuming

that £16,455 should have been charged upon "general purposes" instead of £20,000. So it appears to me, as the Statement reads:—

"On this basis the liabilities at present existing on account of land-purchases along this railway, which are estimated to amount to about £20,000, out of the £36,455 of actual liabilities on account of Native-land purchase, will become a charge against the North Island Trunk Loan."

That is to say, £20,000 is charged against the North Island Trunk Railway, while £16,455 is charged against allocation out of loan for general purposes. Well, taking that £16,455, I only make out £771,700 available for general purposes. That may be a mistake of mine, but I should like this explained. Now, the Minister for Public Works, in dealing with this matter of liabilities and the assets he has against them, has, as I have shown, first of all put £202,145 for that Native-land-purchase vote, and now he comes to make up his assets he adds £60,780, which is a legitimate recoupment from the North Island Trunk Loan; but there is a serious matter of £290,000, which is transferred from some account which has not been in before—the rolling-stock account—and is now charged against the railways to be constructed. Well, that charge seems to me to be a very unprecedented one; but I believe it is an unprecedented thing for a Ministry to get rid of a whole million of liabilities; and to do that they have to resort to some unprecedented expedients. They bring into charge £290,000 for material they have in the colony, and they charge that against railways set aside for construction, and on which a very small portion of this material can be used for some time to come. If they were going to get these railways constructed right out of hand, and if the loan were sufficient to construct the railways and finish them off, they might have some justification for saying, "These railways are to be constructed within two years, and therefore we shall have to supply rolling-stock, sleepers, and rails from stock we have had in hand, and we charge them in advance, because we are dealing with two years' accounts." But, according to the votes which they have proposed, there is no chance of a great many of these railways they propose to construct being finished to such a point as to require rails, sleepers, and rolling-stock within the two years with which this Loan Bill deals; and therefore I hold that this charge of £290,000 is only an expedient, and an expedient not justified by the proposals of the Government or the facts of the case, but only justified by the necessity they were under from having made, at the beginning of the session, a Statement which can only be characterized as a Statement which would disgrace any Government that pretended to have a master of finance in its midst. Of course, the interesting point to the supporters of the Government—and, I have no doubt, the interesting point to the Government themselves—is what they are able to hold out to their supporters as coming in the future,—what they are able to say to those gentlemen is available for new works, available to be voted as the House pleases, and as their supporters please, in directions palatable to their friends, and which will strengthen the support those gentlemen give to the Government. I think that is the policy which has been very consistently followed out by this Government, and I take it that that is really the gist of the whole Statement. They put it thus: "If we can only say to those gentlemen and make them believe that we have so much to spend, then their votes will be assured, and we shall have a much more secure position than if they thought there was nothing to vote except what has actually been allocated." Now, there is a curious discrepancy between the Ministers themselves as to the amount so available. The Minister of Lands said last night that there would be next year £568,000 over and above the liabilities outstanding in 1886–87. The Minister of Lands made that statement, and I have no doubt that in his own belief he is correct. He is an ex-Colonial Treasurer, and I have no doubt has had a good deal to say in the financial policy of the Government; and what he says on a matter of this kind must be accepted by this House with a great deal of respect and consideration. Then, we have the Minister for Public Works, who is directly responsible for this Statement, giving a totally different sum. He says that the sum will be £379,860 available; and in another part he says that there will be available for voting for absolutely new works other than railways £326,865, in addition to re-voting the liabilities, amounting to £495,705. That is to say, the Native Minister says it will be £568,000, and the Minister for Public Works £397,860. That is only a discrepancy of a small matter to them—a Ministry that omits £1,000,000 may very well be excused for inconsistency in such a small matter as that. The Statement of the Minister for Public Works says, "It will be seen that we shall have available for voting for absolutely new works, other than railways, a sum of £623,855, in addition to re-voting the liabilities on the same, amounting to £495,705." Taking the tables giving a summary of services chargeable on the Public Works Fund, leaving out the item railways £1,273,400, we find that there will be a liability on the 31st March next of £160,500 on roads, £8,600 on waterworks on goldfields, £62,500 on public buildings, and £13,100 on lighthouses, &c.: in all, £244,700 outstanding on the 31st March next. So that it is clear that these, being authorized, will be liabilities. Now, the Minister for Public Works says that if they let the contracts these sums can appear as liabilities, and I have no doubt they will appear as liabilities on the 31st March next, and we must take this £244,700 out of the amount said to be at Ministers' disposal for new works. So that the supporters of the Government can take what comfort they can out of that fact. To that £244,700 outstanding in March next may be added £75,000, the subsidy to local bodies. If honourable members will turn to page 11 of the public works esti-

mates they will see the proportion of the subsidies to local bodies. It was estimated there would be required for this purpose this year £50,000, and the amount to be authorized is £75,000. Well, Sir, the Treasurer has distinctly stated that he will pay three-fourths of the subsidies to local bodies within the financial year, and will leave one-fourth to stand to the 30th June next. The subsidies are estimated to be £75,000, and, of that amount, three-fourths comes to £56,250—I have the exact figures here. If you add the liabilities which must be paid, £25,868, to three-fourths of the £75,000, you will find that a great deal more than £50,000 will be required. It is to some extent a matter of estimate, but I make it £81,118. At the end of the Statement a hope is expressed that the Government proposals for charging school-buildings to local loans will be approved of. That is one hope that has certainly been dashed to the ground. The House has clearly shown that it will not allow the onus of providing for school-buildings to be thrown on local bodies, and the Government may make up their minds next year that they will have to provide another £55,000 for school-buildings; and that will have to be added to the other sums which will be practically committed to next year's expenditure. That will make £311,200, which will leave available for this class of items £86,000. That is the total amount that the Government may look to as available for expenditure next year. I believe they will derive very little comfort even from that small amount, because I maintain that some amount of the £200,000 for Native-land liabilities—unless it is a bogus liability—must come in for expenditure during the current year. Now, having shown that this salient feature of the Public Works Statement—that is to say, representing to the supporters of the Government that there will be a large sum at their disposal for new works next year—is altogether a sham, and that the amount is only one-tenth of what is represented, I should like to deal with one or two of the railways scheduled in the Loan Bill. I am led to do so partly by what fell from the honourable member for Waitaki. I would not take much notice of what he said if the Premier had not cheered him, although his statements were contradictions of what the Premier had previously said himself. The honourable member for Waitaki was criticising what the honourable member for Napier said, and stated that that honourable gentleman's speech answered the speech of the honourable member for Waitotara, and that they neutralized one another. He is quite excusable for what he said, because he prefaced his remarks by saying that he did not know much about the subject; and his speech thoroughly proves it. He criticised the remarks made by the honourable member for Napier on two railways of which that gentleman had special knowledge, one being in his own district and the other known to him in his former capacity of Minister for Public Works. The honourable member for Waitaki made some very absurd statements upon those railways. He said, to begin with, that the Otago Central and Napier-Palmerston lines would cost something like three millions of money.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Mr. MACARTHUR.—Well, he said two or three millions. I am quite willing to give the Government the odd million, if they like. He said it would take two millions to complete them to a paying point. Now, the Premier cheered that statement.

Sir R. STOUT.—No; you are quite wrong.

Mr. MACARTHUR.—Of course, if the Premier distinctly denies it, I am bound to accept his statement; but I took particular notice at the time that he did cheer the statement. He was so anxious to give heart to his supporter that he cheered him right through, and did not particularize the statements he wished to cheer—whether they were correct or not. His supporter was answering a dangerous opponent, and that was all he cared for. What the honourable member for Waitaki said was that it would cost two millions to bring those two railways to a paying point, and that, if such an amount had to be paid on those two railways, it would involve a corresponding amount being spent on all the railways throughout the colony, so that the amount we should require to borrow would come up to a very large sum—probably as much as the ten millions that the Government got the credit of intending to propose. Well, in the first place, it is unfair to club these two railways together. One is a short one of fourteen or fifteen miles, while the other is of great length. I will deal, first of all, with the one I know most about—the Napier-Palmerston Railway. That railway is about fifteen miles in length, and it connects the railways on the east and west coasts of this Island. It runs through the Manawatu Gorge for four and a half miles; and I am willing to allow that the country in the Gorge itself is utterly unproductive. But at the entrance to the Gorge, and after the railway goes through it, the land is as fertile as any in New Zealand, and it is likely to support a large population in future. In addition, it is a timber country, and a large timber traffic will spring up at once as soon as the railway is made. A proof of that was adduced last night by the honourable member for Napier. He showed that the railway on the eastern side of the Gorge paid £4 18s. 6d. per cent.; and the connection of that railway with the other system would not only keep up that percentage but would increase it. He admitted that the construction of the railway would be expensive, but it was only a short line, and the whole cost would not exceed £150,000. It would therefore be seen that it was very unfair to club that railway with the Otago Central, which would cost nearly two millions. I am in favour of the Otago Central being made up to a paying point, and I voted against the amount being struck off last year. I do not believe in allowing so much money to lie dead in this railway, and I should like to see more spent, to make it reproductive. I have no less an authority than the Premier for saying that the Otago Central

Railway would be one of the most reproductive in the colony. I remember a very eloquent speech which he made, but which was not reported. The *Hansard* reporters were worn out with work, and I remember distinctly the look of great disappointment on the Premier's face when he found that that speech had not been reported for the benefit of his constituents. However, a *résumé* of that speech was afterwards put in *Hansard;* and this is what the Premier said, in effect:—

"Mr. STOUT said he had been a member of the Waste Lands Board of Otago for many years, and knew that land had been sold and settled on the understanding that the Otago Central line would be completed. The vote was largely for bridges, and if the line were not completed the settlers would come to the House for compensation or relief. He asked honourable members, before next session, to visit the land through which this line would pass. He had himself visited the East and West Coast Railway route, and also that through which the North Island Main Trunk Railway would pass, as well as other proposed lines, and he did not believe there was better land now open for settlement in the whole of New Zealand than that in the centre of Otago. The best wheat that he had ever seen in the course of his life was that grown on the shores of Lake Wanaka. If the line was not pushed on to the Taieri a breach of faith would be committed with the settlers, who would have no market for their produce, as there was no main road along the route."

If I required to be convinced of the merits of the Otago Central line I should be convinced by that eloquent speech. But I was surprised last night when I heard the Premier cheer his supporter when he spoke in derogatory terms of the Otago Central line.

Sir R. STOUT.—I did nothing of the sort.

Mr. MACARTHUR.—Now, the Premier made another statement last night that I was surprised to hear. No doubt he was somewhat irritated by the speech of the honourable member for Napier—a cutting and irritating speech, I admit, from an opponent. The Premier interjected that the Manawatu Gorge line was a new line. That is not a new statement of the Premier's, because he made the same statement —according to the newspapers—to a deputation which waited upon him. I cannot suppose that the Premier is ignorant that the very first public works proposal, the very first Railways Act passed, I believe, included the line through the Gorge. It is true that about eight miles of it, on the West Coast side of the gorge, is new: that is, the junction with the West Coast line is to be at Palmerston instead of at Bunnythorpe, because the grades and the formation are easier. Therefore it can only to that extent be said to be a new line. It most certainly is not a new line except as to the point of junction, because every one who knows the geography of the North Island must know that it is utterly impossible to change the route of the line connecting the East and West Coast railway systems—the connecting line must go through the Gorge; therefore any statement that it is a new line is incorrect. The line through the Gorge was proposed in the original public works policy, and it ought to have been made long ago by the Government; and if it had been made the West Coast line would not now be yielding so small a net return as 12s. 10d. per cent. One reason for this small return is, as stated by the Minister for Public Works, that there has had to be a large expenditure, owing to the inferior timber used on some of the bridges when the railway was made. For that, of course, the present Government is not to blame. But the reason why the line does not pay better is because, though it runs through the richest district in the colony, it cannot take the produce of that district to an outlet. Timber is the greatest product along that railway, but the railway can only take that timber to the small ports of Foxton, Wanganui, or New Plymouth; and from those ports, which do not admit large vessels, freights are so high that the West Coast saw-millers cannot compete with those in other parts of the colony. If the railway were connected with a harbour like that of Wellington I have no doubt that the line would be one of the best-paying lines in the colony. As an illustration of what I am saying I may state that the line from Foxton to New Plymouth is 191 miles long, and the traffic returns on it last year amounted to £68,141. Of this, £15,551, rather less than a fourth of the total, was derived from less than a ninth part of the line — the twenty miles between Palmerston and Halcombe — that is, the timber district. What I am advocating is that if the line were constructed through the Gorge, and the railway systems of the East and West Coasts connected, this, with the connection with Wellington by the Manawatu line — which will shortly be accomplished—would make the present Foxton-New Plymouth line pay much better than it does now. The Government have not, in this respect, pursued the policy which they professed when they took office. When the present Government—that is, practically the same Government—first took office, in 1884, one of the cardinal features of their declared policy was to connect the eastern and western lines through the Gorge. They promised that it should be done at once—that it should be pushed on with vigour, and, as the honourable member for Napier told us last night, they promised him that it should be pushed on and completed in a little over two years. Ever since the Government have been in office we have been waiting to see this line pushed on. I was greatly disappointed at seeing in the Public Works Statement, Table A, the following: "Napier - Palmerston—Liabilities, £23,643; amount to be expended this year, £40,000." This leaves only some £16,500 to be spent on the Gorge line during this year, and this for a work the five miles of which it has been estimated will cost £20,000 a mile. Of course, that is making no adequate provision for a speedy connection of the two railway systems; but it will rather be treating the

expenditure as the expenditure on the Otago Central has been treated: that is, a large sum of money will be lying unproductive because the work is not completed. There can be no traffic in the Gorge itself, and there can be no return from the expenditure, till the two lines are connected. Now, I would just like to say a word or two more here with regard to the Otago Central line and the attitude of the Premier towards it. I was rather surprised at what the honourable gentleman said last night in the House when the honourable member for Waitaki was speaking, and my surprise was increased when I recalled what the Premier had so eloquently said in favour of the line last year, and what he said to his constituents subsequently. Addressing his constituents in Dunedin after the session, the honourable member told them what he had done for the Otago Central. I have taken the words; I will quote from the report of the Dunedin *Evening Herald*—a paper supposed to be favourable to the Government, and therefore it cannot be said, as so often is said when quotations are made from reports in papers opposed to the Government, that the report was a biassed one. The Premier is reported to have said, "Well, Captain Russell's motion was carried; but, happily for Otago—I shall not tell you how it occurred, but you can imagine it—she did not fare so badly." Now, taken in conjunction with all the circumstances surrounding the passing of the motion of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, this statement is very peculiar. On the 11th September last year, when the motion was proposed, the Minister for Public Works told the House the sums that could be taken off the votes proposed for different lines if the motion were carried; and as to this particular line he said £70,000 could be taken off. The honourable gentleman said, according to *Hansard*,—

"Going down a long distance, and omitting a number of small items by the way, we come to the Otago Central, and there, if the honourable member's motion were carried, there would have to be a reduction of about £70,000."

The motion was carried; and three days later, when the House was in Committee, the honourable gentleman was asked to tell the House what the commitments were in regard to each line, and he told us that the commitments on the Otago Central were such that, instead of taking £70,000 off the proposed vote, only £25,000 could be taken off—apparently an increase of £40,000 in the commitments in the interval. This fact, taken in conjunction with the Premier's statement in Dunedin, which I have quoted, is a very peculiar one; and the impression it made on my mind was that in the interval the Premier had "worked the oracle," as it is termed, to put the Otago Central line in a better position as to the proposed reductions than the other lines. I do not say the honourable gentleman did it, but I say the different statements by the Minister for Public Works, taken in connection with the language afterwards used by the Premier in Dunedin, are calculated to give that impression; and if the honourable gentleman did do so the transaction was one that does not redound to his credit by any means. The head of the Government has no right whatever to use his position and the influence of that position specially in favour of a district of which he is one of the representatives. I am not accusing the Premier of doing this, but it is certainly a matter open to explanation—and that is the impression it made on my mind. The sequence of facts and statements seems to show that the honourable gentleman did something special for the benefit of the Otago Central line in the interval between the proposing of Captain Russell's motion and the taking of the votes in Committee of Supply, for, in the interval, if we may judge from the first statement of the Minister for Public Works, the commitments on the line had increased by £40,000, and therefore the vote could only be reduced by £25,000, instead of £70,000. Well, it looked very suspicious; but I was anxious to give the Premier credit for not having done anything of the kind. I stated before, and I say again, that any gentleman who has risen to the high position to which he had risen would not, at any rate ought not to, stoop to such a thing. I therefore satisfied my curiosity by looking up the contracts let by the Public Works Department about that time, and, taking the Otago Central, I find that there were no contracts let—and I assume that the returns give accurate information as to the contracts let—which would at all correspond with the 11th or 13th September, when Captain Russell's motion was carried and supply was voted. Nothing took place, so far as I can see, in the letting of contracts about this date that would account for that difference between the commitments. There is nothing to show that the contracts on the Otago Central were not dealt with in the ordinary way, and I cannot see any evidence that the Premier had done something of the kind for which he was trying to gain credit when he addressed his constituents. I do not believe that he did do anything of the kind; but it must be remembered that he was speaking then to a Dunedin audience, perhaps having in mind the probability of an election that was then believed to be forthcoming. Now, I shall be glad to have the Premier's explanation of this matter. I should like to hear on which of the two horns of the dilemma which I have stated he chooses to rest, because it appears to me that he must either admit that he did something which is not befitting a Premier of this colony to do, or else he was endeavouring to gain credit from his constituents for a thing which he had never done. There are the two alternatives for the honourable gentleman to choose from, and I should very much like to hear his explanation on the point. I have nothing more to say on the public works policy of the Government, beyond this: that they seem to have taken the opportunity of the Public Works Statement to get rid of the difficulty in which they had been placed by the arrears in the Financial Statement. They have managed

to patch up that difficulty about the liabilities—they have cooked the accounts so as to show that the liabilities do not exist; but it is well known throughout the House and the country that those liabilities were not taken into consideration in the Public Works Statement, and that it was in consequence of the discovery which was then made that the delay occurred in bringing down the Public Works Statement, the object being to account in some way or other for the deficiency which really existed. The discrepancy has been accounted for in a way that is utterly unjustifiable—by payments being thrown over into the next financial year, by things being brought into account that never were brought into account before, and that would not have been brought into account now if this mistake had not been made. The Statement as it stands is supplementary to the Statement of the Treasurer: perhaps "supplementary" is not exactly the word to be used, because really it is contradictory; but it is still supplementary so far as it tries to excuse an inexcusable mistake made by the Treasurer in ignoring altogether immense liabilities. I should like to say just a word or two with regard to the North Island Trunk Railway loan. It seems to me that this loan is to be made the milch-cow for the colony, and that everything that cannot be got rid of in any other way is to be put on to this loan. The sums necessary for making roads into the interior, for snagging the Wanganui River, for purchasing land on commission at 2d. per acre, as was pointed out last night—everything of that kind is to be heaped upon this unfortunate loan, and we are not to have even the miserable consolation of knowing that the Government are going to fulfil their promises in respect of this railway as to getting it through in five years. We might, perhaps, put up with these things if we only knew that the line would be finished within the promised time. But, by so much as the funds are diminished by the purchase of land not readily sold will the line be delayed, and by so much will the object the House had in view when it authorized this line be defeated.

Mr. MENTEATH.—The public works policy of the Government has evoked considerable criticism, mild, indeed, in character, but still amounting to a hostile attack. Now, Sir, after carefully considering the proposals of the Government, as expressed in their Public Works Statement, I have come to the conclusion that these proposals, although, as it has been justly said, they do not carry out the policy which the Government originally initiated when they took office, yet do carry out the policy which at this time in New Zealand finds favour with the great mass of the electors throughout the country; and I think that, in a democratic country like this, where the House expresses the changing views of the multitude, and where the Government express the views of the House, the greatest praise that can be bestowed upon the Government is that they really express the wish for the time being of the people of the country. I take it that, in a country like this, with democratic institutions, and where there are many facilities for public opinion expressing itself, the old idea that the Government moves the country—that it directs the policy of the country—is exploded. The real function of the Government now is to throw itself on the crest of the wave. The wave must be there in order that there shall be any movement in the country. Were the Government to attempt to force the country according to their way of thinking, then, assuredly, under the institutions we possess, they would speedily discover that their efforts would result in failure, and disaster to themselves. When this Government took office they came into the business like a youth with high aspirations who is going to regenerate society. He knows nothing about society, and he finds, as is very often the case, that the force of circumstances is too much for him, and finally he settles down in very much the same groove as that in which people have lived before him for years. Now, the Government did not fully realize the state of the country, and did not fully realize the difficulties which would meet them if they attempted to carry out the magnificent policy which they initiated when they took office. The honourable member for Napier, in speaking earlier in this debate, criticised the Government because they had, as he said, demoralized parties. I am sorry that the honourable gentleman did not go more into detail, because I should like to know what party existed in this House before the Government took office, and therefore what party they could demoralize. When another Government was on those benches, and a no-confidence motion was moved, the Opposition had to select a member who, till then, at any rate, had not held any distinguished position.

An Hon. MEMBER.—He was the whip of the party.

Mr. MENTEATH.—But it is not usually the function of the "whip" to lead in a no-confidence motion. The reason why he was selected was that at that time there was no party existing in the House worthy of the name. The Opposition then consisted of a number of heterogeneous sections, but there was no party capable of being called an Opposition; while, on the other hand, a good many of those who supported the Government supported them, not because they liked them, but because they were the Government. For a long time, ever since this House took up the public works policy, the whole question in Parliament has been, Who shall administer the loan fund? The whole question has been as to whether a sufficient number of districts were so satisfied with the distributors of the loan fund as to give them a majority in this House. And if this House committed "the happy despatch," as the honourable member for Napier suggested, I think we should find that the same various voices would speak at the poll which spoke at the last general election. We should again have the same heterogeneous elements, the same absence of any party-lines in the next House, as have occurred in this House. We have heard during this debate the usual cri-

ticism of the borrowing policy. Well, I think that we borrow, not because this person or that person or this party or that party desires it, but because the great mass of the electors at the poll have expressed a desire, and I feel confident that they would express the same desire again, that this country should borrow. That is why we borrow; and we shall cease to borrow, not when a particular Government wishes to do so, but when the inconvenience that arises from borrowing comes home to the great mass of the electors. At the present time the great body of the electors think that the benefits of borrowing outweigh the inconveniences of it; but there will be a time, I think—when the borrowing policy has been pursued further, and when more money has been wasted, as it has been wasted in the past—when the charges will have become so heavy, and it will be shown so plainly that no one can dispute it that our borrowing policy has been a failure; and then, I have no doubt, a large majority of this House will look back with astonishment upon men who could really consider that the public works policy could be of benefit to the country, and will wonder how, in this day, we voted for such a policy. But, as I have already said, we are simply directed by the great mass of electors at our backs, and a large portion of those electors do not trouble themselves about abstract political questions or theories—they do not look ahead. "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof" for them. They look at a public works policy simply from the standpoint of its cost to them to-day, and until its cost becomes excessive they will not realize that that policy is a mistake. It has been said that the present borrowing proposals do not go in the direction of tapering off the annual additions to the indebtedness. I think we have lost sight of the fact that, whilst the actual sum proposed to be borrowed may be as large as ever, the population of the country is much larger; and therefore, relatively to the population, the proposals of the Government for the present year are really much more economical proposals than a proposal to borrow the same amount would have been in 1876. The proposals, therefore, for the year I consider to be proposals in the direction of economy, irrespective of the actual amount. I shall now speak of two or three statements which appear in the Public Works Statement. The first is with regard to railways. The honourable member for Napier declared that the Government had failed in carrying out their policy with regard to railways—that they had declared that their policy was to be guided by the actual profits on the works they undertook, that they were only going to carry out railways that would pay, and that they were going to carry railways to completion—that they would not fritter away money in making a number of different works throughout the country. The honourable member for Napier cited the Otago Central line and the Woodville-Palmerston line. He was rather unfortunate in his choice of examples. I think the Government might reply by saying, "We could not allocate a large sum to the Otago Central line were we to carry out the policy we enunciated"—because I think it would puzzle the Government to say at which point this railway would pay. When the Government talked of completing the payable lines they did not take count of the state of the country whose public opinion they expressed. In New Zealand there is no national public opinion, but there are a number of well-informed provincial centres of public opinion. There is no national public opinion here, to support the Government in carrying out a national policy. Such a policy as the Government proposed was a national policy, and they did not take sufficient count of the fact that New Zealand is simply a combination of different States, possessing wholly different interests, and that the carrying-out of a national policy in a country so constituted would be utterly impossible; because it is obvious that I, in Otago, am not going to be taxed to complete even a reproductive railway in the North Island. The provincial feeling altogether overpowers the national feeling. As long as a Government is elected to carry out a public works policy, that Government must diffuse the benefits of the loans it borrows; and to attempt to concentrate its resources on two or three lines, however paying they may be, will simply enlist against it the majority of those provincial centres of public opinion. The Government have been attacked because they have put on the estimates large votes for roads, and it is alleged that they are putting large votes on their public works estimates for roads because the local-government scheme which they enunciated when they took office has proved a complete failure. One word about railways as contradistinguished from roads. I believe there are few people who deny the benefit of roads in opening up the country, and that in opening up the country roads are almost as valuable as railways; but the distinction is this: that roads must be made under local supervision, and railways may be made under national supervision. We have some data to go upon in determining the value of a railway, but a road is purely a local work—it can be so little scrutinized by this House as a whole—it is altogether withdrawn from the ken of this House; and therefore if we vote money for roads we put money into the hands of the Government simply to spend as they like; and the forces that operate on a Government always result in this: that a great deal of money spent by Governments in road-making must necessarily be spent in influential quarters—in gaining support for the Government of the day, rather than for the benefit of the country as a whole. Therefore it is that our roads, as a general policy, must be administered by local bodies; and I should like to see the whole question of roads—roads for opening up Crown lands, roads on goldfields, and even main roads—relegated entirely to bodies which can exercise a more efficient check upon their construction. The Government, I believe, felt the position of the country in this respect. They felt that roads could not

be properly dealt with in this House, and they attempted to remodel our local-government system; but when they came to deal with the practical issues involved they found arrayed against them a vast mass of different conditions, a vast army of officialism, people interested in Road Boards, County Councils, Town District Boards, and Borough Councils, and when they attempted to touch one portion of the existing system they were met by a scream set up by officialism and by conservatism. The people had got accustomed to the different local bodies, and the Government found that the wish of the majority of the people of the country was that these local bodies should not be touched. The country was very willing in the abstract that the whole system should be remodelled, but when it was proposed to touch any one local body there was a howl set up against it. In short, the Government found the forces of conservatism altogether too strong for them to combat; and I very much fear that on this point public opinion is not sufficiently educated, and that a long time will have to elapse and we shall have to go through a great deal of financial trouble before the colony sees the necessity for the reorganization of its local-government system. The local-government proposals of the Government having "gone by the board," they had no resource but to provide in their public works estimates, as heretofore, the funds that were to be employed for making roads. The Government tried to give the local bodies an assured finance when they found they could not alter the system. There, again, they had grand ideas. There, again, they thought that they were going to carry out a colonizing policy—that they were going to provide the poorer districts with the means of opening up the country. They were, however, met with the opposition of the rich and populous districts, and the opposition of that local feeling which has always been the curse of this country, and which has caused a great deal of expense to the colony. They found that the rich districts were not prepared to accept a scheme by which money was to be taken from them and virtually given to the poorer districts. The Government here again showed that they realized the position, that it was their duty to express the wish of the greatest number throughout the country, and they brought in the Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Bill. They struck out the additional sums voted for goldfields counties; and it ended in a system which provided the rich districts with luxuries, and which left the poor districts utterly unsupported. To give an example of this: One of the counties which I have the honour to represent has got ninety-nine miles of main arterial roads running through it. A great portion of the county consists of Crown lands. The munificent assistance which the Government provided for the county out of their Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Act—which was introduced with such a flourish of trumpets—has been £478. That is the whole amount which the county has received, or will receive, from that particular source towards the many burdens which it has to bear. I believe—although no statement has yet been made as to the payments under that Act—there are wealthy counties, one-fourth the size of Inangahua County, which get as many thousand pounds under that Act as poorer counties, with large areas of Crown lands, get hundreds. I believe there are rich counties, with credit balances, which get something like £2,000, £3,000, and £4,000; whilst we, with ninety-nine miles of arterial roads—costing us, last year, £6,000—only get a few hundreds. There is another instance of the adaptability of the Government. They found, following out the theory that the Government must express the wishes of the great majority of the people, that the wealthy and populous districts were not prepared to pay for aid to the poorer districts, and therefore they adapted their measures to meet those conditions. Sir, I am not now speaking from a local point of view. If I spoke from a local point of view, as representing a poor district, I should not hail this Statement with much enthusiasm; but, speaking as I do from a colonial point of view, I must say that the Public Works Statement as introduced this year to the House, although it does not carry out the policy which the Government enunciated when they took office, still does carry out a policy which any Government occupying those benches at the present time would have to carry out. In fulfilling the duty of a Ministry under these conditions the Government are avoiding very great expense and very great friction throughout the country, which would be the result of perpetual appeals to the country, where the answer would always be the same.

Mr. J. W. THOMSON.—The honourable gentleman who has just resumed his seat has told us that the policy of the Government is generally approved of in the country. He admits that it is not the policy enunciated by the Government when they took office; but he excuses the Government for not carrying out their policy on the ground that in the meantime they have gained experience. He has compared the Government to the youth who enters upon life with high hopes, but who, gaining experience as he goes along, settles down to the ordinary methods of life. Now, the conclusion I draw from that is that those honourable gentlemen had not, when they took office, the necessary experience—that they have gained it as they went along, and that now their policy is in accordance with the wishes of the country. Now, I have always looked upon it that a Government should lead public opinion, and not altogether follow it. I admit that the policy of the Government is acceptable to a larger extent than it otherwise would have been, very much from this circumstance: that the community was frightened by the policy it expected the Government to enunciate. The whole country was kept in a state of excitement from about December till the time the House met. Ministers had been going throughout the length and breadth of the land, and they had been saying all sorts of extreme

things. Although the Colonial Treasurer did not say that he was going to propose a large loan—a loan of ten millions—yet I say that was the natural inference from the action of the honourable gentleman. The honourable gentleman went down to Christchurch, and asked the people there, "Was it fair to charge him with falling short of his expectations when he was denied the instruments to give them effect?" Now, what is the meaning of that? It is simply this: that he was deprived of the instruments of war, and that if he had his own way he would borrow large sums of money with which to construct public works. You can take no other meaning than that from the honourable gentleman's statement. Then, there was a forecast of the policy of the Government which appeared in the *Otago Daily Times* of, I think, the 4th December. That was followed up by an address to the people of Tuapeka—an address which caused great excitement. What did the honourable gentleman say to the people at Tuapeka? He spoke of resuming the public works policy. By that he meant that the public works policy had died out, or was about to die out; and he intended to resume it. I will read the passage: "The action of the House last session would lead to the conclusion that the public works policy is to be brought to an end as quickly as, so to speak, it can be liquidated; and next session we shall have to choose between this liquidation and the resumption of the policy." By that, he undoubtedly meant that we should borrow far more than we had been doing. In that address there was a great deal of high-falutin' in regard to the goldfields, the public works, and local government, and a large portion of the address was taken up with Protection; while at the same time he gave prominence to the idea of turning the Molyneux River at various points for the purpose, as he said, of taking the hundreds of tons of gold that were known to exist in the bed of the river. He told the people that it was known in Germany and France that there were these immense deposits of gold in the bed of the Clutha. The honourable gentleman did not propose that the Government should undertake this work; but it would almost appear, from the zeal with which he advocated the undertaking, that, at all events, he himself, as a member of the Government, would be favourable to the Government undertaking it. Now, Sir, this forecast of the policy of the Government was made previous to the address to the people of Tuapeka, and it may be presumed that the Treasurer had seen this forecast. In the forecast it was stated that the Government intended to borrow eight or ten millions; and the honourable gentleman did not deny that, and has not taken any opportunity whatever of denying it that I am aware of, until yesterday. In his address to the people of Auckland he said that he thought we should borrow one and a half millions for railways, and that a fourth of the money which was spent should be spent on roads and other works, making altogether a round sum of two millions a year. Although he did not specify any time over which this policy should extend, still it is easy to see that a very few years would swallow up the ten millions. I have been led into these remarks by the observations made by the honourable member for Inangahua, and also partly to show that the Treasurer is not really justified in coming down to the House, as he did yesterday, and complaining very much that he has been misrepresented, and that he did not intend to borrow such a large sum of money as he was charged with desiring to borrow. There are one or two other points to which I wish to refer. The honourable gentleman told us that he had not prepared any part of the Public Works Statement—that he did not write a line of it. I was pleased to hear that, because I thought, in listening to the Public Works Statement, that when the Minister came to the part relating to the Public Works Fund he really had not written that himself. I followed the speech of the honourable gentleman to that point, and then I thought, Well, the Treasurer has composed this part of the Statement. The Minister for Public Works has not hitherto shown any aptitude for arranging figures ingeniously, and I am sorry to think that he has begun to do that sort of thing. The honourable gentleman is a plain business-man, and usually expresses himself in a plain business-like way. To understand this ingenious part of the Statement it is necessary to look at the Financial Statement. The Financial Statement was made on the 25th May. It appeared that at that date there was a balance in hand of £768,000. We were so informed by the Treasurer. Now, the Treasurer did not refer at all to the liabilities; but it appeared from the finance papers that the liabilities amounted to £1,094,000, showing that there was an excess of liabilities over the balance in hand of £326,000. But the Minister for Public Works ingeniously turned the tables; he reduced the liabilities to £495,000, and then he added to the balance a variety of assets, thus showing there was a balance in hand of £1,119,000, or, in other words, that the assets exceeded the liabilities to the extent of £624,000. Now, this appears at first sight to be very satisfactory; but the satisfaction in this respect is like the satisfaction we sometimes have in other things—it is very short-lived. The liabilities are reduced by an item of £376,000 for railway works in progress; but we find that this is a liability still—only, instead of appearing as a liability that is to be met out of money in hand, it is put down as a liability to be met out of loan. And then there are assets put down to the extent of £290,000; but we find that these assets have not been paid for, and they have to be paid for out of the new loan. I would just like to ask, what is the purpose that is intended to be served by this manipulation of figures? It can serve no good purpose whatever; and the only effect in the mind of those at a distance, at all events, who read the Public Works Statement is to raise doubts whether things are altogether right. Now, this is one of the discrepancies referred to

by the Treasurer. It is so far good that we have got the Treasurer to admit that there are discrepancies between the Financial Statement and the Public Works Statement; and from the way he referred to them it would appear that these discrepancies are of a glaring character—so glaring that he thought he would refer to them himself, in case other honourable members might in their speeches refer to them. Well, this is one of the discrepancies; and another discrepancy to which he himself referred is this matter of £800,000. The honourable gentleman told us in his Financial Statement that this would be adequate for miscellaneous works for two years: but now it appears that this sum is to be voted for miscellaneous works for this year alone. I think that the Treasurer when making his Statement forgot that there was any such thing as liabilities. If he had recollected that there were liabilities it is very likely that he would have allocated the money differently. For instance, in the case of the Otago Central £200,000 was allocated at the time, but it now appears that during this year and next year a sum of only £89,000 is to be available for expenditure; while in the case of the Westport and Inangahua line, which has not yet been commenced, it is proposed to expend a sum not quite as large as on the Otago Central, but approaching to it—namely, £63,000. Speaking of liabilities reminds me that I may here say a word with regard to the famous motion brought forward by Captain Russell. During the recess Ministers endeavoured to make a great deal of capital out of it. The Treasurer stated that if that motion had not been carried contracts to the extent of £375,000 would have been entered into before the expiration of the financial year. If that had been the case, what would have been our liabilities? Even keeping out of account £200,000, the prospective liabilities for Native land, the liabilities would then have amounted to £1,267,000. If the liabilities had amounted to this sum it would have been necessary this year to ask not for a loan of one and a half millions, but for a loan of two millions; or we should have been forced to proceed much more quietly with our works than we are now in a position to do. It is proposed to spend this year a sum of £1,400,000. We are to authorize an expenditure of £2,350,000, of which £1,538,000 is for actual expenditure; but we do not intend to spend more than £1,400,000. I wish to show that this is a larger expenditure than we have been incurring for several years past. The expenditure for the year ending on the 31st March last was £1,287,000; for the year ending in March, 1885, £1,336,000; March, 1884, £1,303,000; March, 1883, £897,000; March, 1882, £783,000. So that we propose to expend this year nearly double the sum we spent in the year ending with March, 1882. I do not by any means say that, in a certain sense, our expenditure is too large this year—in the sense, I mean, that it is not desirable to execute the works on which the money is to be spent. I do not say that. But I say that this expenditure is too large considering our ability to pay the interest. The Premier, at Invercargill, stated that we were spending too much, and that we ought to edge off our expenditure—meaning that we ought not to spend so much as we have been expending; and he has on several occasions this session said that we ought to look forward to the time when we should not borrow any money at all. If we are to look forward to that time, we should have made arrangements for not spending more this year than we have been in the habit of spending during recent years. This sum of £1,400,000 by no means represents all the money we propose to spend during the current year. The Government propose to lend to local bodies to the extent of £200,000. It is true they do not propose to pay this money out of the Public Works Fund: this money is to be borrowed in other ways. However, it is to be borrowed and lent to the local bodies, and, in addition to that, the Government propose to subsidize the local bodies this year out of borrowed money to the extent of £75,000. The subsidy system is continued in order to assist our hospitals and charitable institutions. From this it appears that we are really to pay for our hospitals and charitable institutions out of borrowed money. There are put down six new lines of railway, of an average length of ten miles, on which the estimated expenditure during two years is £438,000. On these new lines of railway it is proposed to expend during the current year £33,000. Looking at the papers circulated with the Public Works Statement, I find that 1,171 miles of railway have been surveyed; and that there are under formation 75 miles, and under platelaying 103 miles, making altogether 178 miles of railway in course of construction, apart altogether from the 1,171 miles that have been surveyed. Now, what I think we should do is this: We should direct our attention to making to paying points the lines that we have at present in hand. We should complete the 178 miles that are so far completed, and we should complete to paying points all the lines of which they form parts; and, if we do that, we shall be following a wise course. The large sum of £1,482,000 is sunk in railways at present in course of construction—an expenditure from which we are deriving no advantage whatever. This has the effect of reducing largely the profit arising from the money that has been spent on our lines. It appears that our lines are yielding at the rate of £2 18s. 6d. per cent.; but this large sum of money, which is sunk unprofitably as yet, reduces the rate of interest to £2 12s. The Treasurer, when he was in Auckland, laid it down as a point of his policy that we should go on expeditiously with any work that we had in hand—that we should complete it to a paying point. That is a correct thing to do; but this is not in accordance with such a policy. This is simply making things worse than they are at the present time. In regard to the six lines, extending to sixty miles, I would just like to ask the House what we know of them. The Government may know something about

these lines, but no report whatever has so far been laid on the table regarding them. What I think the Government should do is this: They should obtain information regarding these lines of railway. The House, before being asked to vote money for these lines, should know something about them, something about the country through which they are to go, the traffic likely to be on those railways, and something about the revenue they are likely to yield. We know nothing in regard to them. The Government should make all possible inquiries as to these lines, and even go to the expense of surveying them during the recess; and they should come down next session with reports from their own officers and others in regard to these lines, and let us know exactly what we are doing. Now, with regard to this loan, I should have been pleased if the Government had so laid their plans that it would have been necessary this year to ask for a loan of only one million. Many members during the recess gave expression to the idea that one million a year was quite enough for the country to borrow. I said so myself to my constituents, and I think there is a very general feeling throughout the country that one million is quite enough. At the present time we should be cautious. I do not wish to draw a gloomy picture of the country, but I say that at the present time this House should be cautious in all its actions. Look at the revenue of our railways. Why, last year it was only a very little more than it was the previous year; and for the current year the estimated net revenue, even including that from the district railways, about which we have heard so much, is even less than the actual revenue of last year. Then, look at our Customs. Last year they were only a very little beyond the receipts of the previous year; and the estimate for the current year is even less than the receipts of last year. All these things show that we should be cautious in all our actions; and the people of the country, knowing these things, think one million a year is quite enough for us to borrow. At the same time, I admit that the people are not altogether opposed to this one and a half millions which it is proposed to borrow; and the reason, as I said before, is just this: that the people thought the Government were coming down with a very large borrowing policy indeed, and they are pleased to find that the policy is so moderate. It is beyond what they wish; but still they are pleased, and almost astonished, at the moderation of the Government. I would just like now to refer to this point: whether we are to have a loan next year. I raised this question in the House on the occasion of discussing the Financial Statement, when the Premier said that the Government did not intend to raise a loan next year—that is, to ask the authority of the House to raise a loan next year. The Premier said "No" to the remark which I made that the Government would have to ask the House next session to agree to a loan.

Sir R. STOUT.—I am not aware that I dealt with that matter at all. I said that I hoped this loan would last for two years; and I have no doubt it will.

Mr. J. W. THOMSON.—That is a very different thing. The honourable gentleman now says he hopes it will last two years. That is exactly the point I am coming to. This remark from the Premier, that this loan will last for two years, is quite consistent with the remarks that have been made by the Minister for Public Works in his Statement. Now, the position of affairs when the Treasurer made his Statement was this: He said, "We propose to spend on railways during the year half the loan,"—that is, £750,000. Then, he said, "We propose to spend on miscellaneous works half the money in hand—say £400,000; and then we propose to complete the railway through the North Island in four years, and that would mean an average expenditure of £250,000 a year." But this line will cost very much more than a million. The estimated cost of this railway, as brought out in the evidence taken by the Select Committee in 1884, is £1,300,000, and I have heard it said that it will cost very much more even than that. If the Government are to spend on this line only at the rate of £250,000 a year, I am afraid our friends in Auckland will have to put off their Exhibition for more than four years—perhaps for five or six, or even ten years—and then we may have this great Exhibition in the City of Auckland. Well, if we add all these items together, we have the round sum of £1,400,000. Now, the assets were the £1,500,000, and then there was the balance in hand, making together £2,268,000. The estimated expenditure, taking it roundly, was £1,400,000; leaving a surplus at the end of the year of £868,000. At this time there was nothing said about borrowing half of the North Island Trunk Loan of one million. Well, looking at the position as put by the Financial Statement—that we should have a balance in hand at the end of the year of £868,000—I say we are in as good a position this year to do without a loan as we shall be next year to do without another loan. In fact, according to the Financial Statement we shall be in almost the same position at the beginning of next year if we do raise this loan now as we should be this year if we were not to raise it; for now we begin this year with a balance in hand of £768,000, whereas we are told we shall begin next year with a balance of £868,000, or just £100,000 more. We therefore ought to be in just as good a position this year to do without a loan as we shall be next year to do without one. But now we have the Public Works Statement, and we have a review in that extending over two years. Now, what are the moneys we have available? There is this proposed loan of a million and a half, half the loan of one million for the North Island Trunk line, and £768,000 in hand—a total of £2,768,000. Well, it is proposed to expend this year £1,400,000, and then there would be available for next year £1,368,000. Supposing the Government borrowed those two

sums, and, with the balance from last year, had a total available of £2,768,000, and, out of that, spent this year £1,400,000, leaving available for next year £1,368,000, would they be able to do without a loan next year?

Mr. DARGAVILLE.—There would be the other half-million of the North Island Trunk Loan.

Mr. J. W. THOMSON.—That just shows the ignorance of the honourable gentleman. They cannot possibly have that half-million, because that is to be "ear-marked;" and this £500,000 of the trunk-line loan, which the Government intend to raise in the meantime, is to be spread over the next two years for that work; so they could not next year raise the other half-million of the trunk-line loan, and use it for miscellaneous purposes. Now, supposing that next year we can see there is an available balance of £1,368,000, what then? Well, there are three courses open. One alternative is to look forward to bringing the public works policy to a close in March, 1888. Are the Government to do that? It would then be necessary to borrow the amount of the liabilities, and then we may say the public works policy would be wound up. Then, there is this other course open: We may vote money without providing the ways and means. But this House would not do that. It would not be justified in voting money without providing the ways and means. This year we vote £2,350,000. Why do we vote that large sum of money? Simply that the Government may during the current year enter into contracts that will not become payable till the year following. Now, I do not think that next year, with an available balance of £1,368,000, we are at all likely to vote, say, over two millions, as we are doing this year. It would be altogether a wrong thing to do it; and, if we did it, what would happen? Why, as soon as this House met in the following year—1888—it would be necessary to authorize a loan immediately, and raise it with all possible speed—there would be no alternative. I say that is a position into which this House should not on any account be forced. What is the other alternative? It is this: that next session the Government will come down and ask this House to agree to a loan. I think that this is what will happen. In fact, it must happen. We are to spend this year £1,400,000, and an expenditure of that kind simply means borrowing a million and a half a year. What the Government intend to do next session is a very important point; and, indeed, I should not have spoken at all if I had not wished to call the attention of the House to this point. If they intend to ask us to agree to a loan next session, I think they should say so at once; and I hope that before the debate closes the Government will be more explicit on this point than they have been. Though I have made these remarks I intend to support the second reading of the Bill: not that I agree with it altogether; for, as I have said, I think a million would have been quite enough for us to borrow; but I think that the Government have so laid their plans for the immediate future that we cannot do otherwise than pass this Bill.

Mr. SMITH.—There is not much interest taken in this debate, although it is a very important question we have under consideration. The reasons why this is so are easily found. There are two of them: one is that no hostile amendment has been moved, and the other is that the members of the Opposition feel that they have an uphill fight. Throughout the recess they, and their papers, continuously stated that the Government intended to propose a loan varying in amount, according to rumours, from ten to twenty millions; so that now that the Government have come down with reasonable proposals the Opposition have very little to say. There can be no doubt but that there is no opposition in the country to the reasonable proposals which the Government have brought down. Now, in reference to this question of public works, the members who have spoken in opposition may be divided into two classes. One class think that the million and a half proposed in the Bill is too large, while others think that it is not large enough. Those who think the proposals are too large should bear this in mind: that last session for the first time for a great number of years no loan was raised, the Government not having asked for any loan, so that the present loan really is for two years; and I say that a million and a half for two years is not for a moment to be considered large when we remember the immense sums that have been spent in past years. In 1882 we had a three-million loan Bill brought down; and the arrangement then made by the Treasurer, Major Atkinson, was that a million a year should be spent, which was considered to be very moderate indeed. A million was to be expended each year upon particular railways mentioned in the schedule to the Loan Bill; but we know that more than a million a year was spent, and that, as a matter of fact, at the end of the three years there was a large deficit, and that a large part of the loan raised two years ago by this Government had to be applied to meeting that deficit. Now, there have been some remarks made by the honourable member for Napier respecting a railway in my district to which I should like to reply. He commenced by speaking of the Otago Central, and was very sympathetic with the members interested in that railway; but I think he only referred to it to introduce this other railway which he wanted to speak of. He said to the Otago members, "Poor fellows! I think you are very badly treated;" but if honourable members will cast their minds back to last session they will find that he then said it was a line that ought not to be made; he condemned it, together with the Midland Railway. He just used this line to lead up to his own, and then he proceeded to make some extraordinary statements about the Gorge line. He said that, with the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, he two years ago waited upon the Minister for Public Works, and that he was then promised the Gorge line should be

let at once. The honourable gentleman must be making a great mistake on this point. He could not possibly have had such a promise. I myself had the honour of waiting on the Minister for Public Works on the same subject about that time; and what the Minister said to me was, "We propose to at once let a contract for the line from Tahoraite to Woodville." That was the line that he agreed to let at once; and he did let it immediately after the session. He said, with reference to the Gorge line, that the working surveys were not made—there was only a trial-survey then made; but he promised to push on the surveys as fast as possible, and have specifications made out for the work; and he had the surveys pushed on, but the work took a longer time than he had anticipated. There were unexpected difficulties about the engineering, and it was altogether a most difficult piece of work, and very expensive; and, owing to the number of tunnels and bridges involved, there had to be great care exercised in regard to the specifications. Now, the House will quite understand the position. It was the end of September when the House broke up that year; but when the House met last year the Gorge contract was ready to be let, and the Minister for Public Works was prepared to go on with the work. But what happened? We had the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, who was also so anxious for this work to be pushed on, moving that £500,000 should be taken off the estimates; and this work, with others, was stopped in consequence. The honourable member for Napier went home before that motion came on; so that he did not vote for that line being gone on with. The Government were refused funds to carry on the line, and therefore it is these two gentlemen who prevented the Gorge line being gone on with last year. Yet the Government are now blamed for the delay. Then, dealing with the Napier-Woodville line, the honourable member said that this line during the last four or five years had been pushed on at a snail's pace. It will be noted that this just covers the time that I have had the honour of representing in this House the district through which that line is being made. Now, what are the facts of the case? The honourable gentleman did not mention that during the period extending from 1879 to 1881, when the honourable gentleman was representing the district, and was supposed to have great influence with the Government in power, the line stopped short at Makatoku, and no work was gone on with. For two years that line remained there, although it was sure to be one of the best paying lines if it was extended, and, moreover, would have been of great value to the settlers. The line was not then gone on with. But what has happened since 1882? There has been always one contract under way, and sometimes two. The first contract was the Matamau Bridge—a bridge which, with the necessary cuttings, it took two years to do—and ever since then the line has been pushed on, and at the present time it is fast approaching Woodville. I think that the arguments adduced by the honourable gentleman in reference to that line are not borne out by the facts of the case. I may say that I like to see these lines pushed on as rapidly as possible—we all of us like to see that in our respective districts—but, suppose the Government proposed to take votes for completing within a short time such lines as this Gorge line and the Otago Central, why, other districts would want their lines pushed on with equal rapidity, and there would be so much money wanted that the House would never consent to vote it. Then, there is one other point to which I wish to refer in connection with this subject. The honourable gentleman said that this railway ought to be pushed on, because settlement had advanced and population had increased. Well, I am glad to say that the honourable gentleman was correct in that. But whom have we to thank for it? We have to thank the Minister of Lands for pushing on settlement in that district. He has put more people on the land there during the past two years than were put upon it for many years previously. Instead of blaming the Government, he ought to thank them. I would just point out, before leaving this part of the question, that the Gorge line, about which so much fuss is being made by the honourable gentleman, is not the portion of the line that will pay. It is the portion that is nearly completed to Woodville that is going to pay. The Gorge line will take the whole of the traffic on to a private company's line, and they will get the benefit of it, not the colony. However, I admit that the Gorge line will be a benefit, but all that the colony will receive will be the returns from the short piece from Woodville to Palmerston—something like fifteen or sixteen miles. In reference to the question of roads, it has been stated that the Government said they would not use any loan-money for roads—that the loan would go towards railways. But I apprehend that there is a large vote for roads, which is to be spent in opening up Crown lands; and it could be used for no better purpose. With reference to the question of the vote for immigration, honourable members blame the Government because they have not put sufficient money on the estimates to bring out immigrants. I maintain that in the present condition of the colony we are not in a position to bring out more people. We have no lands to settle them upon when they do come here, and there is a large number of people throughout the colony in want of work at the present time, and these people should not be interfered with by outside labour—at all events, labour brought in at the expense of the colony. There is a talk of bringing out farmers. We should be very glad to see farmers with money coming here. That is the class of immigrants we want. Encouragement should be given, and, I believe, is given, to this class. The honourable member for Napier was very strong on this point of immigration; but he quite forgot what passed during his term of administration. In my own district a number of Scandinavians were brought out, and were put on bush-land of some forty acres each

at Norsewood and other places. At first they had to work at very low wages indeed. The honourable member for Napier got a number of them to sow grass-seed on his run at a very low rate. Those were the immigrants who were brought in during his administration. There is no inducement for farmers to come out to the Hawke's Bay District, simply because the open land has been all taken up by the honourable gentleman and his friends. There is one other question which was brought up by the honourable member for Napier which has not been touched upon by any other speaker—namely, that party government is destroyed. I should like to ask, who helped to destroy it? The honourable gentleman and one or two of his friends. He would not follow any party, and he cannot get any party to follow him; and therefore, according to his idea, there cannot be any party government. The honourable gentleman talks about passing the Representation Bill and going to the country, because there is no party in the House to suit him. I am quite certain, from what I know, that he is the last person who would like to go to his constituents. He has never shown any wish to go to his constituents in the past, and I am certain he has no wish to go to them now. It is simply talk on his part. Every Government that he has come down to support he has tried to destroy. It was so in the case of the Stafford, the Hall, and the Atkinson Governments. He was returned at the last election to oppose the Atkinson Government, and he was going, he said, to support the Stout-Vogel Government; and yet he voted against this Government on the first important division, and has opposed them ever since. I can tell the Government a way in which they could get the member for Napier's support—that is, by bringing in a short Bill of two clauses. The first clause should be, that no property he holds in the colony is to be taxed either for local or general purposes; the second clause, that the honourable gentleman should be allowed to purchase Native lands unrestrictedly at his own price. If any Government will bring in such a Bill they will have his support. The honourable gentleman's policy up to the present time has been an entirely personal policy. Whenever a Government attempted to tax his property, or to put a stop to his purchasing Native lands, then he at once opposed that Government, no matter whether they were his greatest friends or not. One of his objections to the present Government is that they put in a restrictive clause proclaiming the land round the trunk line; and now he talks of the destruction of party in this House. I am very glad to see that the Government propose under this Bill to "ear-mark" the money for different works. I hope that, when it becomes law, they will endeavour to carry out the proposals of the measure, and that we shall not have a repetition of what happened in 1882. In that year a three-million loan was authorized, and the railways were specifically mentioned on which the money was to be spent; and then, after two or three years, we find that half the money has been spent on works on which it should not have been spent, and that some districts have got a much larger share than they should have received. I have very much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Mr. WHYTE.—Sir, the honourable member who has just sat down appears to think that he has a special mission in this House; and that mission is to "pitch into"—as it is vulgarly called—the honourable member for Napier. Now, I am free to admit that he generally does it very well. But I would venture to suggest, in the mildest manner possible, that the House is getting a little tired of it, and, if the honourable gentleman would give his views on general questions, I have no doubt they would be of very great value, and would be listened to with very great interest. In his remarks the honourable gentleman said that the Government had had no loan since they came into power. I wonder if the honourable gentleman is forgetting the fact that in 1884 they borrowed one million and a half, and they not only had that, but they had a million in hand of the previous three-million loan. Perhaps the honourable gentleman has also forgotten that when the Colonial Treasurer brought in that Bill he said it was for the purpose of replacing moneys which had been abstracted by the previous Government from the three-million loan. Now, I will just put it to the House, how much of that money which was said to have been abstracted has been replaced? I have only a very few remarks to make on the general question before the House; but, before doing so, I wish to call attention to one paragraph in the first page of the Public Works Statement, in which reference is made to the negotiations for the purchase of the Waimea Plains Railway. It is to this effect:—

"I [the Minister for Public Works] also think it right to mention that, when I brought this matter before the Cabinet, three of my colleagues—the Premier, the Colonial Treasurer, and the Minister of Mines—requested that they should in no way be consulted, and the negotiations between the company and the Government have been carried on by the other members of the Cabinet and myself."

From that it is apparent that at all events three members of the Cabinet are now at last permitted to "run alone." I am very glad to notice that; and apparently it is for the first time, or it would not be mentioned so prominently. I am exceedingly glad to notice this for a variety of reasons. I feel a great interest in this Government, and have a great admiration for the individual members of it; and I have always thought their power was too much cramped by the two leading minds in the Ministry, and more especially by the one leading mind as regards finance. I have always thought they might be allowed a little more rope, more especially since the Government took up our policy. Since the Government did that, I have, of course, been exceedingly anxious that that policy should be administered as well as possible. I have, as I say, taken a great in-

terest in the Cabinet, and I do not care how long they remain where they are as long as they continue to administer the policy they have taken from us. I therefore think it is well that at least three members of the Cabinet have "got off the chain;" and I would venture respectfully to suggest that the principle should be carried a little further, and that other members of the Cabinet should be allowed a little more liberty, so that their individual abilities may be fully developed. We have noticed lately that several members of the Cabinet have been doing very well, and have justified the character I have always entertained of them. The Minister of Justice has been bringing in Bills, and not only that, but has been making speeches without being "jumped upon" by his colleagues—and very good speeches indeed he has made. The Minister of Mines has also "come out of his shell," and has actually made two Statements, and it will be acknowledged by the House that, able as the first one was, the second one was even more so. Therefore, judging from what has occurred in this respect, it might be as well for the Government to extend a little more liberty to these members of the Cabinet than they have had in the past: in fact, it might be as well to allow them to be permanently "off the chain,"—subject, of course, to "good behaviour." Turning now to the Public Works Statement, we find that there are many matters in it which confirm the Financial Statement, and there are many other matters in it which do not confirm that Statement. In one part of the Financial Statement the Treasurer tells us that "the obligations which remain to be fulfilled make it necessary that other means should be provided; but at present the only means existent is the North Island Trunk Railway Loan." I regret to say that the Public Works Statement shows that to be absolutely correct: and accordingly that loan is to be openly misappropriated. The Treasurer also said that "it is well, in matters of figures, that you should prove them by two processes," and that "the double view gives the actual result." Now, we have had the finances of the colony put before us in two different ways, and we have, by means of the second, arrived at "the actual result." The first view, given by the Colonial Treasurer in his Financial Statement, was to the general effect that we had £800,000 in hand for purposes other than railways, and that we could vote it as we pleased, and also that we should have, from the new loan, £1,500,000 free for new railway works. It is true that several honourable members drew attention to the fact that there were, in round numbers, £1,100,000 of liabilities unprovided for: but the Treasurer still stuck to his text. That was the first view. Now we have a very different one, and it is to this general effect; that, although there are liabilities to the value of about £1,100,000, if you take off £200,000 for purchase of Native land and say it is not a liability, you reduce these liabilities to something under £900,000. Then, if you charge to the new loan £400,000, approximately, of liabilities on railways you further reduce the amount to something under £500,000. Then, again, if you charge to the new loan the payment for plant which is already in hand, to the value of nearly £300,000, you get it down to about £200,000; and afterwards, if you make a variety of other charges and get a refund from the North Island Trunk Railway Loan, you will cut it down to £100,000, and so extinguish nearly all the liabilities. Last night the Treasurer admitted that he had to reconsider the estimates to the extent of £100,000. Therefore we have the highly-necessary double view of our financial position, and, as the Treasurer says, by that double view we get "the actual result." But the actual result, as I understand it, is that half the new loan is already anticipated, that the North Island Trunk Railway Loan is mortgaged, and that we have contingent liabilities to the extent of £200,000 for Native-land purchases which have to be provided for, and which will be hanging over us in the future; and, further, that the Government have bought nearly three hundred thousand pounds' worth of sleepers and rails before they were wanted. That appears to be the actual result of the double view of our finances, and what the colony may think of it remains to be seen. Now we come to the next statement that I notice in the Public Works Statement, and, I think, also in the Financial Statement—that is, that "the North Island Trunk Railway Loan should be made inalienable." Now, Sir, the meaning of words very often hangs on their application, and if the meaning of "inalienable" in this case means that the money will be put where this House cannot get at it, or where it cannot be used for votes of this House, then I say that the Government cannot pursue a safer course than that which they propose with regard to this loan—that is, to buy bad land with it. Of course it may be said that we are not bound to buy bad land, for there is very good land along this line; but, if it were our deliberate intention to buy bad land with it, then you could not devise any better scheme than that of buying it on commission, to be calculated at so much per acre, irrespective of quality. I happen to know some of these Land Purchase Agents in my neighbourhood, and am happy to say that you could not easily find better men than the Messrs. Grace and Mitchell; but human nature is human nature, and if men are paid by the acre, irrespective of quality, the result will inevitably be that you will get a great deal of bad land, and the Natives will keep a great deal of the good land for themselves. However, I was rather shocked at the answer of the Native Minister to the honourable member for Waitotara when that honourable gentleman pointed out to him that in carrying on this system he was breaking the law. The Native Minister admitted that he had broken the law either in letter or in spirit—I was not very clear which—but he justified it by pleading the urgent necessity of securing land along the line; but, still, the fact remains that there is a law against purchasing Native lands on com

mission, and that purchasing Native land on commission is going on. Therefore, as I said before, if the object is to put this money beyond the reach or notice of this House you could not pursue any surer course to attain that end than to buy bad land with it. Then, also, we were told in the Financial Statement—and I am not sure that it is not repeated in the Public Works Statement—that the North Island Trunk Railway was to be finished in 1890, and we were to have an Exhibition in Auckland in that year to celebrate the event. On hearing that, of course, one naturally goes to the estimates to see how this is to be carried out, and, when one sees that only £46,000 is available for the work this year and £100,000 next year—that is to say that, up to March, 1888, we are only to spend £146,000 on the work—it really seems to be almost too absurd to say that the railway will be finished by 1890. In fact, I am inclined to believe with the honourable member for Waitotara that the Colonial Treasurer has a very low estimate of our intelligence if he expects us to believe that, with the present rate of progress on that line, it will be finished in 1890. In the Public Works Statement it is stated that "the Government will now be more strictly tied down to carry out its proposals than certain Governments have hitherto been." I am glad of this, and I am particularly glad to see by it that the Government themselves recognize their weakness. And when we remember what happened in 1884, when the million-and-a-half loan was introduced, as the Treasurer said at the time, in order to replace money which had been abstracted by his predecessors from the three-million loan, and when one knows how little of that money has been replaced, one certainly sees the necessity for this provision. There is also another part of our policy which the Government have taken up, although it was a part with which they found great fault when coming into office, and that is expenditure on open lines. That is a practice which was very much condemned at one time by the members of the present Government; but now honourable members will find that it is going on as extensively as ever, and the Government actually propose to go on with it, as shown in the schedule to this Bill. Another part of the declared policy of the Government is that railways should be prosecuted with vigour, and they have undertaken to do this with the money available out of the proposed loan and the money in hand. Let us see what prospect there is of that being carried out. Take the first item, the railway north of Auckland. That is estimated to cost £713,000, and the vote for it this year is £4,000, and next year there is to be £46,000—making, in all, £50,000. That is the vigorous policy in that part of the country. Then, in the matter of the Penrose Railway, £5,000 is to be spent this year out of £23,000. The Rotorua Railway is estimated to cost a great deal; but for this year we have to vote only £15,000, and next year £75,000—and even this small vote is accompanied with an ominous warning that "recent changes will have to be carefully considered." I hope that phrase is not to be interpreted in the way that we were in the habit of interpreting the old term we were at one time so accustomed to—"kept steadily in view." Then, as regards the North Island Trunk Railway: As I have said, there is only to be £46,000 expended this year, and £100,000 next year, and that is notwithstanding the fact that the money is actually available and can be raised at any time. That is the way the vigorous policy is to be pursued in regard to that railway. In fact, I think I am not unfair in saying that it looks to me that this slow rate of progress means that this fund is to be brought to the rescue from time to time whenever it is required by the exigencies of the Treasury. Then, as regards that important railway, the Otago Central, it is only proposed to expend on it £36,000 this year. However, before I conclude, there is one exception to this matter of vigorous expenditure, and that is the Greymouth-Hokitika Railway. I see it has a very large vote—nearly as large a vote as there is set down for that important railway the Otago Central. Thirty thousand pounds is to be voted for it this year, out of £55,000 for the two years. Now, it was currently reported through the House last year that, in the Premier's opinion, that was "an utterly useless railway." The Premier is not here to correct me if I am wrong, but, if that is so—and I am credibly informed he gave expression to that opinion—then he must have "reconsidered his convictions." At any rate, there is a vote to be asked for of £30,000 for this railway, which is nearly as much as is asked for the Otago Central. In reviewing the whole of the so-called "vigorous policy" I am driven to a conclusion similar to that of the Colonial Treasurer, although by an entirely different process, and I think, as he puts it in the Financial Statement—and he usually puts things very neatly indeed—I am driven irresistibly to the conclusion that, even under this so-called vigorous policy, "many generations will pass away before the colonies beneath the Southern Cross reach the culminating greatness of their destiny."

Mr. IVESS.—I look upon this debate as embracing two matters—namely, the public works loan proposal, and criticism in connection with the Public Works Statement. I think it would be quite idle and profitless for us to go round the compass and introduce by way of side-wind matters which, properly, should be introduced in what may be fairly termed a no-confidence debate. Ample opportunity has already been afforded to treat of such matters at an early period of the session, and, seeing that we are all naturally anxious to get away, I think that it is idle in the extreme to import matters of that nature into the present debate. I have always believed in a judicious prosecution of public works, together with a moderate railway tariff. I hold that no questions could be more advantageously advanced in this House than these two. I also hold that the people of

New Zealand attach far greater importance to these two subjects than to two-thirds of the legislation which we from time to time pass. I hold, too, that if the cost of that legislation were applied in the direction I have alluded to it would be more likely to advance our interests, and the people of New Zealand would be better pleased, and it would have the effect of raising this colony to such importance as would place it, if not in the front rank, at least very close upon the other colonies. Now, it is notorious that many of our loans, at the outset of the public works policy, were raised at a time when we were called upon to pay higher rates of interest than we were justified in giving, and that the money was not advantageously expended, and the colony is now suffering through that extravagance. I was rather pleased, on perusing the General Manager's report, to find how our local productions had increased during the last four or five years. That has been mainly secured by our railroads, because, if the railroads had not been extended into the interior, it is evident that the local productions would not have advanced, nor our railways have shown such a fair percentage of profit. When we contrast the extent of our railways with the railways in other colonies, I say that New Zealand has a just right to feel proud of the great progress that has been made during the short period the public works policy has been in force. But I think the Government has not judiciously managed those railways. I have always held that our railways should be better managed, and I had hoped that when a change of Government had taken place the management of our railways would have been greatly improved; but, much to my disappointment, as well as to the disappointment of the country from which I hail, that improvement is not apparent. I have always made a prominent plank in my election speeches "Our Railway Management," and I hold that it is idle on the part of a candidate or of members when addressing their constituents to air their eloquence and expose grievances unless they will take the opportunity in this House when it is afforded to them to make the complaints here. Now, in a very short time this House will be dissolved, and the country will demand from their representatives an account of their stewardship, and I take it that this is a fitting occasion to point out to the honourable gentleman at the head of the department that he has not effected the improvements which most of us had anticipated, from the great experience which he was credited with having commanded in connection with the department. In the course of our debates America is often quoted as an example, and, although that great country possesses a population of fifty million people, and has constructed, up to the present time, something like one hundred thousand miles of railway, and is annually constructing from eight to ten thousand miles, I hold that we cannot expect to make such gigantic extensions, even in proportion, as that country has made; but I believe we can do a very great deal more than we have done in the past by judiciously extending our railways into the interior in order to encourage settlement. Now, the General Manager of Railways, in his report, states that during the last year large reductions have been effected in the tariff. I fail to see that that statement is correct. I will read the paragraph — it is very short:—

"During the past two years large reductions have been made in railway rates, chiefly affecting local productions of various kinds, as agricultural produce, agricultural lime, native coals, timber for export, sheep and pigs, agricultural implements, cheese and milk, grass-seed, flax, &c., and in passenger fares and others. Particulars of these alterations will be found in the Table No. 32. While, therefore, the traffic has grown, there has not been a corresponding increase in the gross revenue."

Now, I have had a comparative table supplied to me. I do not vouch for its accuracy, because it has been roughly compiled; but it will show the difference in the charges between New South Wales, Victoria, and New Zealand, and it will give us an idea as to whether our railway tariff is as liberal as we have a reasonable right to expect. I take Class E—Grain, &c.—which refers to the carriage of local productions mainly:—

—	10 Miles.		20 Miles.		50 Miles.		100 Miles.		200 Miles.		
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
New South Wales	4	0	4	6	7	4	11	9	0	18	10
Victoria ..	3	6	3	6	6	0	11	0	0	19	6
New Zealand* ..	4	5	5	6	9	8	13	10	1	2	2

* Including allowance for loading and unloading.

I have also got a comparative statement showing the passenger fares per mile charged in those three colonies, which will prove that we are also ahead:—

—	First.		Second.		First.		Second.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
					Sat. Return.			
New Zealand ..	0	2½	0	1⅔	0		0	2⅙
					Excursion.			
New South Wales	0	2¼	0	1½	0	3	0	2
Victoria ..	0	2	0	1⅓	0	3	0	2

I will not detain the House by alluding to the concessions made in the other colonies respecting excursions, or what are known as Saturday return-fares. I think the time has certainly arrived when substantial reductions should be made in connection with freights and railway passenger fares. Of course it might be argued that New South Wales and Victoria have a greater population than New Zealand—that, consequently, the revenue accruing from the railways there would be larger, and that those colonies could afford to carry passengers at lower rates; but I think it must not be dismissed from our minds that the population in those great colonies is concentrated in the

cities, and that in New Zealand we have a larger population in the interior of the country, also that we have a larger area of country under cultivation than they have in New South Wales. In New South Wales they have 1,688 miles of railway, and 852,017 acres under crop; while in New Zealand we have 1,570 miles of railway, and 1,132,241 acres under crop. Therefore it will be seen that the gradual growth of our trade in that respect is due entirely to our railways. I hold that it should be our policy to borrow moderately for what may be termed reproductive works, in order that the people of England and New Zealand may be able to sell what the other needs to buy, and to place our cultivators within an easy market, because in other countries where wheat is grown to a large extent I find that very great facilities are extended to cultivators to send their produce to markets. This is notably the case in India and also in America. I need not detain the House by quoting the extraordinary facilities that are extended to agriculturists for the transit of their produce to markets; but it must be apparent to the minds of honourable members that the agriculturists of New Zealand have to compete with them in the markets, and that therefore we should extend every facility to the producer to forward his grain to those places where they are called upon to compete with the exporters of grain from other countries. I hold that the Parliament of New Zealand could not have any higher duty—no matter how it has been neglected in the past—than to afford every facility for the transport of our colonial products, because it is only by the development and extension of those resources that we can reasonably expect our railways to pay a fair amount of interest; and, although our railways have been constructed at a high rate, I think that, looking through the returns that have been published from year to year, it will be admitted that they will compare very favourably with other colonies. But I think that more yet could be got out of the railways if they were fairly managed. In looking over the rate of interest paid by the railways in the more important centres of New Zealand, I find a steady increase, with one or two exceptions. I have quoted four years—1883, 1884, 1885, 1886—showing the rates of interest per cent. on the cost of construction which these railways yield, after deducting working expenses:—

—	1883.			1884.			1885.			1886.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Auckland ..	2	9	2	2	7	7	2	12	0	2	9	1
Napier ..	3	9	5	3	19	1	4	0	5	4	18	9
Wellington ..	1	14	0	1	8	6	2	2	0	2	11	2
Wanganui ..	1	8	3	0	12	7	0	18	6	0	12	10
Hawke's Bay	4	6	5	3	7	2	3	12	10	3	5	9

From that table it will be seen at a glance that our railways are yearly improving their position, and all that is required on the part of the Government is to extend greater facilities to our producers to enable them to utilize lines that have been constructed at an immense outlay; because, although a large falling-off has taken place in the carriage of agricultural produce, that is due mainly to the high rates charged, while there is a slight increase in the carriage of merchandise. It must not be dismissed from our minds that the Atkinson-Whitaker Government were displaced mainly because they refused to comply with the demand made by the Canterbury representatives for a reduction of railway rates; and the agriculturists did hope—but I am sorry to say that we are disappointed—that the new Government would make a reasonable reduction. I say the same complaint still exists, and it will be resuscitated at the general election; and I merely point this out, as it is my duty to do, representing a large agricultural community, and having been returned for that purpose, and I should be wanting in my duty if I did not now rise to complain. I have been elected nearly two years, and I should be twitted on my return if I did not say what I am now saying; and as one who hope to return to this House again, and having some respect for my election pledges and the opinions I expressed on the platform, I hold it is my duty to do so. I am not saying this in opposition to the Government, because the Government has not a stronger supporter than I am; I am not one who waver at all in my allegiance; but, still, I think it is my duty—if one section of it is mismanaged or is not managed according to the desires or interests of the country—it is proper and right, when a fitting occasion presents itself, that this should be pointed out to the Government. To give an idea of the dissatisfaction that existed in Canterbury in reference to the conduct of our railways, I need only quote from a speech delivered by a prominent member of this House two years ago; and I am sure that the arguments which he advanced against the then mismanagement of the railways must necessarily carry weight with this House, because he occupies a high position in connection with railway management. This is what he said:—

"I refer to what I know and have seen. I might allude particularly to the train which runs from Christchurch to Timaru. That train is a mixed train, as it is called—it runs with goods and passengers. It runs, according to the time-table, at a speed of fourteen miles an hour, and those who have had the misfortune of travelling by that train will agree with me that it is about the most curious and agonizing torture that one could possibly endure in travelling by rail. Of course in the old days of stage-coaches one was prepared to put up with discomfort in travelling; but we expect something better than that, now that we have railways. Now, the way in which the running of this train is managed is not likely to be attended with anything like economy, but absolutely the reverse."

That was said by the present Minister for Public Works. The same agonizing tortures

exist now as were then described by the honourable gentleman when he was in opposition. Seeing that he has now the management of these railways, it is only reasonable to suppose that his first step would have been to improve what he condemned. In speaking of the management and condition of the Southbridge line this is what the same honourable gentleman said:—

"If any one from Christchurch has business along that line, to get there by railway he must leave Christchurch by a quarter past seven in the morning, and cannot get back until the same hour at night. What is the consequence? Nearly every one to whom time is an object goes by road. If people club together and take a buggy, they can not only save time, but go at half the price for which they could go by train. I do not consider that good railway management, or even a reasonable effort to encourage traffic. That is an instance of how a branch line is managed."

The same thing exists now. There is just one hour saved in getting back to Christchurch. In that part of the district the complaints are quite as great as they were two years ago. I think that really the time has arrived when our railway management should be placed on a better and more efficient footing. It has been frequently said that the Minister for Public Works has not the control or absolute management of the railways, and that they are more controlled by the General Manager than by the Minister. New Zealand has arrived at that stage when the Minister should assert his authority, and not be controlled by any General Manager, no matter whether his views are in opposition to the views of the Minister or not. The opinion held by half the people in the country is that the Minister for Public Works is only second in command, and that the General Manager really dictates to him what should be carried out. I have often had occasion to communicate with the Minister for Railways, and I must certainly say that in nearly every instance my communication—perhaps not purposely—has been treated with indifference. Weeks and months have passed away before I got a reply. Matters also which I brought under his notice as Minister for Public Works have been treated with the same indifference. This, no doubt, was due in a great measure to the amount of work in his department; and I think the time has arrived when the management of our railways and of public works should be separated, and the management of the railways should be placed in the hands of one man, and the control of our public works in the hands of another. It will be remembered that the honourable member for Kaiapoi (Mr. I. Wilson) carried the following resolution:—

"That encouragement should be given to local productions—for export or otherwise—by a readjustment of the rates of railway freight. That it appears to this House that the freight on agricultural produce is too high, and that the railway tariff should be readjusted with a view to a substantial reduction before next grain season."

This is what that honourable gentleman said in reference to the carrying of that resolution on the occasion of his re-entry to the House, and when speaking against the late Government's management of railways:—

"Now, I have stated over and over again that, to my mind, another interpretation should be put upon that resolution; and, had that interpretation been put upon it, the result, I think, would have been greatly beneficial to the railway system. I consider that what was wanted was a thorough readjustment of these rates, and an amended classification right through the piece. It should be made, as it is in other places, much more in the direction of assisting local industries and local productions of all descriptions than it is at present."

Fruit is a very important production of this country, but there is almost a prohibitive charge placed upon it. The charge is something like double that of grain, and I hold that that production should be placed in the same class. Now, the people of America are confident of their future, and they push on their public works in anticipation of settling the people on the land, and realizing upon the value of that land, with the hope that its occupation will be the means of considerably swelling the revenue. As an illustration of the great advantages that have resulted from railway construction, I need only point to what the railway has done for Illinois. Before the railway was constructed to that State it was almost a prairie, but it was not long before the produce of that State was doubled, and Chicago can be pointed to as an evidence of what the railway has done; and I need only point out Nebraska to show what railway extension has done in that country. The Americans are in the habit of adapting their charges to their needs, and that is what New Zealand requires. There are many districts in New Zealand that require special advantages as compared with other districts. Take, for instance, Canterbury and Otago. These are almost exclusively grain-producing districts, and I know that they require special consideration at the hands of the Government. A hard-and-fast rule should not be applied to those districts, because it is only by encouraging farmers there to crop their land that we can hope for traffic for our railways. I may be pardoned for giving one other illustration of the great advantages secured for America by railway extension. Mr. Poor says that "the gain to producers and consumers which was secured in one year was no less than £7,200,000; whilst the freight in the same year was increased from £2,800,000 to £3,600,000;" and he adds that, "if it were not for the facilities given to producers that year, every bushel of grain would have been produced at a loss." The same applies to us in reducing our railway charges. I do not think I need trouble the House at any great length. I hope the second reading of the Bill will be carried. I am quite sure that it is the desire of the country to see public works prosecuted wi-

vigour and economy, and it is idle for honourable members to waste time to criticise it, because the country demands that our railways should be pushed forward. Although the honourable member for Clutha stated that he did not intend to oppose the second reading, it was idle and fruitless on his part to say that one million would suffice for this year. I hold that the colony has arrived at that stage when it is insulting the people of New Zealand to say that a proposal to increase the public works - expenditure by half a million would meet with any resistance on their part. The people of New Zealand are desirous of completing their main lines, which have been carried on at a snail's pace, and it behoves the Government to push on to completion the main trunk lines with all the speed possible, to bring them up to a paying point. I need only contrast the way in which the main lines of Victoria and other colonies are pushed on to completion. During my short stay in Victoria I have seen a line extending from Melbourne to Sandhurst, a distance of one hundred miles, commenced and completed in six years. That is a pattern of enterprise, and I hold that the people of New Zealand are imbued with the same enterprise, and all we want is a courageous Government determined in their own minds to push on those works. I feel quite sure that would be supported in the country if the Government only had the courage of their opinions. I believe the Government are deserving of every credit for having up to the present time shown a desire to push forward the extensions of our railways, though, of course, they were disappointed in their wishes last year, owing to a cause to which I need not now refer. I say the people of New Zealand are anxious to push forward our railway-lines to completion; and if that were done we should not have this deplorable yearly "cry" from the unemployed, nor should we see many of our colonists anxious to leave the colony—colonists many of them brought to the colony at the expense of the Public Works Fund, and therefore by their leaving the whole cost of their introduction is lost. We should do everything to retain and increase our population, by insuring that they shall have employment, and, above all, we should give them every possible facility for settling on our lands. During the short time in which I have had the honour to have a seat in this House it has been my desire, and it always will be my desire, to see our public works pushed on with all the rapidity in our power, because by so doing we insure the settlement of the lands of the colony; and, unless we do that, the labours of the honourable gentleman who is both Native Minister and Minister of Lands to facilitate and hasten settlement will not have the great effect they deserve. We know that the lot of those who settle on land in the out-districts is often a hard and monotonous one; but by giving them good means of communication with the older - settled districts, and giving them means to bring their produce to where it can be disposed of, we can do much to mitigate that hardness and make their life easier. We give them a greater enjoyment of life at the same time that we do enormous service to the country in many ways, and chiefly by lightening the burden on the colonists by distributing it over a greater number. Sir, I hope the public-works proposals of the Government will be assented to by the House, and I have much pleasure in giving them my support.

Mr. PERE.—Sir, I wish, first, to reply to a statement made by the honourable member for Waitotara last night. The honourable gentleman said that Dr. Buller had induced the Native members to support the present Government. I cannot understand how the honourable gentleman was able to see into the depths of my mind and learn the reasons which induced me to vote in the way I did. He did not give his grounds or his authority for making that statement, and the honourable gentleman must be the cleverest man that ever existed if he was able to read what was in my mind. I will tell the House the reason why I have supported the Government. The principal reason is that I was dissatisfied with the policy of the previous Government, and especially with that of the honourable member for Waitotara, who was a member of that Government. His policy as to Native lands weighed very heavily on people of small means. The late Government brought in a Bill providing that the duty on Native lands should be paid in a lump sum; and the honourable gentleman was also responsible for the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act, under which Natives are obliged to pay rates on lands from which they do not derive any profit whatever. The honourable gentleman also proposed to bring in a Bill under which the administration of Native lands would be left entirely in the hands of the Government. It was to oppose this policy that I was elected by my Native constituents. There were many other objectionable features in the policy of the late Government. After I was elected I waited on the then Premier—the honourable member for Egmont—with the other Native members, and asked him if he saw his way to remove the pressure that was bearing down the Native people; and the honourable gentleman replied that he could not help us. Why, then, should I support such a Government? Was I not perfectly free to support any new Government, in the hope that they would do something to relieve the Native people? I give the honourable member for Waitotara credit for being a wise man, and I say it is out of place in him to accuse the Native members in the way he has done. Perhaps he made that statement out of the desire of his heart to return to the Government benches. This is not an idle statement of mine. I believe I am justified in making it. I am sure the honourable gentleman is very anxious to be Native Minister again, and it will be for those persons who have received benefits from him and his policy to return him to the Government benches; but he must not ask me to help. I

will not allude to that matter any further, but will say a few words now as to railways. It appears to me that honourable gentlemen in this House are constantly asking for railways and other public works to be made in their own districts, and, if the Government favour one district, then the people of other districts are up in arms at once. Those who have had their fill and got what they want become envious of those who want something, and at the same time they are not backward in making further requests. Perhaps it would be better if the present Government were to raise one enormous loan that would satisfy everybody, and so have done with it. If that were done it would be necessary to spend a large sum in immigration, so that we could have all our lands settled. By that means people possessing capital might be induced to come to New Zealand and cast in their lot with us. Seeing that there appears to be a general scramble to get public works, I am myself inclined to make an effort in the same direction for my own district. But the people in my district would be fully prepared to meet the charge for interest on any public works there. The district I represent, though it has contributed very largely to the interest upon the money spent in other districts, has not received anything like a fair share itself from the Public Works Fund—it has not received any equivalent for the taxation it has contributed for many years past. I think the time is near at hand when we should have a railway in my district; but for fear of objections being raised I have hitherto remained silent about it. I am afraid that if I had put forward that claim there would have been objections raised to it. I will now refer to Government land-purchases. During the two years in which I have had the honour of a seat in this House the House has put pressure on the Government to purchase Native land. It was even suggested that the North Island Trunk Railway should not be proceeded with until the Native lands along its route had been purchased; that before that work was proceeded with the Government should buy all the Native lands along it, the object being, I suppose, to prevent the Natives having the benefit of the largely-increased value of their lands given by the making of the railway. I should like the Government to retire altogether from Native-land-purchasing. I believe that if the Government had not made an effort to buy land as directed by the House probably a want-of-confidence motion would have been brought against them, and they would have been turned off those benches. I think that the honourable gentlemen who object to the Government on the score of land-purchases are not consistent. I will not make a long defence of those honourable gentlemen, because I think they can take care of themselves. I will just say this: that I believe it would be better if the Government retired from the purchasing of Native lands entirely. If this disturbing element were removed these charges against the Government for purchasing land would not be made, and the Government would be in a better position to look after the interests of the Native people. They would be able to give their undivided attention to the settling of land and the carrying-on of public works. I am quite in favour of raising a very large loan, so as to satisfy the cravings of every honourable member in this House. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay last year prevented the Government from carrying out their policy, and curtailed their spending-power; and yet that honourable gentleman is now acting against the Government because they do not prosecute public works more vigorously in his district. I do not think that that is at all consistent. I think a man should be consistent, and stand by what he has said formerly. It seems to me that if we go on borrowing a million every year there will always be some wants unsatisfied. I say, Let us have one loan and have done with it, and not have any borrowing afterwards; so that, after we have raised this great loan, and spent it, we may set to work to discover how the interest is to be paid.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Sir, the House laughed at the honourable gentleman who has just sat down because he suggested that we should have one big loan that would satisfy everybody. But I venture to say that the honourable gentleman, when he said that, did not know what I believe to be a fact—namely, that that is precisely the view held by the Colonial Treasurer himself, and also that at no very distant time back, I believe, it was held by some of the members of the Government, including, possibly, the Premier himself. My object in getting up now is, not specifically to reply to any honourable gentleman who has spoken, but to deal with some of the remarks made by the Treasurer in introducing this Bill. The central fact of this Bill and the Public Works Statement, with which it is connected, is that we are to raise a loan of a million and a half, which is to extend over a period of two years—that is to say, to be spent at the rate of £750,000 a year—a small sum in comparison with the borrowing of the past. The Colonial Treasurer took occasion to remark that he had never intended that any proposal materially differing from this should be carried out, that the proposal involved in his present policy was the proposal that he had always intended to be carried out, and that those who asserted that he intended to raise a large loan of eight or ten millions had merely distorted the facts, had been animated by political hostility to himself, and some of them with a desire to injure the credit of the colony. I am perfectly free to confess that I am actuated by political hostility to the Treasurer—though, I hope, by no other kind of hostility—the reason for which is, simply, that I believe the Colonial Treasurer himself has done more to injure the credit of this colony than any other individual in it. I am very sorry that the honourable gentleman is not in his place; but I see the Premier is taking notes, and he is very well able to look after the interests of the honourable gentleman. Now, what I assert:—

that the Colonial Treasurer, during the recess, deliberately set himself, with or without the connivance of the Government, to impregnate the minds of the people of New Zealand with the atrocious doctrine that prosperity was to be recalled to this colony by means of a large loan—that, as in 1870 he had called prosperity into existence by that means, so now he could recall it by a similar process. This is a matter which has not been alluded to specially by any honourable member that I am aware of although it is a very important one in its bearings on the colony—except by the honourable member for Clutha in his very able speech to-night. But there are some points which he left out, and I think it is as well to take them up. Those views of the Colonial Treasurer were sketched out in various speeches that he made during the recess. But he reached the climax, I think, in the speech that he addressed to, I believe, the people of Tuapeka. That address I have now got before me, and the principal points to which I will refer are contained in a few sentences. First of all, the Colonial Treasurer pointed out the fact that the depression which existed in this colony now was not to be compared with that which existed in 1869, and then he went on to say that, "if our counsels"—that is to say, the counsels of himself and of his Government—"are listened to, the colony will once more assert its pride of place and resource." What were these counsels? I think they are pretty much to be gathered from the following passage:

"The great difference of opinion between those who support the Government and those who are anxious to see a change is that our opponents are averse to that policy of progress which to us seems so essential. The question hangs very much upon a decision as to whether the public works policy inaugurated in 1870 has or has not been on the whole a success. It is marvellous that any number of persons can be found to question a success which appears to me to be as clearly established as that one and one make two. . . . The action of the House last session would lead to the conclusion that the public works policy is to be brought to an end as quickly as, so to speak, it can be liquidated; and next session we shall have to choose between this liquidation and a resumption of the policy."

Then he goes on to remark that when he brought down that policy there was a universal chorus of opposition set up by two-thirds of the members of the then House. He proceeds to point out what the faults of that policy of 1870 were:—

"No doubt also there have been faults, which our experience now enables us to detect. The borrowing was for purposes of too general a nature. For every shilling expended on railways more than a shilling was expended on other objects; and in the prosperity that ensued," &c.

So that all the difference to be made in the new policy was that no money was to be spent more for railways and less for other miscellaneous purposes, and no money was to be spent on immigration. Now, if any meaning attaches to this language at all, what was here sketched out was that, whereas the colony was in the deepest possible state of depression, although not so deep as in 1869, nevertheless the Treasurer, by a big loan, was to recall prosperity to us; that he expected the same chorus of disapproval from members of the present House; but, if that chorus of disapproval could in some way or other be got over, he had no doubt whatever that the country would, by that means, once more assert "its pride of place and resource." It is important to remember that at the time he uttered those statements this colony had been borrowing, for years before,—say, five or six years,—at the rate of exactly a million and a half per annum. That was during a period of great depression—say since 1879; so that it is perfectly evident that when he wrote that address—for I may here state that it was not delivered, but was written in cold blood, and was therefore not like any speech in which a person is liable for the moment to overstep the bounds—it is evident, I say, that by that he intended some new and startling policy, involving mainly a new and large loan. And, in fact, it was taken up in that sense by the entire population of the colony and also by the Press, even by the newspapers that supported the Government—they all concluded that some new and startling policy was to be brought down. In the passages I have read it is perfectly true that there was no explicit statement of amount—there was no mention of eight or ten millions. The whole thing was a series of innuendoes. It was intended merely to suggest that such was the policy of the Government, in order to see how far it would take with the public. It was intended to strike the public mind, and yet to keep the Treasurer clear of committing himself in any way. Now, here, then, we have a policy which, if adhered to, only involves an expenditure of £750,000 a year. Can it possibly be said that in any sense this policy which we now have, this comparatively moderate policy, is the policy the Colonial Treasurer intended when he wrote that address to the people of Tuapeka, or when he addressed the people of Auckland and told them that this colony could and ought to go in for an expenditure of loan-money of two millions per annum, one and a half millions to be expended on railways and half a million on other forms of public works? Either the Colonial Treasurer intended that policy to be carried out or he did not. If he did not, it is clear he should not have led the people to believe that he intended it, and if he did intend to carry it out he should not have gone the length of denying it when introducing this Bill, or, at any rate, of fencing with the question. Immediately after that I had occasion to address my constituents; and I am perfectly free to say this: that I never yet addressed them in such a state of fear and trembling for the baneful influence upon their minds that those speeches of the Colonial Treasure

might have had; for there was, I am sorry to say, a pretty general idea in many quarters in the South that prosperity, so sadly wanted, could be recalled by these methods. And I had to put it to my constituents in this way: I had to point out, as I have already stated to the House, that we had been borrowing a million and a half a year ever since the depression set in in 1879, and that as that money was borrowed the depression deepened. I had to put the problem in this way: If borrowing nine and a half millions had produced so much depression in the past, how much depression would ten millions produce in the future? That was the only way that I could see of striking their minds. It seems to be the one idea running through the mind of the Colonial Treasurer, that the only way of bringing prosperity to a district or to a country is by borrowing—by bringing in streams of foreign money; and it appears to me that that is an idea which we must summarily stamp out, if we are to have our politics kept pure. I did not use, when speaking to my constituents at Naseby, an argument which I think might very well be used in this House, because I thought that it would be out of place; but I hold that it could be proved, on scientific principles and with mathematical accuracy, that the question of prosperity in this country, or in any country, is not to be connected with the expenditure of borrowed money. When, in certain cases, scientists wish to find out the cause of some phenomenon, they have a certain formula, which they call the process of exclusion, by which they can do it. They say,—Such-and-such a thing is the cause of the phenomenon: Take that thing away and the phenomenon remains: Therefore that thing was not the cause of the phenomenon. And so they go on. A somewhat similar formula may be applied to our borrowing. The formula might be stated thus:—Borrowing is the cause of the prosperity: The borrowing remains, but prosperity has given place to depression: Therefore borrowing was not the cause of the prosperity.

Sir R. STOUT.—That is not "the process of exclusion" at all.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—The honourable gentleman will pardon me, but I have no doubt that he will twist it into something which may appear not to be that process, with his usual ingenuity. The formula is not the same, but the logic is. Now, it is a curious fact, and one that will certainly be worthy of notice when our political history comes to be written, that, while the Treasurer, speaking in the various cities of Auckland, Wellington, and other places, and ultimately at Tuapeka, was sinking deeper and deeper into the abyss of prodigal borrowing and extravagance, the Premier advanced step by step, by regular degrees, until he reached a considerable degree of soundness and economy. The Premier made three different speeches during the recess, and in the first of them he made no allusion to this question of borrowing at all; but in the second he did, in a cursory, vague way, which shows conclusively, to my mind, that, while he was somewhat startled by the effect upon the public mind of the Treasurer's speeches, and disappointed at their effect, he then began to see that some sort of economical administration, so far as the borrowing and spending of money was concerned, would be necessary—that extravagance would not be popular. In the first of those speeches, as I have said, he made no reference to borrowing at all; but in the second speech he used the following language:—

"Railways were going on in Australia and America; and we could not stand still. At the same time as far as he was concerned no political or public pressure would force him to consent to any scheme that meant simply borrowing a large number of millions without seeing that they were properly expended, and not too hastily. There was a danger if they went into the market to borrow a large number of millions."

I should think not indeed; but it appears to me that that language is peculiarly flabby, as if the Premier were halting between two opinions. At Invercargill, however, the Premier arrived at what I may call the highest point of economical protestation. It is a curious fact that, as the Treasurer went to the lowest deep at Tuapeka, so the Premier, acting on the reverse principle, reached the highest point at Invercargill, for there almost every statement he made of any importance the Treasurer found it absolutely necessary to go on to a public platform and apologize for. No one could have supposed that the several speeches made by these gentlemen were made by colleagues in the same Government. If a stranger had landed in the colony at that particular time, and had heard the Premier deliver his speech on the advantages of thrift and economy, and had heard him condemn at Invercargill extravagant borrowing, and then had heard the reply which was immediately made by the Treasurer at Wellington, he would have supposed that Sir Julius Vogel was leader of the Opposition, instead of Treasurer in the honourable gentleman's Government. I do not blame the Premier, because in each of these speeches he displayed a new phase of development in the direction of economy. I do not blame him for it at all.

> I held it truth, with him who sings
> To one clear harp in divers tones,
> That men may rise on stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things.

But I have my doubts, after what I have read and seen, whether the Premier really rose at all, and whether he was not rather dragged upstairs, by the force of public opinion, on the way to economy and soundness. And now the honourable gentleman seems, like the Colonial Treasurer, as he sits there, a perfect picture of thrift—like Economy upon a monument. But I think it is not so many months—and my opinion is borne out by the evidence before us—since he was prepared to go any length that the Treasurer was prepared to go; and that is saying a g

I have no desire to detain the House for any length of time, and therefore I will here say about this Bill that the policy itself is not a bad one. It is not perhaps an extravagant one—that is, assuming that the spending of this loan-money can be spread over two years, as is intended. But there is no possible guarantee that we shall not require a loan next year; there is no guarantee that the £750,000 will do for one year; and I hold that, so long as the Colonial Treasurer occupies a seat on those benches, there is a very solid guarantee indeed that if he sees his way to get loan-money next year he certainly will try to get it. There is no doubt in my mind that the Treasurer and, possibly, the Government are simply baulked of what they wanted, and that they will wait their opportunity. I recollect that, in one of his addresses, the Treasurer stated that he dreaded anything that would take the attention of the public mind off the policy of public works. There was nothing else to be attended to, he thought; no question of policy could arise, nothing could arise in connection with the education system, nothing could arise in the process of raising the people in the political scale—nothing of the sort was contemplated; but he regretted anything that would divert the attention of the people of New Zealand from the question of public works—that is to say, simply from the question of public borrowing. It appears to me that a perfect craze has set in in connection with public works, and the result of all this is that new schemes are being conjured up by the Colonial Treasurer, and we are having brought under our notice a new group of public works, which must in time land us in the utmost difficulty. Any one who has read the Financial Statement—from which I take, for mere convenience, the schedule of works—will see that there is no rest from this borrowing, but that new undertakings are being put forward for the expenditure of huge sums of money. Sometimes merely small sums are mentioned, and at other times very large sums; but what I want to make clear to the House is that, whenever these sums are once scheduled for particular works, we can never get rid of the liability then involved. Once these lines are mentioned they never will be allowed to drop. The liabilities will remain, and they will be such as cannot be ignored in the light and airy way in which the Government ignored the £1,094,000 the other day. Then, there is the construction of this double line out of Auckland southwards.

Sir R. STOUT.—That is not a new railway.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—No; but it is a new proposal. Then there is the Hokitika-Greymouth Railway.

Sir R. STOUT.—That is not new.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—If not new, it is very improper, and not so long since it was new.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It is partially made.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—It should never have been made, wholly or partially. Then there is the Blenheim-Tophouse line—I presume the Premier will hardly say that is not new—and the Westport-Inangahua line, which, as I am informed, even the people in the district do not want. And then there is a line mentioned during the recess, and which is, I understand, now being surveyed, but which the honourable gentleman did not care to put down here—that is, the Lawrence-Roxburgh line. That, also, is a line which has been mentioned, and I have no doubt it will not be allowed by the people in the district to drop, and, although it is not in the schedule, depend upon it it will appear in the schedule on some future occasion. All those lines are either entirely new or they are unnecessary, or they are almost new, and they will entail future expenditure on a very large scale. I feel that lines which really demand the expenditure of public money in order to complete them to workable points are put further and further back for the sake of these new lines. Look at the Otago Central, for instance. Honourable members laugh when I mention the Otago Central, but I do not suppose they will laugh when they get the facts of the case. The honourable member for Waipawa condemned the honourable member for Napier because he was against the Otago Central line last year and is in favour of it this year. I presume that the fact of the matter is that the honourable member for Napier looked into the merits of the line in question during the recess and found that it was a very good one; and if other honourable members would do the same I have not the slightest doubt they would come to the same conclusion. It only proves that as the honourable member for Napier gets older he gets wiser, and that the honourable member for Waipawa does not. The Otago Central line has been eight years in being constructed. It was commenced in 1878. There has been voted for it no less a sum than £570,800, and there has been spent upon it only £318,418, including the liabilities of £51,000, leaving a balance due to the line at the present moment of £432,382. I am not going to say anything about the Otago Central line except this: that this House has, in past years, thought fit to vote all that money, and that the money has not been spent. Therefore it is not fair that this line should be allowed to drag on, being constructed at the rate of one mile a year, while a number of new and useless lines are only now appearing on the surface. As regards the district railways which have been purchased, we were told that they were only to be paid for by debentures, and therefore they would not demand a sum of money. Every transaction is made with debentures nowadays—it may be called Government by debenture. It is nothing else but loans and debentures. The purchase of the district railways last year was not supposed to demand any loan-moneys, and now we find that an extension of the Thames-Te Aroha line is put down for £80,000. It is a very wrong thing that lines which have been sanctioned by this House and the country as national lines, whether they be good or bad, so long as they have been so sanc-

No. 20.

NEW ZEALAND.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SESSION 1886.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

21st July to 23rd July.

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WELLINGTON:
BY AUTHORITY: GEORGE DIDSBURY, GOVERNMENT PRINTER.

1886.

Price 2d.

tioned, should have their claims forestalled in this way. The Otago Central line, having been so long kept in hand, ought now to be brought to a workable point: I do not care where that point is, so long as it is found to be a suitable one; and that should be done before any new lines are commenced. I cannot help thinking that in connection with entirely new lines we are "laying up for ourselves wrath against the day of wrath." We all know and feel that they are not wanted—that they will not pay, and will not be useful in developing the settlement and progress of this colony. What I do feel sad about is that the sole object of entering upon all those new lines is simply to enable the Government to consolidate support to itself in the House. That is my deliberate conviction. In conclusion, I say that we may make light of it now, and laugh at honourable members such as the honourable member for Parnell, who has warned this House and the country against excessive borrowing; but I believe there is a day coming when we shall certainly pay dearly for our carelessness. Only the other day I was reading of an occasion when the great statesman, Charles Fox, was dining with Edmund Burke, and Burke was declaiming about the French Revolution and the evils it would entail on Great Britain by its example. Fox said, "Never mind, Mr. Burke; depend upon it we shall go on as we are until the day of judgment." "That may be very true," replied Burke; "but it is the day of no-judgment I am afraid of." Sir, it is the day of no-judgment I am afraid of. I believe the judgment of the public mind of New Zealand is being corrupted and demoralized by this constant stream of borrowed money. We are being taught not to rely on our own resources. We all know that prosperity can only come to any country, and can only belong to it, by the quantity of its products, by the price those products bring in the markets of the world, and by the favourable relation of that price to the cost of production. Prosperity can only come when we can produce largely, and when that produce sells at a profitable price. A new doctrine is being foisted on the people of New Zealand by those in high places, and that is that whenever we are in depression we must look to borrowed money to get us out of it. I believe that doctrine has produced, and will produce in future, most disastrous results. As the Colonial Treasurer is the great apostle of that doctrine, all I can say is, that I trust this House will, though it may not perhaps do it this session, assert itself at no distant date; and, if the House does not, that the country will take the matter in hand and send members to this House who will demand a change in the *personnel* of the Government, as a result of which a better and sounder economy may be instilled into it.

Mr. PEACOCK.—Sir, I understand that in the discussion on the present measure the remarks of speakers are not necessarily confined to the Bill before the House, but that we may make a general criticism of the financial proposals of the Government and their public works policy. In the very few remarks I intend to make I have no wish to go much beyond the measure which we have before us. There can be very little doubt that the utterances of the Treasurer during the recess led to an impression throughout the country that the Government proposed to bring down to this House a further large scheme of borrowing; and it was only the feeling which was evoked in the public mind against such a large scheme that has tended, I believe, towards the modification in the proposals of the Government which they are now submitting in this Bill. The feeling which was very strong in the country resulted from this consideration: that a large borrowing policy, if promulgated and accepted by the country, would contain no guarantee that the objects to which the loan was to be applied would be of a reproductive character — that, in fact, there might be, and would be, a recurrence to the expenditure of money, as in the past, on works not necessary in the present condition of the colony, and which it would be desirable to leave for some future time. The Treasurer, in speaking, tried to form two classes in the community: one being those opposed to all borrowing and who were in favour of an immediate stoppage of public works, and the other being those who, like himself, were desirous to push on public works, as he said, "vigorously"—that is to say, those who were in accord with himself as to the pace at which the colony should go in the way of borrowing money. I think it will be allowed by the House that the number of those who consider it desirable that our borrowing money should stop and our public works should cease is very small indeed; while, on the other hand, the number of those who are deeply impressed with the heavy indebtedness of the colony and the necessity for prudence, and yet believe that we must go on borrowing to a limited extent, and that it is not possible for us to stop in our career of public works, is very large. It was, I believe, the strength of feeling amongst that class, which the Treasurer seemed to ignore, that was the means of causing the Government to reconsider their first intentions and to come down with much more moderate proposals than they otherwise would have submitted. I may as well state at once that I do not object to the amount which it is proposed to borrow in this Bill, but I do object to the manner in which it is proposed to be spent. I do not think the railways mentioned in the schedule of the Bill on which this money is to be spent are of a kind which are necessary in the present condition of the colony, or that they are even in accord with the views the Government expressed as to the kind of railways on which money should be spent. It seems to me that there are several lines in the South Island mentioned in this list which are not only small lines, but also new works, and which might fairly wait until times were more prosperous in the colony, when, by the increase of our population, there would be a greater likelihood of traffic, and they would to some extent be of a paying character. It was understood that the cardinal point in the public works policy, when initiated, was

that the main trunk lines of the colony, at all events, should be made; and, then, there was this other leading feature—and latterly it has been agreed to—that those lines which have already been made up to a certain point should be carried on until they came to a point at which they would be paying. Then, again, there is a third class of works, consisting of those railways which already exist, and which require to have additional permanent-way and accommodation for the public by reason of the increased traffic upon them. These are the three classes, as I understand, which deserve particular attention at the hands of the House, and which should, in a great measure, sway the House and the Government in determining the manner in which the money borrowed for railways should be spent. And, to show that I am not misjudging the Government in the statement I have made as to the manner in which they proposed that the money should be allocated for railway purposes, I need only refer to what the Treasurer said in 1884. He then said that, in the interest of prudence and common-sense, railway works must be carried on with some regard to early returns as the works progressed. Can that be said of many of these small lines to which I have referred as contained in the schedule of the Bill? I do not think it can; and I believe that in putting those lines in the list the Government have been forgetful of that which they sketched out as the policy which should be followed. Then, again, what has become of the proposals contained in the Financial Statement of 1885? In that Statement we find the Treasurer saying this: that in future there should be three classes of railways; and these were — first, forest railways, the cost of which was to be recouped by the sale of the forests and forest land; second, district railways, the peculiarity of which was to be that the local bodies would have to pay half the interest which might be required in excess of the receipts, presumably to restrain the desire for useless railway-lines; then there were the main trunk lines. These are the three classes of railways which the Treasurer mentioned in his Statement of 1885; and I should like to ask what has become of the policy which was shadowed forth in that Statement. It seems as if those honourable gentlemen had no sooner promulgated their ideas with regard to the future than they at once disregarded those intentions, and we hear no more about them. Again, when the Treasurer was in Auckland, and was speaking on this subject of railways, and referring to the remarks of the Premier at Dunedin, he stated that, if the money is to be expended in reproductive works, it ought to be arranged that the returns from those works should come in by way of relief to the general revenue. I desire to emphasize this point, and to say that, while this is the feature which the Government laid down to the country as characterizing their policy, they do not give effect to it in the list of railways now before the House, and on which the money to be borrowed under this Bill is to be expended. In regard to the North Island Trunk Railway, I am not going to twit the Government with respect to the statement now made—that it will take four years to make that line, or say that they have failed in their promise as to the time at which that line would be completed. I believe, myself, that the statement they first made as to the short time it would take was incorrect; but, at the same time, I am not willing to allow that that railway has at all been retarded, as the Government have frequently avowed, by the action of this House in restricting the money to be expended on railways last session. The Government profess to have taken active steps regarding the purchase of land along the North Island Trunk Railway-line; and I am not going to take any objection to that—on the contrary, it has my very hearty approval; but I cannot condemn in too strong terms the proposal they have now made —to take the money for that purpose from the North Island Trunk Loan. We all know how the Government hinted during the recess that they might take this money and use it in carrying on other works, and it was only when a feeling of horror was evoked throughout the whole country at such an idea that they departed from their intention in that respect. Then, we find, when frightened by public opinion, that they turned round, and the Treasurer, in Auckland, stated that the Government, so far from intending to use this money for any other purpose than that for which it was voted in 1882, were proposing to make it still more clear that the money should only be used for the purpose for which it was intended. It was very satisfactory to find, from that speech, that the Treasurer had come to a right frame of mind, and that he was thoroughly in earnest in his determination to see that the money was devoted to its right object. In his speech at Auckland he said, "I may state that I have taken steps to enable this loan not to be raised until the House has had an opportunity of devoting it to those purposes for which it was destined to be raised." That is all very well; but what are we to think of the Treasurer now, when we find that, with the same breath in which he says that they are going to "ear-mark" this loan, he also says that they are going to use it for the purchase of Native land?—a purpose which, honourable gentlemen will have no difficulty in seeing, was not at all contemplated when the loan was originally authorized to be raised in 1882. We all know very well why this proposition to use this money for purchasing Native land along the North Island Trunk line has come from the Government. We know that it arises from the fact that the Treasurer made a mistake in his Statement when he said that there would be £800,000 available for works other than railways. If it had not been for that mistake we should very probably not have heard of this proposition. It was no doubt because of this deficiency, and of his temporary oblivion of the fact of these liabilities existing to the amount of over a million pounds, that he had to make some shifts

in order to make up that deficiency. It was by doing such things as proposing to bring in the money for rolling-stock and plant which might be debited to the various railways in the list, and thus set free some of the amount to be borrowed to be expended on other works than railways, and by this other shift of using for the purchase of land the money intended only for the construction of the main trunk line, that he has seen his way to make up some of the deficiency which he has been able to perceive since he made his erroneous Statement. And now the question is this: The Government having found that they had made a mistake as to the money available for works other than railways, how is that money to be provided? My own idea is that it would be a much more satisfactory proceeding on their part if, instead of attempting to take the money from the North Island Trunk Railway Loan, and devoting it to the purchase of Native lands, they were to curtail some of the smaller lines in the list, which are not necessary in the present condition of the colony, and which are not in accord with the avowed intention of the Government as to the manner in which the borrowed money should be spent on railways. I shall certainly oppose the diversion of the North Island Trunk Loan to any other purpose than the construction of the line, and I shall be one of those who will leave it to the Government to devise some means of finding funds, either in the way I have suggested with regard to curtailing some of these in the schedule, or such other course as the Government may be able to propose which will commend itself to the approval of the House.

Mr. BRUCE.—Before you put the question, Sir, I should like to make a few remarks; and I may almost preface them by saying that I scarcely know whether I should speak at all, because I recognize this fact: that speeches rarely influence a man's vote in a division—if I may put it in that way. But perhaps our constituents expect us to express our opinions on subjects of large importance such as this before us on the present occasion. Perhaps that will justify my action in rising to-night. Now, first of all, I wish to take notice, in the few remarks I am about to make—because they will be few, as I shall condense them as much as possible—I wish, first, to take notice of some of the statements made by the Colonial Treasurer in moving the second reading of this Bill. He, first, if I recollect rightly, informed us that he had some secrets to disclose to the House—some Cabinet secrets. Well, if I understand the English language at all, the secrets he disclosed to the House were that in reality he had made a very great mistake in reference to that £800,000, which had so long gone missing, but of which the honourable member for Egmont—if I may be allowed to put it in that way—discovered the locality. The Colonial Treasurer appears now to disclaim emphatically that he had ever been advocating a large borrowing policy—I mean, during the recess. Now, it seems to me impossible to deny, reading, at any rate, between the lines of the speeches the honourable gentleman delivered during the recess, that he was the advocate of a very large borrowing policy indeed. When he addressed a very large meeting at Auckland he made, if I may be allowed to say so, a piteous appeal. He said, "Are you going to give the colony another chance?" and the colony, from one end to the other, accepted that view of the situation; and at the same time the honourable member for Wanganui—I suppose, at the instigation of the Cabinet—suggested the idea of a dissolution. And what were the questions which suggested themselves to the constituencies? I will put that to the House. Why, every candidate who was dangled before a constituency represented by an Opposition member represented himself as an advocate of borrowing ten millions and a policy of Protection combined.

Mr. HATCH.—A good line, too.

Mr. BRUCE.—Well, if I were to suggest any two things which I thought would sink the ship of State it would be Protection and heavy borrowing combined. It has been alleged during the course of the debate, by some Government supporters, following the cue of the Colonial Treasurer, that he did not mean heavy borrowing. Well, then, where was the necessity for the Premier of the colony to go down to Invercargill and practically disclaim the policy of his colleague, after—I wish to note this—after the colony had pronounced against it, that is to say, after all those who wished to make this beautiful colony their home had pronounced against it? We know perfectly well that, had this heavy borrowing been brought down, it would have attached the vote of every man, presumably, who had nothing to lose; but we who had made this colony our home, and intend to make it our home, will certainly oppose proposals which can only land us in disaster. There is another matter which I wish to allude to in reference to the Colonial Treasurer's speech. He made a statement which, I must say, appeared extraordinary, to say the least of it. He contended—I do not recollect his exact words—that if we borrowed, nationally, thirty millions, and if, individually, we borrowed another thirty millions, the latter was not, in reality, a colonial liability. Now, I say this is an extraordinary thesis for a man in his position to lay down in this House. Let us test the principle by extension. Supposing, for argument's sake, that this colony owed sixty millions of money, and only one million of it had been borrowed nationally, would any man in his senses contend that we did not still owe that other fifty-nine millions. The thing appears to me absolutely ridiculous? and it seems extraordinary that a man in the position of the Colonial Treasurer should advance such a theory. All the difference, as it appears to me, is this: Nationally, we borrow at 4½ or 5 per cent., and we waste a great deal of the money; individually, we borrow at 7 or 8 per cent., and we do not waste so much. That is practically the difference. There is another matter in the speech of the Treasurer to which I wish to make a passing allusion. The Trea-

surer, I contend, went far to denounce those who have held that a borrowing policy for this colony can only end in disaster—he wished to hold them up as people who would decry the credit of the colony. I am not one of those "croakers" who believe in absolutely stopping the borrowing policy; but I say that those who differ from me, those who believe that that policy will end in disaster, have a perfect right to express that opinion in this House or in the country; and I say that they deserve every credit for giving expression to that opinion, because we know that with many, I think I may say with the many, those opinions are unpopular; and for that reason those men who, like the honourable member for Parnell, have continually, I might almost say *ad nauseam*, told us that this policy would only end in disaster are entitled to credit from the thinking men of the colony, because they are sincere in their belief, and they are not afraid to give expression to their honest convictions. Now I wish, before I pass from the subject of the Colonial Treasurer, to give expression to one opinion of my own, which I know differs from that of many honourable members in this House; and it is this: that, although I do not in practice agree with him, I do theoretically to a very large extent, and, at the same time, I believe that the Colonial Treasurer is as desirous as I am of promoting the welfare of the colony. Now, I wish to make a few remarks with reference to the utterances of another Minister—the honourable member for Wanganui. The Native Minister, in replying to the honourable member for Waitotara, made what appeared to me the extraordinary remark that that honourable gentleman's speech had been one of misrepresentation and distortion. Sir, I think I am expressing not only the feelings of this House and the opinions of this House but of the whole Colony of New Zealand when I say that if there is one man in the colony more incapable than another of misrepresentation and distortion it is the honourable member for Waitotara; and I am quite sure that, although these assertions were uttered in the heat of debate, in his calmer moments the honourable member for Wanganui will indorse my views with reference to this matter. The honourable member for Wanganui appeared to me scarcely to represent fairly some of the remarks of the honourable member for Waitotara. I will take one as a specimen—the honourable member for Wanganui's allusion to the honourable member for Waitotara's remarks in reference to the £4,000 that had been used for the purpose of fencing the Native reserve. Now, I may say that the honourable member for Waitotara, in alluding to that subject, said that he had no fault whatever to find with the money being used for that purpose, but that he did object strongly to its being placed to an account which was practically that of purchase of Native lands, and his contention was that under that heading it should not have passed the Audit Department. The Hon. the Native Minister, in replying, dwelt considerably upon the fact that this was a legitimate expenditure, and that it had been sanctioned even by the honourable member for Taranaki. Now, the honourable member for Waitotara has expressed approval of the expenditure, but he had disapproved of its being passed by the Audit Department in the manner it had been; and, Sir, that contention, from my point of view, the honourable member for Wanganui utterly failed to answer; as also he did another argument advanced against his administration in reference to the sale of some sections, to which I will not further allude. However, the honourable member for Wanganui made it apparent that he was progressing very rapidly with the purchase of Native lands along the central line. Well, I am very glad to hear that such is the case—exceedingly glad to hear it, because contingent upon that fact is the success of the line. Unless that line has settlement alongside it the carriages will never pay for the grease on their wheels. That is just as certain as that 2 and 2 are 4. However, as I see the Minister for Public Works in his place, there is one question I wish to put to him. His colleague, as it appears to me, shows most unmistakably that he is rapidly acquiring land along the line, and I wish to ask him why it is that he is not doing his share and pushing on that line rapidly. Why, at the southern end of the line he has only let a contract for four or five miles this year. At the northern end twenty miles have been let, for what reason he knows best himself. I voted last year against the rapid construction of that line before land was acquired along it for settlement, because I recognized this: that, if I voted otherwise, amongst other things I should have been guilty of a distinct and absolute breach of faith with the southern members who walked into the lobby with me for the central route—I wish that to be thoroughly understood—and also because, as I have before remarked to the House, that vote of mine last year landed me in considerable tribulation during the recess. However, I have the approval of my own conscience. I just wish to say this with reference to the Central line: I believe that, as land is being acquired rapidly along its route for settlement, the work of the construction of the line should be proceeded with rapidly. I can say this with reference to the southern end of it: that I know that for sixty miles from Marton it will tap some of the finest country in New Zealand—finer country than members of this House, I believe, are aware of—the country lying between the Central line and the Ruahine Mountains. Well, in reference to this matter I shall not rake up past grievances—I am not a man of that disposition; but I think that the Minister for Public Works has hardly treated me fairly in reference to this whole question. I hope that our relations in the future will be of a more amicable nature than they have been in the past; for, although we are political opponents, I have no personal enmity to a political opponent; and I think I have shown the Minister for Public Works that he has hardly treated me fairly in this matter. Now, I wish to make

a few remarks on the policy of the Government. I am one, to use an expression of my own profession, who steers by his own compass—I like to form my own opinions and to hold my own views. I think the Government cannot be said to have a policy at all, and I do not blame them for that. I believe we hear too much of heroic policies altogether. I hold the country responsible for that. The country continually expects the Government to have a policy — to be doing something, even if that something means, which it too often does, mischief of some kind or another—that is, incumbering the Statute Book with legislation. If the Government has a policy at all it is the policy of the Opposition. The honourable member for Inangahua delivered a speech which I listened to attentively, as I always do to anything that falls from that honourable member, as I recognize in him one of the ablest men in this Assembly. He made a most ingenious defence of the Government. He wished to make it appear to us that the Government was perfectly justified in accommodating itself to circumstances. That is practically the position. Probably I am the greatest neophyte in the House. I came here under singular disadvantages. My life has been spent in utter obscurity. But it does not accord with my ideas of constitutional procedure that a Government should be without principles of its own, and accommodate itself to circumstances. I believe that a Government should come down with pronounced principles, and stand or fall by those principles. I could have made a better defence of the Government than the honourable member for Inangahua did. I should have said for them that the circumstances in this House were entirely exceptional. As such they have appeared to me. One Government had been in for several years, and we know perfectly well that, in this world of action and reaction, the country wished for a change. The country was not prepared for the return of the honourable member for Egmont and his party; and I might also put it in this way: that, as the pendulum swings either way in this world, it is injudicious to arrest its stroke. I think that, under the circumstances, the Government were justified in holding to their seats, because it was the wish of the majority of the House that they should do so. I could see nothing but chaos in the future. The country did not wish for the return of the party which had been in power, and I could not see any stability in those who were prepared to take their places. If there is any difference between the policy of the honourable member for Egmont and that of the present Government it is this: The honourable member for Egmont would make more roads out of borrowed money than the present Ministry. The present Ministry appear to think or believe that unless railways are made out of borrowed money nothing else will be reproductive. Now, this appears to me a most extraordinary thesis for a man of the unquestioned ability of the Premier to lay down. What is a road or a bridge? It is a means to an end, the same as a railway. To what end? To lessen the cost of production, and thus swell the volume of our produce. That is practically the position. If we made roads and ran cars on them, and charged fares for those cars, we should make them as directly reproductive as railways. I am one of those who believe, in reference to our railways, that they have been managed on a rule-of-thumb principle, not merely by this Government, but by preceding Governments. It is a subject I have given considerable thought to, and I believe that the railways have not been run for the benefit of the nation at large, which borrowed the money to make them. However, this is not the time to enter into that discussion; but I hold very pronounced views upon that question. The honourable member for Franklin North said that with our public works policy we should have an immigration policy. Well, it goes without saying that the more men with capital we introduce under present conditions the better. But I say that we must keep a judicious equilibrium between labour and capital, and we must not introduce more labour than there is capital to absorb: I do not think the Government is at fault in this respect. But I am quite in accord with those who believe that the Government should deal a little more leniently with severed families. I have in my mind's eye an instance of a man whose family is at Home, and whose earnings are entirely incapable of allowing a union of the family. In such cases I think the Government might be a little more lenient. I was just saying a few words in reference to roads, and I must say I quite agree with what fell from the honourable member for Napier in reference to that matter. This Government deserves a great deal of credit for the amount of work it has attempted to do. It has attempted a scheme of local finance which, although it does not meet with an unqualified approval, is yet, all things considered, a step in the right direction. But, if the Premier declines to make roads in outlying districts with borrowed money, and if he is inclined not to give facilities of education to those outlying districts, he will stunt the settlement and colonization of this country; and, when the history of the Government of which he is the head comes to be written, if he does not adopt different tactics I fear the record of colonization during his administration will be rather a melancholy one. It has been alleged during this debate that we have no parties in this House; and I quite agree with that assertion. It is absolutely ridiculous for any one to state that we have party ties in this House. We will assume, for argument's sake, that a question which is not now within the region of practical politics is thrown down on the floor of the House—that is, the question of Protection and Free-trade. If we each had to go into either lobby as Protectionists or Free-traders, where, then, would be the cohesion in the ranks of the Government party? The cohesion, as has already been remarked by the honourable member for Mount

Ida is of a utilitarian character. I shall vote for the second reading of this Bill if it is pushed to a division, because I recognize the fact that we have practically committed ourselves to undertakings which it is advisable should be completed. What would be the use of making the walls of a house without roofing it? It is absolutely necessary that we should push our present public works to completion; and I think that under existing conditions the demands of the Government upon the public purse are of an exceedingly moderate character. I do not take a gloomy view of the future of this beautiful colony. I say "beautiful colony:" I have been a great wanderer through the countries of the world, and in this colony I have made my home, because I prefer it to any other country I have visited; and I say that I do take a hopeful view of its future. I believe that it has great resources, and I have sufficient faith at least in the honourable gentlemen who sit on those benches to believe that they will use the money now asked for in the best interests of the colony. I am sure, at least, that they will use it so as to satisfy their supporters. I do not presume to be anything but a very humble member of the rank and file of this House; but, as I have alluded to a policy, I should like to furnish the Government with a policy, and I venture to say, that although I am not an assuming man, a better policy was never published in this House. That policy is the advice which Hercules of old gave to the wagoner—that we should advise every one in the country not to trust to this House, which is only a committee of the people, to rescue him from any depression which exists, or to banish it by any heroic policy, but rather to put his own shoulder to the wheel and extricate himself; because I am quite certain that it is only by steadfast and well-directed effort individually—by economy and industry individually—that we can again resume our course in the pathways of progress and prosperity.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I must confess that I have seldom listened to a speech so full of contradictions as the speech of the honourable member for Rangitikei. He commenced by telling us that he steered by no compass at all. He has just drifted about as every breath of wind drives him. He found fault with the present Government one moment because they had no policy; and the next moment he tells us that they have a policy, because they have taken up the policy of the Opposition. I would ask him now what has been the policy of the Opposition. I have now been a member of the House for a number of years, and I have so far failed—and other honourable members have failed also—to find out what the policy of the Opposition is. Their tactics, when in power, were these: The House met, and we sat here month after month, and the Financial Statement and the Public Works Statement were kept back until very near the end of the session—until the Government had managed to extract from the then Opposition the ideas of a few measures, which they adopted as their policy. But, strange to say, after the honourable gentleman made the remarks I began by referring to, he went on to state that he does not blame the Government for having no policy, because they ought to have none; and he next says their only policy is to stick to their seats, and he afterwards tells them that they ought to stick to their seats because we want them to do so. Now, a greater mass of contradictions in one speech I have never listened to. Then, the honourable gentleman found fault with the remarks the honourable member for Inangahua made in defence of the Government in saying they adapted themselves to the necessities of the case; but a little later on the honourable member for Rangitikei informed us that it is the proper function of the Government to adapt themselves to the circumstances of the case. The honourable gentleman said the Government should have no policy, and a little later on he said he would give them a policy. He also told us—speaking as to the merits and demerits of roads and railways—that it comes to just the same thing whether we make roads or railways, because we can charge tolls on roads, and so get some return for them, the same as from railways. But the honourable gentleman did not recognize the great difference there is in this respect: that the average cost of road-making is very much more than the cost of railways, and that on railways we pay for the cost of haulage, which is very different from paying a toll to be allowed to haul with our own power. The honourable gentleman also said there are no party lines here; but, strange to say, whenever a division involving the fate of the Government takes place he is invariably found voting against them; and if that is not showing party spirit and party differences I do not know what is. I think the honourable member for Mount Ida has also made some extraordinary statements this evening. That honourable gentleman told us that when he last addressed his constituents he was in a very great difficulty, and did not know how to put the position to them; but he ultimately decided to put it in the form of a question—thus: If nine and a half millions have produced a certain amount of depression, how much will ten millions produce? That is a very profound question: and it seems to have been so profound to the honourable gentleman that he did not enlighten us as to what the answer is. I rather pity the honourable gentleman for having been in such a quandary. I think I should have told those I was addressing not only what I thought the answer was, but that I could not support a Government which proposed to take what I believed to be a wrong course. But the honourable gentleman seems to have been afraid to say anything one way or the other. So he put the question to them, and did not give the answer.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I gave them that.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Well, if so, I do not know exactly where the thing comes in. The honourable member then gave what he stated to be the grounds of his opposition. He said

that in scientific investigations, when it was found that a given cause produced certain phenomena, if the cause was taken away and the phenomena remained it was proof that the phenomena had not been produced by that cause. So, he says, if borrowing is a cause of prosperity, if the borrowing remains the prosperity must remain: but instead of prosperity we had depression; consequently, borrowing was not the cause of prosperity. But I would ask the honourable gentleman, how can borrowing cause prosperity? If the honourable gentleman had said that the judicious expenditure of borrowed money induced prosperity, and that, if that judicious expenditure was taken away, then depression would follow, he would have said a sensible thing. Borrowing is nothing in itself, but the judicious expenditure of what is borrowed is something. To produce an effect there must be a cause; but surely mere borrowing in itself never caused anything in any shape or form.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—The Treasurer said it.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—My honourable friend must be rather weak to form the premiss of a proposition in which he himself admits there is nothing. The bulk of his speech was, in effect, this: that the expenditure of money can bring no prosperity. That was the basis of his argument about the nine and a half millions. But the honourable gentleman knows perfectly well that the judicious expenditure of money does cause prosperity. He says the only thing that can cause prosperity is to get production from the country, and to sell what is produced in the markets of the world at a profit. But does not the judicious expenditure of money tend to that very result? If by expending money we lessen the cost of the producer getting his produce to market—that is, if, say, by making a railway we enable the farmer to get his produce more cheaply to the nearest port—is not that really lessening the cost of production, and so helping to enable the producer to sell at a profit in the markets of the world? The honourable member then deprecated the Treasurer's wanting the public attention to be always directed to the public works policy, and he said the public works should give way to everything else which will raise the people of the country to a high political standard. The honourable gentleman instanced education; but I think he was rather unfortunate in his choice of an instance, because I think it could be shown that we in this colony devote more attention to education, and spend more proportionately on it, than in either of the other colonies, or, indeed, any country in the whole world. But does not this judicious expenditure on public works tend to bring about that political superiority for which my honourable friend strives? The honourable gentleman showed the cloven foot at last, for he told us that the reason he finds so much fault with the public works expenditure is that the Otago Central line is not pushed on so rapidly as he thinks it ought to be. The honourable gentleman finds fault with the amount scheduled in a Loan Bill for the Blenheim-Tophouse line. The honourable gentleman says that we are initiating new works. But this Blenheim-Tophouse line is a line far older in contemplation than the Otago Central is. The first public works proposals included a trunk railway from Invercargill to Cook Strait, and the Blenheim-Tophouse line is part of it. It was formerly a question whether the northern end of the line should go along near the coast or farther inland; but the late Government are responsible for choosing the Tophouse route. The. honourable gentleman urged that the Otago Central ought to be pushed on because money has been voted for it from time to time. But has not money been voted far oftener for other lines, and not been spent? Has not money actually been scheduled in the Loan Acts for the lines from Blenheim and Belgrove southwards, but spent on other works, even on the Otago Central?

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Well, where but from loan has the money spent on the Otago Central come from? In the last Loan Act £90,000 was scheduled for the line from Blenheim south, and £40,000 for the line from Belgrove south—a total of £120,000; and how has it been spent?

Mr. FERGUS.—And £300,000 was scheduled for the Otago Central too.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I am not speaking of that line now. Of this total of £120,000, only £29,000 has been spent on the works for which it was scheduled. The honourable member for Mount Ida gave credit to the honourable member for Napier, inasmuch as, though last year he was opposed to the Otago Central, this year he is in favour of it—that he has during the recess made himself acquainted with the work, and now admits that his former view on the subject was wrong. Where did the honourable member for Napier get the information which has effected the change?

An Hon. MEMBER.—From the Otago members.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I do not know that he can place much reliance on those members. Now, the Royal Commission said the Otago Central is one of those lines that ought never to have been begun.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What Royal Commission?

Mr. LEVESTAM.—The honourable member himself was a member of one Commission, and made a report which he has never had time to read; or if he had he would never have opposed the continuation of the southern trunk line as he has done. We have the report of the Engineer in Charge of the South Island, which speaks favourably of our railway; but there is no such report as to the Otago Central.

Mr. FERGUS.—Yes: there are two favourable reports on record.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Yes; but by whom were the reports made? That is the question. Altogether, I must confess that those honourable gentlemen to whom I have referred have not distinguished themselves by being very logical

in their deductions. There is another of my honourable friends who spoke yesterday—that was, the honourable member for Franklin North. I do not know that it is worth my while to follow him through his speech; yet he made some statements which I presume will go into *Hansard*, and perhaps it would be as well to correct them in a few particulars. My honourable friend was satisfied with giving a whole string of figures without going into any explanation, or telling us what was meant by them. He told us that the imports had fallen off, and that the exports had fallen off. I presume he meant us by that to come to the conclusion that the colony was in a much worse state than it really is in. But these figures, to be worth anything, should be amplified a little. He should also tell us the population—what it is and what it was; because, if our imports have lessened, and our exports have increased, then I think the colony is in a better condition. I think the Government have done all in their power to foster the local industries of the colony. He should also have told us that on the imports the profits of the producer are added to the price, and that to the exports something like 20 per cent. ought to be added. My honourable friend told us yesterday that we had not produced any machinery, or very little. If he had attended the Industrial Exhibition that was held here a short time ago he would have seen machinery displayed there which must have convinced him that a great deal has been produced here, or such perfection would not have been attained. I do not know, however, that we need pay much attention to what he says, because he tells us that from his earliest infancy he has been taught to look upon the public works policy with the greatest distrust and abhorrence. Seeing that the public works policy was only introduced sixteen years ago, my honourable friend must be so very young that his opinion should not carry any weight. He goes on afterwards to tell us that we ought to borrow more money, because we could not do without it. These have been the arguments from all the members that are opposed to the Government. They tell us the only thing they have to find fault with is that they had believed the Government were going into a very great borrowing scheme; and they are much disappointed that the Government have not done so, because they had made up their minds that they would make some very strong speeches against the Government, and they had not the opportunity of letting them off. We are told by the honourable member, too, that all members come here for selfish purposes. If I had been here I should have told him to speak for himself. I do not come here for myself, but for my district; and there are not many members here who have asked for so little as I have done. With regard to immigration, there is no doubt that we want more population; but I hold that it is absolutely necessary that we should borrow money and expend it in railways and roads, before we can contemplate bringing a large population here. We have been told also of the vast amount of money that has been borrowed in the past. The honourable member for Mount Ida spoke of the nine and a half millions that had been frittered away. I would, however, ask him to remember that it was former Governments that frittered it away, and very largely on unproductive works. The present Government have stated over and over again that they are opposed to borrowing merely for the sake of borrowing. They have said that the roads of the country should be made out of consolidated revenue as far as possible. They realize the fact that it cannot be done altogether out of consolidated revenue, and therefore they say, "We will lend you the money; but we know from past experience that roads have not always been made because they were wanted, but often for the mere purpose of causing expenditure in the district, and therefore we require that you should make yourselves responsible for part of this." When we consider the amount of money that has been uselessly spent in public buildings, I think we may well pause before continuing in such a course as has been followed in the past. I do not look forward to the future with the same despondency as my honourable friend. I look forward to a time of prosperity, and I believe that a judicious expenditure of public money will bring us to that state of prosperity which I hope to see.

Captain RUSSELL.—Sir, there is scarcely any topic which I can speak on to-night which has not been already spoken upon by the various members who have addressed you. Even the story of the wagoner and Hercules, which I had made up my mind to relate, has been narrated by another member; and it is difficult to say anything new that is worthy of attention. But one of the reasons—in fact, the principal reason—why I get up to address you, Sir, this evening is in consequence of the speech delivered by the honourable member for Inangahua—delightful in diction, but most dangerous in doctrine. What was his argument? His argument was that the Government should be guided by the ebb and flow of what passes as public opinion, and endeavour to float on the crest of the wave; that the members of this House—who are supposed to be the leading men of the country—should no longer attempt to guide, but only follow, those whose knowledge of public affairs must be less than their own—presumably because they are no longer fit to lead. The doctrine he preached was that the highest duty of a Minister of the Crown was to watch how the cat was going to jump. I, at any rate, have the courage of my convictions, and have got up to-night to say that such a doctrine is dangerous in the extreme to the colony; and, if we have not the courage to speak when we see the country on the road to perdition, the country will in all probability go to that perdition, from which a word of warning might save it. Sir, almost without exception, as honourable members have addressed you one after another, they have expressed more or less disapproval of the Loan Bill and the public works policy, but, notwithstanding that, they have each

decided to vote for the second reading of this Bill. Well, if there is any chance of a division on the Bill, I shall be happy indeed to tell against the Bill. I realize that it is impossible to throw the Bill out, but it is our duty to place our ideas on record if we think that a borrowing policy is inimical to the best interests of the country. That it is necessary that there should be a certain amount of expenditure I have admitted before; but the policy of spending large sums of money for the sake of expenditure I believe to be injurious; and I shall not hesitate to say so, whatever the result may be to me. Apart from a policy of a lavish public works expenditure, I conceive that this Loan Bill—or, rather, I should say, the schedule of the Loan Bill—is in itself very badly drawn. It inaugurates the commencement of a new series of public works which are absolutely unnecessary—which are absolutely not wanted by the country, nor wanted for any purposes of colonization. Also, the money which is placed upon this schedule seems to me to be distributed in a manner which is in itself inexpedient, and will not work for the benefit of the country. There are one or two of the railways, with which I am acquainted, to which I will briefly refer. I have said just now that there are several railways in this schedule which it is unnecessary to commence. One of these I will more especially mention—the railway from Westport to Inangahua. It was my good fortune to serve on the Commission which inquired into what is now known as the Midland Railway; and, among other things, it became my duty to visit the Town of Westport; and, in making official inquiries as to the best line of railway that could be made between the East and West Coasts, the point was mooted as to whether the railway could go from Westport to Reefton, and so over to the eastern coast. Sir, you will scarcely believe it that, although the Government have now brought down the sum of £63,000 on this schedule for the Westport and Inangahua Railway, the authorities in Westport would scarcely take the trouble to answer our questions when we asked them which way they desired the line should go. They wanted harbour works; and, when we asked them if they wanted a railway, they had no more thought of it than they have at the present moment—it had never crossed their minds. They reiterated, "We want a harbour." I speak on this subject from official knowledge: they had no notion whatever of demanding a railway, the commencement of which would be absolutely useless. And yet we find £63,000 put down for this railway, while other railways which would benefit by being pushed on with the money are stinted, and the money is frittered away in all directions where the people have not even asked for it. Coming to two other railways that I know of, there are the Woodville-Palmerston line and the Masterton-Woodville line. And here I should like to corroborate the statement of the honourable member for Napier. The honourable member for Waipawa has told us this evening that there was no promise made that the Woodville-Palmerston line should be gone on with. I presume he said this because he did not hear such a promise; but how any honourable member can say what was or was not promised to another when he was not present I cannot conceive. But what I remember of the occasion is this: There was no question, so far as I remember, of the letting of a contract down the Gorge; and, possibly, to that extent, the honourable member for Waipawa was right.

Sir R. STOUT.—Hear, hear.

Captain RUSSELL.—But I am also clear on this point: that there was a distinct assurance given that the line to Palmerston through the Gorge should be opened as soon as the Wellington-Manawatu line was finished. I have no recollection of a contract, but I have a distinct recollection that there was a promise that the line should be open to Palmerston as soon as the Manawatu line was completed. Then, again, the honourable member for Waipawa twitted me with being against all railways, and said that the result of the motion which I had the honour to move last session on the public works estimates prevented this Gorge line from being made.

Sir R. STOUT.—Hear, hear.

Captain RUSSELL.—Honourable members may say, "Hear, hear," but, although I am opposed to frittering away public money, I have never suggested that such a railway as that which runs from Napier to Tahoraite—which pays £4 18s. 9d. per cent.—should not be gone on with. What I protest against is railways being made that cannot possibly pay. That is folly. But a railway that is paying more than the interest on the cost of construction is one that I shall not oppose. But even under the alleged circumstances, we know that at this very present moment the surveys have not been completed on that line, and that it is impossible at the present time to call for tenders, whatever money the Government may have in hand, because the Public Works Department has not got the surveys made for the construction of the line. Then I come to the railway from Wellington to Woodville. It is possible that it may be necessary to form that railway by-and-by; but, owing to the distance from Woodville to Wellington by way of the West Coast being so much shorter than it is by the line through the centre of the Island by way of Masterton, I do not think it will be necessary to carry the line beyond Eketahuna for a considerable period. I may also point out that the result of completing the line from Palmerston to Woodville will be to connect the East Coast with Wanganui and Taranaki on the one side, and with Wellington and the South on the other. It will, in fact, be the connecting-link between the East and West Coasts and Wellington, and with the North Island Trunk line at Marton. The amount necessary to make that connection could be spent much more profitably during the next two years than any expenditure on the Woodville-Mauriceville line could be. It seems to me that there is

another very good reason why that latter line should not be pushed on at present. The special-settlement scheme, of which we hear so much, and of which so much is expected, but from which I fear very little good will come for a number of years, is now being tried in that district, and at the present time plenty of what we may call foreign capital is being poured into those bush districts. People who have taken up land are felling bush, erecting fences, building houses, and generally doing the work of colonization, and therefore there is a considerable amount of money-capital being spent there in that way. There is also being spent money in the construction of roads for the purpose of making the land available for settlement. There is, on the whole, great prosperity there. I suppose that there is more prosperity in those bush-districts at the present time than there is in any other part of the colony. Notwithstanding this, we are going to pour in this railway money, which I conceive to be almost useless expenditure. The people are not in want of money. I may be told that the people are in want of a railway for transport; but it is no such thing, for there is nothing to be sent out of this district, nor is there likely to be anything to be sent out for some time to come. When the people have felled their bush, have burned it, have fenced, and have grassed their land there may be something to send off the land; but that will not be for some time to come: and, in my opinion, it will be years before there will be anything to send off the land except, perhaps, stock, which will probably travel more cheaply on foot than by rail. But, certainly, for three or four years there will be nothing at all to send. And now here is another reason why I say, Do not push on this line now: in three or four years many of these deferred-payment settlers will probably be reduced to their last penny. It takes years to make a bush-farm pay; and it will, no doubt, be the case that when these men have sunk their capital in improving and stocking their lands they will be very short of ready cash. They will, no doubt, have plenty of food, but no money; and then, if ever, would be the time to push on public works in the district, so as to give them a chance to survive a bad time. They will have a certain amount of produce to send away, and they will, moreover, be "hard up," and the expenditure will be of great advantage to them. In the meantime the expenditure will be unnecessary, and certainly very unprofitable. There has been so much said about the missing £800,000 that it is almost unnecessary that I should say anything about it; but I wish to point out one circumstance to the House, and that is what appears to me to be the very unequal manner in which this money is likely to be expended, judging by the estimates which we have here under the head "Miscellaneous—Roads and bridges." In answer to a request which I made the other day for a survey for a road in that much-neglected part of the colony known as the East Coast, between Napier and Wairoa, I was told that there was no money available. The inhabitants of that part of the country have never had a fair share of the public works expenditure, and, in truth, they have been altogether neglected; and yet, when I asked that even surveys should be made, I was told that there was no money available for the purpose. Still, here, in these estimates, we find that the more populous districts and the richer parts of the country are to have large sums of money given to them for expenditure in the erection of bridges. In the district I have the honour to represent a road cannot be surveyed; but here there are proposals to spend tens of thousands of pounds for bridges and roads in districts which are well able to take care of themselves. I suspect that, when this missing £800,000 comes to be found, a good deal will be discovered in bridges in more favoured districts than that I have the honour to represent—I mean favoured by Ministers, not by Nature. The Colonial Treasurer, in speaking when introducing this Bill, told us we ought only to get new loans for the purpose of constructing railways. It may be considered a somewhat peculiar line of argument for me to take up, seeing that I contend that money should only be expended—and then with extreme care—upon works which are likely to be reproductive, when I say that money should be expended on roads as well as on railways. Well, the argument must be taken, not for what I think should be, but for what is; and, if large loans are raised, then they should be expended on roads as well as on railways. In fact, I am not quite sure that they should not be expended on roads in preference to railways; though what the honourable member for Nelson said is true, that the extension of railways through good land will lead to the sale of that land at an early period by bringing it into communication with the rest of the colony. But what I contend is that roads are absolutely necessary in order to make the railways pay; and, more than that, they are absolutely necessary in the interests of settlement, because you can have no satisfactory settlement unless you have roads along which people can travel from their land in order to get to the local centres, where they are in the habit of doing business. Unless there is some scheme by which the outlying districts are able to obtain a share of the money for the construction of roads, it seems to me that it is useless to push on railways. To build railways without at the same time making roads to feed them is much like building an aqueduct miles and miles and then finding that there are no rivers or streams to supply it. Unless there is an ample supply of roads to feed the railways, the railways cannot possibly obtain freight, and the railways might just as well not be formed at all. The Colonial Treasurer went on to say that the railways were worked for the benefit of settlement, and not for the benefit of property. I am glad to hear that such a policy is to be adopted; but at present it is notorious, or, at any rate, it is universally stated, that the railways have been managed upon anything but business prin-

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ciples. Happily, I am able to give an illustration of what I allude to. There is a large refrigerating establishment situated in Hawke's Bay. Probably it does a larger business of its kind than any other institution in the colony. I do not think I overstate the case when I say that it deals with a quarter of a million of sheep per annum. I am told that it is impossible that any large proportion, or any large quantity, of those sheep can be carried by rail to that establishment. Whether it could be done or could not be done I do not at present say; but the proprietor has absolutely assured me that a very large quantity of sheep might be brought to his establishment by rail, and at a profit to the department, if the tariff allowed it. I do know that the establishment does not use the railway very largely in moving sheep, and I also know that the fuel used in this establishment is, almost the whole of it, imported from New South Wales or across sea. The proprietor also assures me that he has a large amount of bush—at any rate, quite sufficient to supply his wants in the way of fuel. But the charges are so prohibitive that he cannot send his timber to the works by railway. In fact, he finds it cheaper to carry coal from Australia than it is for him to get timber from his own land for the works, and if the charges were more reasonable it would enable him to use timber for the whole of his fuel instead of coal; but the rates are prohibitive, and it is cheaper for him to obtain coal from Newcastle instead of taking timber from his own land, which is only distant fifty or sixty miles. These I believe to be facts; and I commend the matter to the notice of the Minister for Public Works. If it is true that the railways can be managed in the interests of settlers, the sooner it is done, and the sooner complaints of the kind I have mentioned are removed, the better. My honourable friend the member for Egmont has stated, during this session, that the Stout-Vogel Government must be extraordinary administrators, for they do not know how the money is being expended; and he illustrated his arguments by proving that £800,000, or rather £1,090,000, had gone astray in the accounts: and, as a matter of fact, neither of them did know what money they were spending. I am bound to say this: that that argument has been applied all round. I cannot remember any Ministry which has not had a similar charge laid against it. Is it true that successive Ministries have not known how the money has gone? Is it possible also that we, the members of this House, do not know how the money has gone? Is it true that we, who ought to be able to inform the country, do not know where it has gone? How can the country know, if we do not know? I believe it is the fact; I believe that neither Ministers, nor members, nor the country have the least idea how the money is expended. I am perfectly convinced of this, and say that that point alone is one which should induce us to consider the advisableness of curtailing our public works expenditure, for it is a state of things which should be put an end to at once. The Native Minister stated also that the Colonial Treasurer did not denounce his opponents—that he only criticised. I will not take the trouble to refute that; but I may say I have a very distinct remembrance of how I myself was denounced in all parts of the colony during the recess, and by no one more roundly than by the Colonial Treasurer. It has been suggested to me by an enemy that the denunciations heaped upon me have done more to immortalize my name than anything I could have possibly done myself. Well, I am prepared to leave it in that position; but the Colonial Treasurer's denunciations will not deter me from saying that I think we ought to be very careful in our public works expenditure. A good deal has been said about the value of our railways, and about the soundness of the principle of constructing these railways; but let us take the results as given by the Minister for Public Works himself in his Statements. It will be admitted that the railways hitherto made have been made through the most productive and populous parts of the colony; and what has the result been? In 1882 the profit was £3 18s. 2d. per cent. on the capital invested; in 1885 it was reduced to £2 15s. 4d. per cent.; and in 1886, taking the Minister's own statement, it was £2 12s. per cent. How long is this thing to go on? Is it to be the more lines of railway we make, the more public works we create, and the more money we spend the less return we are to get from it? It may be all right; it may be that this will not lead to repudiation; but in the case of a man managing his private business I know what the result would be in the end. If he borrows money from his banker at 7 or 8 per cent., and only succeeds in getting 3 or 4 per cent. upon it, the inevitable result is that he goes into the Bankruptcy Court. I admit that a State is somewhat different from an individual, but a relative amount of prudence ought to be applied in managing the affairs of the colony: if not, a day of retribution must come upon it. We had, in 1885, 1,477 miles of railway, and a revenue of £1,045,000. In 1886—that is, this year—we have increased our railways to 1,613 miles, and have increased our revenue to £1,047,000. I am leaving out the odd figures. As the result of this we have increased our miles of railway by 136 and have increased our revenue by £1,706. It may be that by going on in this way we shall be bringing the country into a state of great prosperity; but I confess I do not see it myself. It seems to me, on the contrary, that the more railways we make the more serious will be the deficiencies in the revenue when we come to meet them. The 136 miles of new railways added to our lines this year cost £662,620, and, the increase of revenue being only £1,706, it is evident they earned something under £13 per mile. Then, I find these words in the Statement of the Minister for Public Works: "I think honourable members, when they realize this fact, will admit that the result is a favourable one." Sir, that is one of the most extraordinary sentences which it was possible to put

into a Public Works Statement. We have not yet come to the bottom of the abyss, because the almost hundreds of miles of railway which have been constructed in a very short time have yet to suffer, and, when all the wooden viaducts and huge bridges, built of timber, begin to decay in the course of a very few years, a very serious expenditure must take place to replace those works by more permanent structures. It seems to me that if we do as I contend we ought we should pay for all such repairs out of revenue. We should then have to deduct enormously from the net annual revenue, and, instead of getting £2 12s. per cent. from our railways, probably the percentage on the cost of construction within a very short period would go down to 2 per cent. at the very outside. Then comes the question, To what extent have we benefited by the public works? Our gold export has diminished. The wool exported in 1884 was worth £130,628 less than it was in 1875, or ten years ago. I do not say that the public works are to be blamed for that; but I only point out the difficulty of paying interest under such circumstances. The yield of grain is diminishing enormously. Our exports have during the same time increased, in round numbers, one million, and our population has nearly doubled. It is true that we produce much more in the colony instead of importing; but I think it must be a fact that less money is circulating now amongst the people, and, consequently, that they are less able to bear taxation than they were in former years. I know the Colonial Treasurer prepared a table last year by which he showed that there was no more taxation now per head of the population than there was in 1870; but I maintain that under the Customs revenue we are more heavily taxed, and that on those articles which are manufactured in the colony now we are paying a very heavy taxation indeed—indirect, no doubt, and shown in no table of statistics, but caused by the heavy duties imposed on similar articles imported, which enables the manufacturer to charge the public the cost of the article *plus* the import duty. Since the public works policy we have created the beer Excise, the property-tax has been introduced, the Sinking Fund has been absorbed, and more burdens have been thrown on the local bodies, and the Customs duties nearly doubled. Why is all this? Is it not direct evidence that the public works policy has failed? And, in addition, we have swarms of unemployed. With increased taxation and numbers of people unemployed in the colony, who can say that the public works policy has been a success? But yet the cry is, "More expenditure, more expenditure; go on borrowing. If you only go on long enough, prosperous and happy days will return again." I do not believe that, but assert it will bring us very near indeed to that national misfortune which is called repudiation. I do not think we would willingly contemplate repudiation, but fear the day will come when it will be almost an impossibility to pay our interest in full. The Colonial Treasurer—and I think the honourable member for Egmont has also been guilty of the same heresy—in saying that the people are not taxed more heavily now than they were before the public works policy, omitted one important consideration, and that is that the male adult population is not proportionately so numerous as it was some years ago. These are some figures which I have extracted from census returns, which bear on the subject, and which justify my argument that, per head of population, we are more heavily taxed at present, inasmuch as the breadwinners have decreased proportionately. The last census before the inauguration of the public works policy was in 1867, when the proportion per cent. of males between twenty-one and fifty-five years of age —which I take to be the bread-earning age —was 59·44. In 1881, which is the last census I have been able to get at, the percentage is 46·89—a reduction of 13 per cent. during those years. In the year 1864 the percentage of the bread-earning class was 61 of the population of the colony, showing the adult male population which originally preponderated in the early days of colonization is steadily diminishing, as of course it naturally must and should. We have passed through an era of almost unexampled prosperity. We have had tens of millions of public money expended amongst a mere handful of people, and a similar amount in municipal and other local loans. Large sums of private money have also been spent. There is no place probably on the globe where so much capital has been poured out on so small a population in so few years. We have been paying much of our railway revenue and Customs out of borrowed money, as our luxuries and our travelling have been paid out of our borrowed money, and not from our legitimate earnings. We shall go on increasing our debt, no doubt; but, though we do go on, it will not be in the same proportion as it was, and we shall have less money, and more people to spend it amongst; and the rampant days of prosperity have gone, I am afraid, never to return. I shall be told, perhaps, that the cessation of expenditure will injuriously affect the poorer clauses. Unprofitable expenditure can do these classes no good. It may give a temporary fillip; but that is not for the good of the country. We must act for the many, and not for the few: we must think of those who are bound to live here and to die here. Though there may be a small temporary prosperity brought about by this lavish expenditure, we must remember those people who will have to remain in the colony, and who will have to pay the taxation hereafter. These are the people that we must study, for, inevitably, this large expenditure will come upon them. They cannot take care of themselves. The richer classes may be able to go away; but the poorer cannot—they must remain, and, in their interest, we must be prudent. I am sorry to say that in many places in this colony I have heard the same policy advocated as was advocated by the Gladstone Ministry when they set out to relieve General Gordon—a

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policy that was termed the "smash and scuffle policy." A great number of people in this colony have advocated a policy of scuttle first and smash afterwards—a "boom and be off" policy. That is a policy which I have heard advocated in many parts of the colony. Every member in this House would stand aghast were I to dare to use the expression "repudiation;" but in what, I ask, does that differ from the "boom and be off" policy? Sir, when that policy comes to be advocated, not by the poorer but by the richer classes, who say, "Let us have more loans to bring about a rise in values, so that we may sell and clear out," do not they virtually repudiate their engagements to the colony? And who shall say that the notorious article in the *Standard* is absolutely unjustifiable?—I dare not, for one. I know I shall be called a disciple of the "lie down and wait" party; but here I may say that my practice is that of the wagoner in the fable, of which simile, by the way, I have been partly robbed by the honourable member for Rangitikei. Still, I would point out that we are not a "lie down and wait" party. When the wagoner found himself in difficulties he knelt down and prayed to Hercules to help him, and Hercules answered, "Put your shoulder to the wheel and help yourself." But, Sir, we dare not pray to Hercules; we should fear that great god might come down and sweep our Augean stable. No; we kneel and pray to Plutus and beg of him to come to us and help us with his metals—his gold; but there are some of us who believe that honest independence and individual effort are to be preferred to borrowed and squandered gold, and, if that is a policy of "lie down and wait," we are proud of the policy, call it what you will.

Debate adjourned.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 22nd July, 1886.

Local Bodies' Loans Bill—Stoats and Weasels—Local Bodies' Loans Bill—Employment of Females and Others Bill—Civil Service Reform Bill—Companies' Branch Registers Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

LOCAL BODIES' LOANS BILL.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN brought up the following reasons for the Council insisting on its amendments in the Local Bodies' Loans Bill:—

"The object of clause 38 of the Local Bodies' Loans Bill is to obtain the real opinion of the ratepayers, so far as that can be made evident by a majority, more or less pronounced, of exercisable votes. As the burden of taxation necessarily imposed, if loans be raised, must be borne for a long period of time, and not always, or even generally, by those at whose instance the debt is incurred, it is but right that there should be reasonable precaution against recklessness and improvidence. In practice, no serious difficulty has been found in eliciting the 'real opinion' of ratepayers by this method. The polls taken under 'The Napier Harbour Board Empowering Act, 1884,' and under 'The Gisborne Harbour Board Act, 1884,' may be cited as evidence. In each of these cases, in which a majority of the whole was required, a vote of the ratepayers of a very extensive district, which was almost unanimous, was obtained.

"The words 'votes which can be exercised' have no other meaning than the total number of votes on the roll. As the rolls are periodically made up, the 'non-existent' voters must be, at any time, a minute quantity. The non-residence of a voter, as it does not absolve him from taxation, ought not to deprive him of his franchise. In practice the words 'which can be exercised,' or their equivalent, have not been found to present any ambiguity.

"The clause 38, as passed by the House of Representatives, did not, as is asserted, provide ample safeguard against undue borrowing, it being possible under its provisions so to operate as that a small interested, and therefore active, minority could impose serious permanent burdens upon a district.

"The principle affirmed by clause 38, as amended by the Legislative Council, has been previously recognized by the General Assembly, and in practice has been found beneficial."

STOATS AND WEASELS.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES, in moving the motion standing in his name, said,—Sir, a careful perusal of the report of the Rabbit Nuisance Committee confirms me in the propriety of the course which I am now taking, because I can find no just reason in the report for the course which is there proposed to be taken. On the contrary, I find that the opinion of the Committee itself appears to be that the step in question would not be productive of any material good results—certainly not results of a character to justify the proposal to introduce into this colony large and constant supplies of destructive vermin such as stoats and weasels. I would wish to say also that in the action I am now taking I have no desire in any shape or way to obstruct the objects of the Committee. I, in common with most other sensible people, I suppose, fully appreciate the danger by which one of our chief industries is threatened, and the very adverse circumstances that people who are now engaged in carrying it out are suffering under. We must all feel very great sympathy with their position, and I am sure we all desire to do everything in our power to aid in destroying the pest with which they are threatened. All that I object to is that, in this particular case, in importing the animals in question we are following an unwise and dangerous course. I will ask the Council not to suppose that this is a matter of trivial mportance. We know by experience what a

few mistakes of this kind have led to, and what have been the consequences in many cases. It has often occurred to me that, starting as we did in the early days in this colony with a clean sheet, so to speak—without any noxious animals of any kind—it was wonderfully short-sighted on our part and on the part of the earlier Governments not to take the subject of acclimatization in hand from the first, and insist that no animals should be imported into this colony without a very careful examination of their merits and demerits. I need hardly point out some of the mistakes and their consequences. From sentimental reasons more than anything else, we imported the sparrow; and what has been the consequence? At the present moment it is doubtful whether the sparrow has been more a benefit or an evil. At any rate, in the agricultural portions of the colony it is costing thousands of pounds to the farmers to keep the sparrow under control. Then, some one in the early days thought how very pleasant and agreeable it would be to have a little water-cress for breakfast! The water-cress was introduced; the water-cress ran riot; and now a yearly rate is imposed in many places in order to clear the rivers of the pest. Then, again, we imported the lark purely from motives of sentiment. The larks are considered by the farmers to be even more destructive than the sparrows. To come nearer the point, some gentleman in the early days, wishing to have a little sport, imported the rabbit. We know now what has been the fate of the rabbit, or, rather, what has been the fate of those who are suffering from the inroads of the rabbit. We are asked to remedy this evil by importing most destructive predatory animals. I think we may well pause before listening to the advice of the Committee on this question, and asking the Government to turn the Crown lands of the colony into preserves for stoats and weasels. I came across a paragraph the other day in a newspaper, which related in rather an amusing way some of the results of importing noxious animals into the country, and then importing antidotes. With the permission of the Council, I will read it:—

"If our experience of this folly has not been enough, there are other countries able to furnish terrible examples without end. The case of Jamaica has been amusingly described. In order to put down the native black rat, a Jamaican Governor of the last century brought in the 'cane piece rat.' This animal ate black rats certainly, but, for choice, made its meal on the sugar canes, and did the plantations immense damage. A species of ant was then imported to eat the young rats, but was found, when too late, to prefer almost everything else of an edible nature in Jamaica. So a large cull frog was brought from South America to prey on the ants. Alas! the bull frog [illegible] ducklings and young [illegible], the mongoose was tried as a [illegible] for the cane piece rats, and, sure [illegible] very considerable havoc amongst [illegible]. But even a mongoose will not live on [illegible] of slaughtered rats, and when the cane-piecers ran short the mongoose helped itself to anything and everything which seemed at all nourishing or agreeable. Most Jamaicans of to-day talk rather bitterly of the wisdom of their acclimatizing ancestors; and this is not wonderful. We ourselves know a somewhat similar feeling. Yet there are men amongst us who, in their panic at a dangerous enemy like the rabbit, are prepared to repeat once more the old blunder. Surely the unreason of such a step should be logically plain enough."

We are asked to import stoats and weasels in large and constant supply. It is well, perhaps, that we should know something of their habits. There is nothing more difficult to obtain than accurate and definite information on any matters; and I may say that in the case of stoats and weasels, which we are asked by the Committee to import in large and constant supplies, I was rather surprised at one of the most active members of the Committee being entirely in the dark as to their rate of increase. He said they bred once a year; whereas, as a matter of fact, they breed two or three times a year in the Old Country, and would most probably breed four or five times a year here. I will read the following extracts from standard works on natural history relating to the habits and nature of the stoat and weasel. The first is from a work by Mr. Wood, who says of the weasel—

"The audacity of this little creature is really remarkable, although its diminutive size renders it an insignificant opponent to man or dog; yet it can wage a sharp battle even with such powerful foes, and refuses to yield except at the last necessity. It is very fond of eggs and young birds of all kinds, and robs the nests of eggs or young. Like the polecat and others of the same group, the weasel is most destructive in its nature, killing many more animals than it can devour, simply for the pleasure of killing. Even such large animals as hares have been said to fall victims to the weasel. As an instance of its exceeding audacity, the following may be cited: 'Two men were riding near Cheltenham; one dismounted, leaving his horse in charge of the other; a weasel came out of the hedge, fastened on the fetlock of the horse, and would not loosen its hold until killed by the owner of the horse.' Several instances are on record in which a man would have been worsted by the assaults of weasels had he not been rescued by timely assistance. It is well known that weasels will unite their forces for the purposes of attack, and will hunt down their game in regular form. The number of young which the weasel generally produces at each birth is four or five, and there are usually two or even three litters in each year."

Of the stoat, Mr. Wood says,—

"The stoat is considerably larger than the weasel, measuring rather more than fourteen inches in total length. It is a most determined hunter, pursuing its game with such pertinacious skill that it seldom escapes. The hare, though far swifter than the stoat, and though a fierce and determined fighter when it

is matched against animals that are possessed of twenty times the muscular powers of its assailant, frequently falls a victim to the stoat. As to the food of the stoat, it seems to be easily contented in this respect, killing and eating almost any description of wild animals, birds, and reptiles. Birds' nests of all kinds are plundered by this incorrigible poacher. On account of its agile limbs, sharp teeth, and ferocious disposition, even a single stoat would be an unchancey opponent for an unarmed man; but if several stoats should unite to attack a man he would find himself in a bad case, armed or not. Such a circumstance was lately told me, my informant having heard it from the principal actor in the scene. A gentleman was walking along a road near Crickdale, when he saw two stoats sitting on the path. He picked up a stone and knocked one over; the other uttered a loud and peculiar cry, which was answered by a number of its companions, who issued from a neighbouring hedge and sprang upon their assailant, running up his body and striving to reach his neck. When he saw the stoats coming to the attack, he picked up a handful of stones, thinking of repelling his little enemies, but they came boldly on in spite of stones and stick; fortunately, he had on a woollen comforter, which protected his neck. Finding he had no chance of beating off the pertinacious animals, he flung away his stick, and, pressing his hands to his neck, ran home as fast as he could. By degrees several of the animals dropped off, but when he arrived at his stable no less than five stoats were killed by his servants as they hung on his person. His hands, face, and part of his neck were covered with wounds. The distance from the place where he was attacked to his own home was nearly four miles."

This is a work to be found in the library, and it is essentially a work of authority on the subject. I will next quote a few remarks from another writer, Mr. Richard Jeffries, a writer of the present day—one whose very pleasant papers are to be found in most of the London papers and leading magazines, and who is the author of some delightful books on natural history that are to be found in our library. He says,—

"The thirst of the weasel for blood is insatiable. The keeper looks upon the weasel and stoat as bitter foes, to be ruthlessly exterminated with shot and gun. He lays to their charge deadly crimes of murder—the death of rabbits, hares, birds; the theft and destruction of young birds; even occasional abstraction of chickens close to his very door, despite the dogs chained there. They are not easily shot, being quick to take shelter at the sight of a dog; they will snap viciously at the dog that overtakes them, even when sore wounded, always aiming to fix their teeth in his nose, and fighting savagely to the last gasp. The keeper slays a wonderful number in the course of a year; yet they seem as plentiful as ever.

"But even more remarkable is the list of those creatures which have stood their ground in spite of traps, guns, and dogs. Stoats and weasels are always shot when seen; they are frequently trapped, and in every manner hunted to death, and their litters destroyed, the last the most effective mode of extermination. But, in spite of the unceasing enmity directed against them, stoats and weasels remain common; they still take their share of game, both winged and ground. Stoats and weasels will not be killed out. As they are both defenceless creatures, and not even swift of foot, being easily overtaken in the open, their persistent continuance is curious: if any reason can be assigned for it, it must be because they spend much of their time in burrows, where they are comparatively safe; and because they do not confine themselves to woods, but roam cornfields and meadows. Certainly if man has tried to exterminate any creature he has tried his hardest to get rid of these two, and has failed. It is even questionable whether their numbers show any appreciable diminution. Kept down to the utmost in one place, they flourish in another."

I do not know, although it is my business to bring an indictment against the stoat and the weasel, that I can prove more than what is here stated by these impartial natural-historians. We find that these little animals are most insatiable, bloodthirsty, audacious robbers; that they hold their own against armies of gamekeepers, against the whole country population, against boys and dogs, and are to be found in as great numbers now in England as they were two or three hundred years ago: and these are the animals we are asked to import, or, rather, the Government is asked to import to turn loose on unfenced ground—lands of the roughest description, where they will have ample supplies of food, where no man will interfere with them, where they will hold their own from this time forward, and where they will probably increase at twice or three times the rate they increase at in the Old Country. On looking at the report of the Committee I am surprised to find that no reasons of any weight at all are assigned why such an infliction as this should be imposed on the people of this colony. It is evident to my mind that this is a piece of panic legislation. The very plans attached to this report point to the same conclusion. They divide the colony into districts where the rabbits swarm, where they are more or less hurtful, and where they will come if they are not stopped; and it is on these grounds—grounds of pure panic—that I believe Parliament is asked to support a report which recommends the introduction of these noxious animals. I would ask the Council to consider whether we should not pause—whether we should agree to commit this wrong in the future on the colony. I find in the last paragraph of the report that the Committee recognizes that the means it recommends for the destruction of the pest are not radical cures; and that, until some discovery shall be made more searching and fatal in its effects than anything at present known, the absolute eradication of the pest cannot be looked for. So that, if even we import large

and constant supplies of these animals, we still, according to the Committee, cannot hope for a cure of this rabbit-pest. Surely, if that is the case, we may well leave out this one particular recommendation of the Committee—a recommendation fraught with great danger and future trouble to the agricultural parts of the colony. What will be the inevitable effect if these waste lands of the Crown are turned into preserves for raising unlimited numbers of stoats and weasels? Is it to be supposed that they will remain there? Can it be supposed that the rabbits themselves will remain there in the midst of preserves of stoats and weasels, when the rest of the country is open to them to go where they like? The rabbits will leave these lands and spread themselves faster over the country, and the stoats and weasels will inevitably follow them, and go down into the settled parts of the country. They will then, as a matter of course, become pests to the farmers, who will be unable to raise their poultry in safety, and the stoats and weasels will become, as they are elsewhere, an intolerable nuisance. It has been said that it is quite out of the question that they will attack lambs. My own opinion is entirely different. It is said that it is almost unknown that lambs suffer from the attacks of these animals at Home. The reason is perfectly obvious. The care of sheep at Home is a totally different thing from what it is here. During the lambing-season especially, lambs are under the continuous and watchful care of the shepherd. Here, in the neighbourhood of the country where these animals are to be turned out, will be found large runs and large flocks of sheep. During the lambing-season the sheep are driven to the quietest place that can be found, and where there is the least interruption. Then, they are only looked at once or twice during the course of the week, to see that they are resting quietly. That is as much care as is required. Under these circumstances, it appears to me to be the most likely thing in the world that, if we are to raise large preserves of these destructive little animals, in the course of time they will make themselves perfectly free of the lambs. I am satisfied that in the future we shall find that the honourable gentlemen who are now so very anxious that the Government should import these stoats and weasels and turn them loose on the waste lands of the Crown will be just as anxious for the Government to take steps at an enormous expense to destroy them. I trust the Council will agree to the motion I have put on the Order Paper. I trust we shall not permit such an injustice to the country as to recommend the course which it has been proposed should be taken by the Government; and I trust the Government, even if they should be recommended to take that course, will have the firmness not to adopt the suggestion until they find out more clearly than they have at present any opportunity of doing, what the general opinion of the colony on this question is likely to be.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That, in the opinion of this Council, it is highly inexpedient that the Government should take steps to provide a large and constant supply of the destructive vermin known as stoats and weasels, as recommended in the report of the Joint Rabbit Nuisance and Sheep Act Amendment Committee."—(*Hon. Mr. Reeves.*)

The Hon. Mr. BATHGATE.—I have very great sympathy indeed with those who are at present suffering from the rabbit-pest; but I also share very strongly in the alarm which the Hon. Mr. Reeves has expressed in regard to the future prosperity of the colony if we are to permit the Government to introduce a continuous supply of ravenous beasts of prey such as stoats and weasels. We have to thank the honourable gentleman for the very clear way in which he has stated his case, and also for having referred us to the important authorities he has quoted, bearing so very forcibly on the subject. The Committee strongly urged that the Government should without delay take steps to have a large and constant supply of stoats and weasels. If we are to gather any main fact from the report, it is this: that the pest has increased, that all the means hitherto adopted to suppress or mitigate it have utterly failed; in other words, that the machinery which has been set up at the expense of the colony for the suppression of this pest has utterly broken down. How could it be otherwise? The very nature of the machinery was certain to lead to such a conclusion. This colony is very fast from year to year drifting into this position: that we are governed by experts. The Ministers of the Crown are as nothing in the hands of these experts: they are the complete slaves and subordinates of the underchiefs in all departments. And I charge this department with having already inflicted a serious and aggravated injury on the colony in the introduction of stoats, weasels, and ferrets, and other animals. I am perfectly satisfied that no Minister of the Crown, no educated man taking any large hold of what is good for the country, would ever dream of introducing ravenous beasts of prey. No doubt the rabbits thrive in an extraordinary degree in this country; but are we on that account to introduce the natural enemies of the rabbits? And what is the object in view? It is that these natural enemies should overcome this plague. I suppose that the department fully expects that this dangerous experiment and their labours will ultimately end in the rabbits, at least, being kept under. Then, here is the position in which the thing will be left: We shall have the plague of rabbits subdued, but, instead of the plague of rabbits, we shall have swarms of these dangerous animals in their place. After these animals have done their work, can any profitable use be made of them? Will they form, in any shape whatever, an article of commerce? Certainly not. These ravenous animals will be left to prey upon whatever is left suitable for their subsistence. The whole thing appears to me to be an utter absurdity. I am afraid the mischief is done already. The remedy of introducing these animals will undoubtedly prove worse than

the disease; but I am afraid we are suffering from the fatal step of the original introduction of these vermin. I am informed, on the best authority, that an honourable member of this Council saw fit to introduce stoats, weasels, and ferrets upon his estate in a southern portion of the colony. I understand that since the introduction of these vermin there is not a single duck to be found within twenty-four miles of the estate. It is quite well known in natural history that these animals have attacked men repeatedly. I saw an account in the newspapers the other day of a mother finding a weasel at the throat of her child. If these animals spread it will be impossible for surveyors to camp out in prosecuting their duties. It will be dangerous, too, for stock-drivers, who have often to sleep out for many nights. Sleeping on the ground will become absolutely impossible. I have no doubt whatever, if these vermin overcome the rabbits, they will attack any living animal that they can possibly overcome; and it is idle for us to say they will never attack lambs. Who could have foretold ten or twelve years ago that the keas would prove so destructive a plague as they have proved in some districts in the South Island? It would be impossible for small settlers to keep poultry: we should probably have to mourn the scarcity of poultry and eggs; and thus, too, a valuable export might be cut off. We should destroy all chances of our small settlers having an article of trade open to them by which they could increase their resources. In every aspect, looking at the introduction of these ravenous animals, I am positively filled with fear and dismay. There was never a more dangerous step proposed to be taken than the introduction of such animals into a colony like this. I have no hesitation, therefore, in coming to the conclusion that this part of the report should not be acted upon. If you ask me to provide an efficient remedy, I will tell you one. There was considerable alarm seven or eight years ago, when the spread of rabbits became general; but in some quarters they were regarded as the friends of the people. The true remedy is to break up large estates and the waste lands of the Crown into small sections, and to settle industrious settlers upon them. I am bound to say there would be no trouble with rabbits after that. I have very great pleasure in supporting the motion.

The Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON.—The Hon. Mr. Reeves commenced his remarks in a way which seemed to me rather to infer that the Committee have placed in that report all the information they have obtained, and that they have expressed in that report all that they have done to get information regarding this pest in the colony. I might, perhaps, refer to a report to which the honourable gentleman has already referred. It is from an article which appeared in the *Lyttelton Times*, and it was from that article that the honourable gentleman quoted a little with regard to the introduction of the animals in Jamaica. That article commences in this way:—

"For the last two months a Parliamentary Committee has sat in Wellington to consider a means of meeting the rabbit-pest. So far as is known, the Committee has done nothing yet except consider; but rumour has it that its members are about to do something—something that had much better be left undone."

I infer from that that the writer of that article either did not know that the Committee were taking evidence and making all inquiries with regard to the pest, or that he was not willing to give that information to others. The Committee have had very many sittings. They have examined a great many persons of experience in the matter of rabbits, and they have got answers to questions relating to the rabbit-pest from all parts of the colony. The object has been to get opinions from every side regarding the subject. The result is this: that not only did the witnesses strongly urge the adoption of this course, but, out of sixty-eight or seventy replies received from different parts of the colony, the answers have been almost unanimously in favour of the introduction of these animals. I quite agree with the Hon. Mr. Reeves that stoats and weasels are undesirable animals if there is no occasion for importing them. I would not import them for amusement or where there was no occasion. But we must recollect what this matter is we are dealing with. The report states that the question is not second in importance to any that can engage the attention of the Legislature. I maintain that that is a correct statement. We hear from all parts of the colony of the dreadful ravages committed by rabbits. This pest certainly has cost the colony at least two millions sterling, and we cannot, it appears to me, see the end of it. It calls upon us to act in the way which we consider most effective. It is a question of extreme importance, and it is on these grounds that the importation of these animals is recommended. I would point out that it is recommended that these animals should be placed on the roughest and most inaccessible portions of the Crown lands of the colony—districts where it is impossible to deal with the rabbit-pest in any other way. It was shown clearly to the Committee that, whilst in ordinary country poisoning by grain is very effective, and may keep the rabbits down, in the high and unoccupied lands it is impossible in many instances to carry grain for the purpose of poisoning the rabbits. It has been urged that what we should do is to settle the land—to break up the large holdings. There are some honourable members who never lose an opportunity of raising that cry. What would be the state of the colony now if we had not had large holdings as well as small? It is useless to talk of at once cutting up the land into small holdings and introducing settlers upon these holdings. I quite acknowledge that in thickly-populated districts rabbits will be kept down: in fact, in agricultural districts they will be kept down as soon as we can prevent the rabbits coming in great numbers from the high lands. The way proposed by the Com-

mittee is the only way we can see at the present moment of dealing with the matter. I hope honourable members will not adopt this motion. The conclusion come to by the Committee was not arrived at hastily; it was not come to without a large amount of evidence being taken, and the opinions of a great many people being received. I think I can fairly say that the general voice of the colony is in favour of adopting this, which appears to be the only safe remedy for the rabbit-pest. Even supposing stoats and weasels became very numerous in some parts of the colony, they would not be found in any numbers among the small settlers. If the rabbits were kept down the stoats and weasels could easily be got rid of. Stoats and weasels are easily trapped. The Committee report that the Government will be obliged to prevent by all means in their power the destruction of stoats and weasels in those districts where they are turned out. Stoats and weasels are very easily caught and destroyed. I say again that I hope honourable members will not lightly reject a report of this description, because I am very certain it is most necessary that these animals should be introduced.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—I am much pleased that my honourable friend has brought this motion forward. He has done it in the way that he does everything which he undertakes in this Council. First of all, he has tried to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the subject. Every honourable member will give him credit for being disinterested in the views he takes in this matter, seeing that he is not so personally concerned in it as some other honourable members are. The honourable gentleman deserves all the more credit, therefore, for having studied the matter so carefully. I am sorry the honourable gentleman was not a member of the Committee; for then we should have had a question of so much importance as to whether the introduction of these animals would be detrimental or otherwise properly considered. My honourable friend has mentioned several kinds of animals which have been introduced already as having proved a great nuisance; but I entirely disagree with him in regard to what he has said concerning sparrows. He has in a wonderful manner painted the noxious animals the introduction of which is now proposed. Bengal tigers and lions are nothing to them. Barnum was very great as a showman; but, if he could have been so fortunate as to pick up with some one to describe these animals in the way the honourable gentleman did, I think he would have achieved even greater success than he did.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES.—Not my description.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—Well, it was a quoted description. The honourable gentleman quoted a story of a man who, when four miles from home, was attacked by weasels, which hung on to him for a long time and were ultimately killed on the man reaching home. It seems to me they were a long time in trying to kill him. I admit that stoats and weasels are very dangerous animals to introduce; but we have a desperate case to deal with, and desperate remedies are necessary. And I am not sure whether it would not, on the whole, be a mistake to bring those animals into this country. The coloured maps attached to the report show where rabbits are very thick indeed —where they are what is called "dangerous," and where they are just beginning to spread. From all the evidence we have gathered it seems to be an established fact that the rabbits are spreading very fast at the present time. Now, if these animals are to be introduced, and are to live here and to be a success, you will have to turn them out amongst the rabbits. The first effect of this step will be to scatter the rabbits in every direction over the country. I see the Government are recommended to introduce them in large numbers; but I am of opinion that their introduction will have no effect in this country if you allow them to spread east, north, south, and west. You can do nothing unless you fence in the rabbits; and, if you do that, the danger to which my honourable friend has referred will be reduced to a very great extent, and the rabbits will be exterminated in any part of the country into which stoats and weasels have been turned out sooner than would be the case if these animals were allowed to wander from one place to another. My honourable friend said that these animals do not kill lambs at Home. He tells us that there lambs are very well taken care of, and that the shepherds are always at hand to protect them. But that is not the case at all. The stoats have just as good a chance of killing lambs in the Old Country as they have here, and, in fact, a better chance. This is certainly the case in some parts of Scotland, where stoats and weasels are in large numbers. Then, again, with regard to the statement that their introduction into this colony is only for the benefit of one class, I deny it entirely. It is really for the benefit of everybody in the colony—first of all, those whose interests are directly affected, and, secondly, and thirdly, and so on, those who derive indirect benefit. We are also told that the rabbit-pest will be likely to prove of advantage to the country, inasmuch as it will have the effect of breaking up the big estates. I expect my honourable friend Mr. Shrimski will say "Hear, hear," to that. But how ridiculous is such a statement! What would have been the result if these estates had been so broken up in the early days? There would have been scarcely any one here at the present time. The men, however, who came out at that time were different from those who come out at the present time. A great deal of the depression is, I believe, owing to the fact that those who come out now will not go into the country, but remain in the towns. Then, it is said that if the country were settled in this manner it would have the effect of exterminating these rabbits. But will those who say that bring out the settlers and put them on the land, or give it them free, as at the

present time is becoming the common practice of the country—making them a present of it? And what will the small farmers do with it when they get it? Nothing. They would not kill the rabbits; the rabbits would be there still. And none but those who know something about the matter can at all appreciate the amount of damage which the spread of rabbits is likely to entail on the colony. Although I should have to bear my share of the taxation, I say that, if you proposed to borrow five millions to-morrow, and by doing so could kill the rabbits out in New Zealand, I would vote for it, and I think the work would be done cheaply at the price, especially if you added the benefits that would thereby accrue to the country, either directly or indirectly. I had no idea at the outset that this discussion would have assumed so much importance. It is very easy indeed to find fault; but neither of the two honourable gentlemen who have found so much fault with the proposed introduction of the vermin in question has suggested any other remedy. And here I do not wish it to be understood that I say in an unqualified manner that this remedy alone will be sufficient, or will be a good thing. I have already said, and I say again, that I believe the introduction of these vermin, instead of being an advantage to the country, will be a very great disadvantage indeed unless by a rabbit-proof fence you can confine the rabbits to where they are. If you are going to turn them out indiscriminately on the country, then I say you will be doing the greatest possible harm you can to the country. You will have left nothing but the nuisance, without any advantage being derived therefrom. But I say that neither of these gentlemen has suggested any improvement in the state of affairs. They say, "Do not introduce stoats and weasels. They are a nuisance. They hang on to our necks and those of our horses, and we have to run home to get our grooms to knock them off and kill them." At the rate the rabbits have been spreading in the past, it will soon be impossible for any settler to derive a livelihood from the lands. Talk of repudiation! if it is possible to bring the colony to such a climax, it will be the rabbits. Get this pest spread all over the country—it is antagonistic to the interests of the settlement of the colony—and you will find it difficult to meet your engagements. I have troubled the Council some time—much longer than I had intended to do—but I hope the motion will not be seriously entertained. My honourable friend the mover of the motion has said that this is a piece of panic legislation. I do not see that it is. I am sure that everybody is discussing it in as calm a manner as possible, and I am glad this important subject is being so well ventilated. Its ventilation, I think, will do a great deal of good, and may possibly stimulate some persons to discover some means of getting rid of this fearful pest in this country.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—The honourable member has given us some reasons for not wishing to adopt the recommendation contained in this report. I will discuss the matter from a practical point of view. First, upon the suppression of the rabbit-pest depends in a measure the amount of our export of wool to England. That amounts to three millions per annum. Upon the suppression of the pest depends the food of nearly all the cattle and stock in addition. That means another million per annum. What state would the country have been in now if war had not been waged against the rabbits for the last ten or twelve years? I can tell honourable members that on a certain run of sixty-five thousand acres four hundred thousand skins were got in one year; and the cost of killing the rabbits was more than the value the skins realized. Then, look at the export of skins. The export every year for some years past has averaged nine million skins, and still it is a fact that the number of rabbits in the colony is on the increase. Sir, we have already introduced ferrets, a few stoats and weasels, and the mongoose. Very recently I had a memorandum from a runholder in the South Island, stating the improvement the land had undergone by reducing the rabbit-pest by ferrets, this improvement being borne witness to by the state of the grass and the condition of the stock. There is, too, another point of view to look at the matter from. Last year the rents of Crown lands realized £167,080. When the rabbits prevailed extensively, many of the runs were given up, and in other cases two or three sets of tenants occupied the same land in succession, but were ruined by the pest. Were we to cease our efforts to deal with this pest it would result in a great loss to the revenue, and the pest would spread from one end of the Islands to the other, and the country would be almost valueless. The very existence of the settlers engaged in pastoral pursuits depends on the eradication of the rabbits. It is the Crown lands which have caused all the mischief. They are usually difficult of access, and there the rabbits have increased to an enormous extent, and have swarmed down on to surrounding country. The Council may rest assured that the Rabbit Nuisance Committee would not have proposed the introduction of stoats and weasels if there was not a good reason for it; but I think it will be evident that there is a very good reason for importing this natural enemy. From the evidence it will be seen that there are instances of small farmers being occupied in keeping down the nuisance by employing a man constantly. If this is the case, is it to be supposed that, as has been said, the pest would be eradicated by settling the land with small farmers? My opinion is that unless the natural enemy is obtained in large numbers, and turned out to deal with the pest without let or hindrance, the pest will increase and continue. I believe that, with poisoning, and turning out the natural enemy, there can be no doubt that the pest will be kept within reasonable limits.

The Hon. Mr. ACLAND.—The honourable member who moves this motion comes forward as the champion of the small settlers and the

small holders, as I imagine from some of his remarks; but the fact is that in Canterbury—at all events, in the part of Canterbury in which Christchurch is situated—they do not know what rabbits are; they have not the remotest idea of them. From some of the evidence that was taken before the Committee it seems that some of these small holders in the part where the pest is are quite as much interested in the matter as any of the large holders. They say the rabbits are on the mountains five or six thousand feet high; and it is impossible to suppose that such country as this can be broken up into such small holdings that the settlers could do anything with them. As it is, the rabbits live there, and come down on the small holdings in the surrounding districts, and the farmers are unable to keep them down. Therefore it is a matter of quite as much interest to them as it is to the runholders. Indeed, this is not a runholders' question at all—quite the contrary: it is a colonial question altogether. It affects the staple product of the colony—wool; also meat. I do not suppose the honourable member has taken the trouble to read the evidence, or else I think he would look on this subject in a different way. The settlers are unable to keep up the usual number of sheep; and therefore not only the supply of mutton, but the wool also is affected by the rabbit-pest. With regard to the question of danger, that is an important point. These are undoubtedly dangerous animals. Well, so are ferrets. In some of the works I have read they say that tame ferrets are more dangerous than wild. The honourable member also made a great point of the constant efforts made to destroy stoats and weasels in England, and yet they had been unable to exterminate them there. That is perfectly true; and one answer given to the Committee shows one reason why they are not exterminated in England. It was mentioned that a man offered to send out stoats from England at 5s. apiece. This was rather doubted, because the Committee thought they were much more expensive, and the cost would be added to by bringing them out; and this was the question asked of that witness. "Can you name the agent who would supply you at that figure?" The answer was, "He was gamekeeper to the Earl of Yarborough. The Earl does not allow trapping—he is a sportsman—and consequently there are a great many stoats there." That is the reason why the stoats are not exterminated in England—because in places where there are foxes and traps are set for stoats and weasels, there no one desires the stoats out the foxes; and therefore it is not likely that any sportsman would allow trapping. It is not with the rabbits—because by the laws of nature, no doubt stoats and weasels will prey on them. I do not see how we could do anything to the last one; there is not likely, but no doubt we could do much to such a degree that we should be able to cope with them. But, if an animal is not to be imported because it is dangerous, how about dogs? We often see in the papers accounts of children or other persons being attacked by a savage dog. No one, however, says on that ground that dogs are not of use. If the rabbits are to be stopped from overspreading the Canterbury Plains, the only means of stopping them, in addition to poisoning them, is to turn out their natural enemies in the wild, hilly parts of the country.

Debate adjourned.

LOCAL BODIES' LOANS BILL.

A message was received from the House of Representatives requesting a Free Conference on the amendment made by the Council in clause 38 of this Bill.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That this Council agree to a Free Conference with the House of Representatives on the subject of their amendment in clause 38 of the Local Bodies' Loans Bill; and that the Hon. Mr. Stevens, the Hon. Mr. Holmes, and the mover be Managers for this Council.

Motion agreed to.

EMPLOYMENT OF FEMALES AND OTHERS BILL.

On the motion for the committal of the Employment of Females and Others Bill,

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN said,—The honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill was good enough to allow the committal to be postponed for a few days in order that some papers for which I moved—namely, the reports of the Inspectors under the Act—might be laid before the Council. The time has been so short since the papers were presented that I have not had an opportunity of paying much attention to the matter. There are only two reports on the table, and one of these was before the Council on a previous occasion. These are the only reports which have been received by the Government. The Inspector for Dunedin says,—

"During the quarter I have visited at various times the factories and workrooms in this district, and (with only two or three exceptions) I found no desire on the part of employers to contravene the Act. This may possibly be owing a good deal to the depression which exists here at the present time not offering sufficient inducements for so doing.

* * * *

"There have been only two informations laid during the quarter for breaches of the Act: the first was under section 6, for employing a boy after two p.m. on Saturday; and the other under subsection 1, section 7—namely, for employing a girl for more than four and a half hours without an interval, in each of which cases the person was convicted and fined."

These are the official reports as to the working of the Act, and I desire to ask honourable gentlemen whether they think there is sufficient ground given for the alteration which it is now proposed to make. One Inspector says that he observed in a confectioner's shop two females who were employed for very long hours, one of whom is supposed to be ill from overwork, and he is of opinion that something should be done to regulate establishments of

that kind. These are the reports from the official side. There are, however, statements on the other side from those persons who have been injuriously affected by the operation of the Act, which, I think, are quite as worthy of consideration as those of the detectives. From amongst a great many other communications which I have received on the subject—for I seem to have become quite a distinguished individual in connection with this Employment of Females Act—from various parts of the colony, I will just quote one, which is contained in the form of a letter addressed to the editor of the Auckland *Evening Star*, as follows:—

"I specially desire to direct your attention, and also the tradesmen of Auckland, to the continual acts of oppression which are being brought into operation against the employers of labour. The various clauses of the Employment of Females and Others Act are exceedingly unjust and oppressive. The other day, at our law-court, a poor tradesman, who employed but one girl occasionally to assist his wife to trim hats, was fined £2 for not having a notice of the hours of labour posted up in his room; also another was fined the same amount for having failed to send a copy of his work-hours to the Inspector; and a third for having a lad of fifteen years upon the premises after 2 p.m. on Saturday, although it was shown that the lad was waiting to deliver a parcel of work which had to be delivered on the said day. I ask, are these the laws to have upon the Statute Book—laws to oppress the honest, hardworking, and industrial classes of the community? I appeal to all liberal and sensible minds. . ."

Now, we have the Inspectors' reports that, in spite of the inherent wickedness in the nature of employers of labour, the Act works fully to the satisfaction even of the detectives; but, on the other hand, we have the complaints of those persons who suffer from its operation, which, I think, are quite worthy of consideration before we seek to make these provisions more intolerable and injurious. On a recent occasion I was myself subjected to what, I am sure, will now be admitted was a very unfair attack for the part which I had taken in opposing the further enactment of measures of this character. I was accused of sneering at the workpeople—of having spoken in a sneering manner of the classes who were affected by this Bill—that is, of sneering at the bulk of the population, and, by implication, of using such terms with respect to them as that they were "the scum of the earth."

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—Pardon me; but I never applied that to the honourable member. I said this was language used years ago by speakers on the subject. The honourable gentleman must have misunderstood me.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—By implication, the honourable member intended, I believe, to convey that, from the well-known inclination of my mind with reference to the working-classes, I was capable of using such language, or thinking in such language.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—The honourable gentleman misunderstood what I said. I do not withdraw one word of what I did say, which was that those were the terms in which the working-classes were spoken of by statesmen years ago. I am quite sure that my honourable friend is not capable of using such language or of thinking in such language.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I am glad to learn that I misunderstood my honourable friend. I hold honest labour in high esteem; but there is a class for whom I have supreme contempt—those who are the base parasites of the working-classes. They are not of the working-classes; they are men who, scorning themselves to labour, are mean enough to profit by and live upon the labour of others. These are the men that I have a contempt for; but there is no man in the colony who has a greater respect for the honest working-man than myself—not one, not the honourable gentleman opposite, nor any other member of this Council. But I do, as I say, scorn the parasites who prey on the working-man and who trade on his ignorance; they are panderers to the mob, and ambitious seekers for popular applause. They have individual interests in dealing with questions of this kind; and I think they ought not to be allowed to influence the legislation of this colony for their own purposes. Having failed on former occasions to induce the Council to take the view that I do take of this Bill, and while refusing my consent to the Bill being read a second time, I will not now make any motion on the subject. If the Bill goes into Committee, I am quite sure that the good sense of the Council will not permit it to leave the Committee in the shape in which it is at present.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I should like this Bill to be read a second time, because a statement in the report of the Inspector is such that some alteration in the existing law is indispensable in the event of the law at present not being sufficient to authorize such alterations. The paragraph in the report of the Inspector which has been referred to, and which I will only refer to again by its number—6—was such that it is quite clear that there is no power in the Act as it exists now for remedying the state of things disclosed in that paragraph. I hope the Colonial Secretary will introduce amendments to remedy that state of things. There is also a necessity for a further amendment in connection with the facts stated in the eighth paragraph of the same report. In it, the Inspector states the employés could not take their mid-day meals under shelter. They were obliged to go into the street and take their meals in the rain. If there is not power in the law at present to remedy that state of affairs, then we should amend that also. I trust that the Hon. the Colonial Secretary will be able to satisfy the Council that the amendments he proposes will prevent such improprieties.

IN COMMITTEE.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the Chairman report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN moved, as an

amendment, That the words "and ask leave to sit again" be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the question."

AYES, 13.

Barnicoat	Hart	Menzies
Bathgate	Johnson, G. R.	Shrimski
Buckley	Lahmann	Taiaroa
Dignan	Martin	Wilson.
Grace		

NOES, 20.

Bonar	Miller	Stevens
Brandon	Peacock	Walker
Brett	Peter	Whitaker
Fraser	Pollen	Wigley
Holmes	Reeves	Williams
Kenny	Reynolds	Williamson.
McLean	Robinson	

Majority against, 7.

Amendment agreed to.

Progress reported.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I have come to the conclusion, after very careful consideration, that I cannot support this Bill, because it involves two principles both of which I think are extremely objectionable. In the first place it makes provision for the mode in which cadets are to be appointed; and it is a most extraordinary provision: nomination is to be by the members of the House of Representatives. The Hon. the Colonial Secretary has shown me a paper containing alterations which he intends to propose in this clause; and I will deal with that instead of the provision in the Bill. I think the original proposal was very impracticable, but it was not so bad in some respects as the provision which the honourable gentleman proposes to substitute for it—namely, that the Government is to select cadets from each electoral district. I do not know what regulations are to be made to give effect to it, but it appears to me that there will be very considerable difficulty in doing so. There is a Bill before the other House now dealing with the question of representation, which will, if carried, make an alteration in the electoral districts every five years. I do not see how the proposal of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary would [illegible] Bill is passed [illegible] proposal [illegible] Representatives [illegible] and other servants, and I think that is most objectionable. This is the introduction of a system which, I think, is one of the most objectionable features of the American Government, and that is, that there is to be a clean sweep of the Civil Service periodically: whenever a new Ministry come in they may give all the Civil servants three months' notice. I think that would entirely destroy the Civil Service of the colony. I have had some experience of our Civil servants, and I say that there are some very excellent men amongst them. No doubt, where you have a large number of men there will be some drones and some unsatisfactory people. That is so, and always will be so; but, taking the Service as a body, I say they are an efficient body of servants to the colony, and that it would be the greatest possible pity to destroy the Service. There are other serious objections to the measure; but these two are fully sufficient to justify me in objecting to the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. HART.—The objection I have to the Bill is that it is an experiment, and the old maxim says, *Fiat experimentum in corpore vili.* To enact by experiment on such a body as the Civil Service of New Zealand, which is so essential to the well-being of the colony, is an impolitic act, in my opinion, and it runs counter to the principle laid down by one of the first economists of the present century, who has recently passed to his rest. I think his words should be written in letters of gold, and placed in our Assembly halls for the guidance of honourable members. He says,—

"We have learned that in all questions relating to human society, in all controversies where the agency of human beings is to be relied upon for working out even the smallest results, the only sound basis upon which we can found doctrines, and still more the only safe basis upon which we can erect laws, is not hypothetical deduction, however ingenious and subtle, but conclusions and reasoning supported by the largest and most careful investigation of facts."

Nothing has been adduced to show that the proposals in this Bill are [illegible] and well founded, and I think, upon the principle laid down in the book from which I have quoted, the measure should be [illegible].

The Hon. Captain FRASER.—I hope the good sense of members will prevent this Bill passing. This Bill is not what the colony [illegible] They expect a [illegible] of the Civil Service [illegible] a good [illegible] Civil Service. I [illegible] of a [illegible] was [illegible] 25 per cent. [illegible]

Hon. Mr. Robinson

should not be done again, and done in every department of the Service? I am opposed to clause 9. If that clause were carried, I think the result would be that in the course of a few years the Civil Service would overawe and control the Government, and I think it would be like what the Civil Service is in Russia. I shall vote against the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—It cannot be denied that for some time past the public have been agitating for a change in the Civil Service. If honourable gentlemen will only look back a few years, when another Ministry was in power, they will remember that a Commission was appointed at an enormous expense to the colony to go not only through this colony, but over the whole of the Australian Colonies, to acquire information with a view of saving expense in our Civil Service. The cost was very heavy, but up to the present time none of us know what has become of the report. The report has been mislaid or taken out of the offices, and when the succeeding Ministry went into office it was not to be found. Far be it from me to say one word—nor can I say one word—against the Civil servants of the colony—against their honesty, integrity, or ability; for I am persuaded that the Civil servant does his best in the interests of the public service. But what can they do when there is a cry throughout the colony for change and retrenchment? Strange as it may appear, it seems to me that honourable gentlemen who are always talking about retrenchment invariably do their utmost to oppose any measure that is likely to carry out retrenchment. We have a statement from the Premier, who pledges himself by this Bill to save from £30,000 to £40,000.

An Hon. MEMBER.—How?

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I am not here to say how—I am not Premier at present; but if ever I have the honour to be in that position, and am called upon to make an explanation of how that saving could be effected, I shall be happy to do so. I may merely suggest that the Government have faced the difficulty in bringing this matter before Parliament, and in trying to save money in the interests of the colony; and yet the moment the Bill comes before this Council an objection is taken to it by the very gentlemen who are always crying out in favour of retrenchment. What does the Bill propose to do? In the first instance it proposes that no one shall enter the Civil Service unless he has passed the Civil Service examination—not only young men, but also young women. We have had petitions sent to this Council against the employment of females in the capacity of barmaids, and now we are trying to prevent them from entering the Civil Service.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—The Bill does not provide that.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—This Bill raises the question. Then, we find honourable gentlemen very much aggrieved in regard to making the recommendations for the appointment of cadets in the Civil Service. Members of this Council are excluded from that privilege. I think, on the other hand, that it is a compliment passed to the members of this Council, because now they will not be pestered as they have been by friends wishing to have their sons enter the Civil Service. I think it is rather a boon to be excluded from being asked to bring our sisters, our cousins, and our aunts into the Civil Service. I know from personal experience that it is an impossibility to give every one satisfaction; and the applications made to members of both branches of the Legislature, if they were complied with, would make the Civil Service ten times as big as it is at the present day. What is to be done, then? Whatever good measures come forward there seems to be an opposition got up to destroy them. With regard to the provision in clause 10 that in cases where there are more applicants for the appointment than one they should be balloted for, surely that is fair enough. Then, with regard to making provision for their savings, I think that is also a very fair and proper clause. Why should not the Civil servants make provision for themselves and their families? They would be more independent by doing that themselves than having to depend upon the Crown granting a pension or anything of that kind. It is far more honourable to lay by a small sum in this way than to be dependent on a pension and subject to all the insinuations that are usually cast upon them. With respect to the three months' notice, I am sure honourable gentlemen who have been in public life, and who have been in the Government, must know perfectly well that, as to a great number of Civil servants who apply for six months' leave of absence—no doubt they deserve it, being in the office from one year's end to the other—the granting it throws the office into a state of confusion, especially in the case of the chief of the department being called away. I think that three months is quite sufficient. When the Government does face the difficulty in bringing forward a Bill, without any expense incurred by the country as on a former occasion, to do justice to the people and the Civil servants, then it is attacked immediately. I trust honourable members will give the matter fair consideration, and will allow the Bill to come into operation.

Debate adjourned.

COMPANIES' BRANCH REGISTERS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY, in moving the second reading of the Companies' Branch Registers Bill, said its object was to facilitate the transfer of shares among people residing in country districts. It would enable those people to carry on transactions without going to the expense of doing so by power of attorney. Clause 10 was a mere machinery-clause for the purpose of protecting the Crown in New Zealand. Provision was made that on the death of a shareholder his shares should be liable to stamp duty.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES said the clause to which the honourable gentleman referred would have a most mischievous effect. It would

deprive the colony of revenue which belonged to it; and he could not see why shares entered in a district register should be exempt from stamp duty more than shares entered in the main office. He doubted very much whether the Bill would not afford facilities for fraud; and it would be quite possible to use registered documents to obtain money on them, whilst the document might be being used at the other end as well.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said that was provided for.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES contended that there was a doubt upon the point he raised with reference to the stamp duty. He thought the Bill would deprive New Zealand of stamp duty.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR thought the Bill a very useful and necessary one for companies carrying on business in New Zealand which had large numbers of shareholders in London, and it would be the means of preventing a great deal of fraud and trickery in the event of any such companies requiring to be wound up.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN agreed that the Bill was very useful and necessary. It was simply a copy of an English Act down to clause 10. Then came an extraordinary provision, the consequences of which to companies seeking to bring into the market English estates he was afraid of if the Bill passed in its present shape. He thought the 10th clause would be very mischievous; therefore he would pause in giving the Bill a passage through the Council unless this clause was eliminated. In the meantime, with a view of this being done, he would suggest the second reading.

[illegible] was a second time.

The Council adjourned at a quarter to ten o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

[illegible]

[illegible]

THIRD READINGS.

Waimate Racecourse Trustees Empowering Bill, Oamaru Harbour Board Loan Bill, City of Christchurch Municipal Offices Bill, Auckland Harbour Board Loan Bill.

HAWKE'S BAY TRUNK RAILWAY ROAD.

Captain RUSSELL asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will cause a detail survey to be made of the best line of road from the end of the Patea Road, Hawke's Bay County, through Rangitikei County, to the nearest convenient position for a station on the North Island Trunk Railway? The position of this road was that it was a sort of "no man's land." It could not in any way benefit the Rangitikei County, but, on the other hand, the Hawke's Bay County had no power to enter on the land and make a survey for the construction of a road. It was very important that a road made so many miles into the heart of the country should be prolonged to the railway as soon as the route of the railway was ascertained.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that he stated last year that the Government would cause a survey of some sort to be made, so that a road could be made as soon as the railway was approaching completion; and that was the present intention. The work would be taken in hand before the railway was completed there.

GORE RAILWAY-CROSSING.

Mr. COWAN asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will cause a level crossing to be put in on Hurunui–Bluff line, at Hyde Street, Gore? This subject was creating a great deal of dissatisfaction in his district. No doubt the Minister for Public Works would inform them that it was for the safety of the traffic that these [illegible] were not granted; but he thought that the Department ought to see that the residents of these towns which were [illegible] and where the traffic was not [illegible] every facility for going [illegible] across the railway, [illegible] the safety of the railway [illegible].

Mr. [illegible] quite agreed that it was [illegible] people to cross the [illegible] the honourable [illegible] were already [illegible] there. If a [illegible] at great dis[illegible] would be found, [illegible] up this road [illegible] could not [illegible] crossing to be [illegible] existence.

[illegible] RAILWAY-CROSSING.

[illegible] for Public [illegible] crossing to be [illegible] Railway, at Lanark [illegible] arguments he [illegible] apply, [illegible] There was [illegible] of the line, a [illegible] on the other

side, *viâ* Lanark Street; but if he went round by the nearest crossing he had to travel to his work half a mile each way, as the nearest crossing was several chains away. He had received notice from the Inspector of Permanent Way that if he persisted in crossing where there was no legal crossing he would be prosecuted. The cost of making the crossing would be a mere trifle—just the cost of a couple of loads of gravel and the necesssary timber to protect the rails; therefore the question of expense could not deter the department. He urged the honourable gentleman to endeavour to give the necessary facilities in this case, and he hoped he would give a favourable answer.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said this matter was not considered from the point of view of expense, but the objections were on very much the same grounds as in the last case. However, as the honourable gentleman had given information that he (Mr. Richardson) had not had previously, he would have further inquiry made into this case.

MAUNGATAUTARI CASE.

Mr. TE AO asked the Government, Whether they will have the report made by Judge Smith on the Maungatautari case printed, and translated into the Maori language? He asked this in consequence of a motion made by the honourable member for Auckland East. Seeing that the session was very nearly at an end, he was very anxious that something should be done, lest, by the time passing, it should be too late. Many petitions bearing on this subject had been presented from the Natives, and had not yet been dealt with; and the Natives were very anxious to know the nature of this report.

Mr. BALLANCE said the report had been laid on the table of the House, and he understood it was ordered to be printed. A translation would be made by an officer of the House.

OTAKI NATIVES.

Sir G. GREY asked the Native Minister, Will the Government afford some aid to the Native inhabitants of Otaki to provide for medical assistance at that place? He included in that the country extending as far as Ohau and Horowhenua, in which the Native population numbered 623. They were greatly in want of good and proper medical assistance.

Mr. BALLANCE said the Government did what they possibly could by providing a medical man for urgent cases in that district, and they supplied some fifteen pounds' worth a year of medicines to the Anglican clergyman at Otaki to be dispensed among the Natives. Providing a doctor specially would entail a large cost.

Mr. TE AO moved the adjournment of the House. The gentleman to whom the Government sent the medicines had no medical knowledge, and could not make a proper use of the medicines. The Natives wanted a competent medical officer to deal with cases of sickness. Some years ago a medical officer was there, paid by the Government. It was objectionable to place drugs in the hands of persons who did not understand how to apply them. If this person had some knowledge of medicine it would be different.

Dr. NEWMAN said the Maoris in that district were dying out in a shockingly-rapid manner, and he thought, if the Minister could see his way to provide that a medical man should visit the settlement—say, by the Manawatu Railway from Palmerston—once or twice a week, it would be a very great advantage.

Mr. BALLANCE said the reports to the department did not show that the Natives there were dying out rapidly. It was true that a layman was not the best person to dispense medicines, but he did not know that the Government could provide a doctor for every Native community in the colony. In this district there were some Natives exceedingly wealthy—large landed proprietors, and in receipt of a considerable income—and if the Natives would raise a sum of money in that district for the payment of a medical man the Government would be prepared to subsidize the amount raised. Mr. Te Ao might consider that suggestion.

Sir G. GREY asked if the Government would give an equal amount to that raised by the Natives.

Mr. BALLANCE would take time to consider that, but probably they would, if necessary.

Mr. ROLLESTON thought another condition should be that those wanting medical assistance should "take the blue-ribbon." Free medical attendance should not be given to people addicted to excessive drinking.

Mr. BALLANCE would suggest that.

NORTH ISLAND TRUNK RAILWAY.

Major ATKINSON asked the Government, Whether they will, during the recess, get such surveys made as will enable an opinion to be formed as to the relative merits of the routes to connect Taranaki with the main trunk line by Stratford and Mimi? There was a very strong belief in the district he had the honour to represent that a very good route could be found for a line to connect the Taranaki District with the main trunk line. He understood, of course, that such a line could not be immediately made—these things were not done in a hurry. It was very generally believed that a good connecting route, coming out somewhere near Stratford, could be found. He saw that the Minister had got some information of an important character as to the suitability of the country in the neighbourhood of Mimi as a connecting-route, and he was anxious that, before any steps were taken to commit the Government to any route, the Stratford route also should be thoroughly explored, to ascertain whether or not, as was believed by many competent persons, a good line could be found in that direction. He hoped the honourable gentleman would see his way to give a favourable reply to this question.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that during the last recess the Government had received a considerable amount of information on this subject, and the Engineer-in-Chief had recommended that, as soon as a competent railway engineer

was available, he should be sent to the district to ascertain which was the best and shortest route; and that would be done. The distance on which fresh and definite information was required was under twenty miles on one route, and about thirty-five on the other. The Engineer-in-Chief had recommended that both routes should be examined, and so soon as a reliable railway engineer could be spared this would be done.

TAPUAEHARURU–TOKAANU MAILS.

Mr. GRACE asked the Postmaster-General, If he will, this year, make provision for a weekly or fortnightly mail service between Tapuaeharuru and Tokaanu, Taupo? There was a weekly mail coach from Tauranga and Napier to Tapuaeharuru, Taupo, but there was no provision made for delivering a mail at the Tokaanu or south end of the lake. There were about fifteen Europeans and over five hundred Maoris living in the vicinity of Tokaanu, and the want of a regular mail had for a long time been very much felt. The distance between Tapuaeharuru and Tokaanu was about thirty-five miles by land and twenty-five by water. There was a vessel of about ten tons, a trader on the lake, and no doubt for a small subsidy the owner thereof would undertake the regular delivery of the mail at Tokaanu; and one of the local storekeepers would probably be quite willing to act as postmaster there.

Sir J. VOGEL said if this service could be done for a moderate amount he would cause it to be carried out, and in the meanwhile he would cause inquiries to be made on the subject.

ARAHURA BRIDGE.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether or not he will, at an early date, let the contract for the Arahura Bridge, the tenders for which have been held over since the commencement of this session? Tenders for this work were in at the commencement of the session, and, as the amount was so small, for some time, and as it was important that the work should not get on w[illegible] the Minister for Public Works might ask the permission of the House [illegible] to let a contract [illegible] as the session was so [illegible] a year.

Mr. [illegible] CHAPMAN said [illegible] work [illegible] House.

BOWEN–OKARITO ROAD.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister of Public Works, Whether he has received a [illegible] Hokitika, 10th July, 1886, from the County Chairman, Westland, [illegible] the Government [illegible] the Bowen–Okarito Road, and [illegible] provision will be made for same on supplementary estimates? Am requested by Council to ask your assistance in this matter. At last night's meeting resolution carried expressing disappointment at fact that all votes on estimates for works in county this year were simply re-votes of votes passed last year. The Council surprised at this outcome of all the promises made, and hope you will be able to get something done on supplementary estimates. "JAMES CLARKE, "County Chairman. "Hokitika, 10th July, 1886."

He hoped that the Minister would be able to [illegible] a favorable reply.

Mr. [illegible] MACH replied that the Government [illegible] that this was a very desirable work [illegible] done, and the sooner the better; [illegible] would cost a considerable sum, and the [illegible] were not prepared to spend im[illegible] it would be required. He quite [illegible] it was a part of the main road [illegible] and that it would [illegible] a considerable quantity of Crown land [illegible] and for that reason the Govern[illegible] matter under serious considera[illegible] see their way to give the [illegible] at once, a sum would be [illegible] estimates by way of a subsidy [illegible]

Mr. SEDDON would go so far as to say, as a matter of [illegible] this road being in the [illegible] to represent, that [illegible] a telegram similar to that [illegible] the honourable mem[illegible] also say that he [illegible] of the telegram, [illegible] the notice of the

Government, and that it had, in consequence, been brought under the consideration of the Cabinet. He said this lest it might be supposed that he had been indifferent to the importance of the question. Such was not the case. He agreed with all that had fallen from the honourable member for Kumara. This was a most important work, and it was one in which he had been, and still was, deeply interested——

Mr. SPEAKER thought that the honourable gentleman was exceeding the latitude granted to a member who wished to make a personal explanation.

GRAND JURORS' EXPENSES.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Government, Whether they will place a sum of money on the supplementary estimates for payment of the actual travelling expenses of grand jurors attending sittings of the Supreme Court? At a recent sitting of the Supreme Court at Hokitika the Grand Jury made a presentment to the presiding Judge, the Chief Justice, in which they pointed out that it was very hard that they should have to travel from between fifteen and twenty miles to attend sittings of the Court to give their services, and that they should receive no allowance for coach-fares or horse-hire. The Chief Justice indorsed what was said, and promised to forward the presentment on to the Minister of Justice for favourable consideration. There was no sum on the estimates for paying the grand jurors these expenses, and as the Minister of Justice had stated that there was no intention to abolish the Grand Jury, it was to be hoped that the honourable gentleman would place a sum on the supplementary estimates.

Mr. TOLE replied that it was quite true that a presentment had been made, and had been forwarded on to him; but there was nothing in the way of a recommendation from the Chief Justice. He might say that there was no law authorizing the payment of these expenses, and it was not the intention of the Government to ask for any amendment of the law in that respect, because they did not think that expenses should be paid to grand jurors.

GREYMOUTH HOSPITAL.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Government, Whether they will pay to the Trustees of the Greymouth Hospital the sum of £193 2s. 7d. claimed by them as subsidy on contributions received from the District Hospital and Charitable Aid Board for the period ended the 31st March, 1886? Under the provisions of the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act the Government were bound to pay, as subsidy, to separate institutions pound for pound upon the amount received from the District Board by the Trustees of these institutions. The Trustees of this institution at Greymouth had received from the District Board £193 2s. 7d., but, though the Trustees had applied for a subsidy on this sum, they had been unsuccessful in their application. He should be glad to hear the reasons why the money was not paid.

Mr. TOLE replied that there had been some difficulty in ascertaining the amount to be paid, but that had been ascertained, and the vouchers had been passed, and the money would be paid in the course of a few days.

MATCHES.

Sir G. GREY asked the Government, If they will introduce a Bill requiring that the word "Poison" should be attached to each package or tin of poisonous matches which may be sold in the colony? He might state, in reference to this matter, that he had been informed by the parent of one child who had been poisoned that he was entirely ignorant of the poisonous nature of the matches at the time; and he might say also that there were a great variety of matches sold, and that all were not of a poisonous kind; and, seeing that the poison employed in the manufacture of some matches was of the most deadly kind known, it should be required that the word "Poison" should be put upon each box of these matches. He was told that the reason why it was held that these matches did not come under the provisions of the law relating to the sale of poisons was that, in this case, there was some other material mixed with the poison: but he apprehended that there was not such a thing known as a pure poison. He thought that the Act was sufficient to authorize the prosecution of any person who sold these poisonous matches without due warning; but, as the Government held a contrary view, he trusted that they would so alter the law as to secure that, at least, all persons who bought them should have fair warning; for, under the present state of affairs, a large number of children were poisoned annually for want of proper warning being given. There was also this to be considered: that these matches ignited by pressure—at least, so he was informed; and there could be no doubt that several fires, some of which had been attended with fatal results, had originated in the colony owing to these matches. He did not think, therefore, that he had made an unreasonable request in order to prevent children being poisoned in this horrible manner.

Sir R. STOUT said he had no doubt that the action of the honourable gentleman had so thoroughly drawn attention to the poisonous nature of these matches that the adult population of the colony were now fully aware of the danger of using them. He did not think, therefore, that it was necessary to carry out the suggestion made by the honourable gentleman in this question. The printing of the word "Poison" could only inform the parents, for the children likely to be poisoned could not read the word "Poison," nor would they know what it meant if they could. The Government had no intention of bringing in a Bill on the subject. At any rate, the Government had no intention of dealing with the matter this session. There were Bills on the Order Paper now which it might be impossible to get through.

Sir G. GREY had to thank the honourable

gentleman for the information that children could not read, but he should like to say also that there were many parents in the colony who did not know that these matches were poisonous. He had found that the editors of newspapers were not aware that they were poisonous. The subject was so important that he thought no time should be lost in introducing a Bill on the subject.

DISTRICT RAILWAYS PURCHASING.

Sir G. GREY asked the Premier, If he will take measures for having the inquiry into the purchase by the Government of the Waimate Railway debentures carried further, in the direction suggested by the honourable member for Egmont?

Sir R. STOUT said he did not think that any further inquiry, so far as he could gather from the evidence, was necessary; and, of course, it was a reflection upon the Committee —a suggestion that they had not done their duty—to ask for a further inquiry. Therefore he did not intend to ask the House to make any further inquiry.

LOCAL BODIES' LOANS BILL.

A message was received from the Legislative Council insisting on their amendments in clause 38 of the Local Bodies' Loans Bill, and stating reasons therefor.

Sir J. VOGEL moved, That the House ask for a Conference, and that Mr. Ballance, Mr. Macarthur, and the mover be appointed Managers on behalf of the House at the Conference.

Motion agreed to.

OTAGO HARBOUR BRIDGE BILL.

On the question, That the Otago Harbour Bridge Bill be committed,

Mr. MACANDREW said it would be recollected that when this Bill was read a second time there were a number of objections raised against it. He might now say that, in order to remove every possible objection, he proposed in Committee to eliminate the whole of the clauses relating to rating—to do away with them altogether; and also to exclude the Peninsula Road District from the operation of the Bill. He also proposed to insert one or two other provisions, at the instance of the honourable member for Roslyn, who was the ex-Chairman and a member of the Otago Harbour Board. With these amendments he thought there could be no possible objection to the Bill passing.

Mr. GORE said that when the Bill passed its second reading he mentioned several objections to it. There were many more he might have mentioned; but it seemed to him that when an old member of the House like the honourable member for Port Chalmers introduced a Bill its second reading was supported as a matter of course. That practice, he thought, was wrong. By the second reading of a Bill, he took it, its principle was affirmed, however much it might be altered in detail in Committee. He would like to state to the House, respecting the proposed bridge, that, as far back as 1866, Mr. Balfour, the then Provincial Marine Engineer, reported very fully upon the Otago Upper Harbour, and in that report he condemned reclamation except to a very limited extent, and gave as his reasons that it would affect the tidal flow, and that the result would be that the bar at the Heads would eventually be silted up. Now, he would put it to the honourable member in charge of the Bill, did he wish the ground above the bridge to be reclaimed to spoil the scour of the harbour, and to interfere with Port Chalmers as much as with the City of Dunedin? The Minister of Mines had said that the best use the Harbour Board could make of the portion of the Upper Harbour above the bridge would be to reclaim it. Now, if that were done there could be no doubt of the result, according to the high authority quoted, and also according to the authority of Sir John Coode, who reported against further reclamation. If the recommendation of the Minister of Mines were carried out it would destroy the Upper Harbour. He trusted that honourable members would not vote for the third reading of the Bill. He did not intend to oppose the Bill in Committee, because he did not see how it could be altered so as to make it unobjectionable. What he objected to was the destruction of the harbour, and no alteration in the details of the Bill would alter the effect that the construction of the bridge would produce. He also wished to have the ruling of Mr. Speaker upon this point. The honourable member in charge of the Bill said he had taken out the rating powers; and, if that was the case, it appeared to him (Mr. Gore) that it was certainly no longer a local Bill, but must be a private Bill. He would like Mr. Speaker's ruling on that point.

Mr. SPEAKER said that the clauses referred to had not been taken out yet, and of course it was a local Bill so far as the House was concerned. He could not answer for the position the Bill would be in when it came out of Committee, but he did not think that would affect the matter.

Mr. ROSS thought that the contingency referred to by the honourable member for Dunedin South was one that would never arise. He believed that the Harbour Board would, under any circumstances, insist upon a free inlet in the structure erected, in order that the Board might dredge above the bridge rather than reclaim it. Several plans had already been submitted to the Board, and the Board had always insisted upon there being one or two swing-bridges, so as to admit the passage of large vessels.

Sir R. STOUT, personally, did not think that the bridge, if properly constructed, would affect the flow of the water in the Upper Harbour; but he intended to move in Committee a clause saying that, in addition to the Harbour Board approving of the plans, the City Council of Dunedin should also approve of them. He thought that would meet the objection raised.

Mr. BRYCE desired to call the attention of the honourable member in charge of the Bill to an objection made by him in a very few words, to which objection no allusion had been made. The question he referred to was that regarding the imposition of tolls. The honourable member had said that he proposed to remove every possible objection. Did he intend to remove that objection by making the bridge free of toll?

Mr. MACANDREW.—No, of course not.

Mr. BRYCE.—Of course not! Well, it was not such a matter of course, because this imposition of tolls on bridges had become almost obsolete. There was scarcely any one now who would defend the imposition of tolls under such circumstances; and therefore their imposition was not a matter of course. Did the honourable gentleman suppose that the House would deliberately consent to a thing that it had, of late years at all events, constantly set its face against? The honourable gentleman must be aware that the system of collecting revenue in that manner was open to serious objection, and had been condemned all over the world. He thought that, before an attempt was made to impose such a condition afresh, at any rate they should discuss the principle of tolls, and show that it was justifiable in this case. That had not been done. He presumed that what was meant was that the tolls were looked to to furnish the interest which would be due on the amount raised for the bridge—that there was no other revenue provided, and of course they must have tolls if they had the bridge. The system of tolls had been greatly discussed in this and other countries, and almost universally condemned; and he hoped that, in reply, the honourable gentleman would address himself to a justification of a system which it was now proposed to perpetuate.

Mr. MACANDREW had only to say that he was as much opposed to tolls as was anybody in the House, but it was, in this instance, a case of—Tolls or no bridge. They could not possibly have a bridge without tolls. If the honourable gentleman could show that it might be otherwise, he would be delighted. With regard to what the Premier had said about inserting a clause giving the City Council a voice in the matter, he might say he had no objection whatever to that, because he believed the citizens of Dunedin were very much interested in the erection of this bridge. Had there been any public spirit amongst them it would have been erected years ago, for it would add another lung to Dunedin, and in many respects make it one of the most attractive cities in the colony.

Motion for committal of the Bill agreed to.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 6.—Consent of Harbour Board and City Council of Dunedin to be given.

Mr. BARRON moved the insertion of the words "and the Borough Council of Caversham."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 10.

Bryce	Larnach	*Tellers.*
Gore	Montgomery	Barron
Hobbs	Richardson, G.	Conolly.
Lake	Trimble.	

NOES, 22.

Ballance	O'Conor	Taylor
Bruce	Peacock	Tole
Duncan	Reese	Vogel
Garrick	Richardson, E.	Walker.
Guinness	Ross	
Levestam	Steward, W. J.	*Tellers.*
Macandrew	Stewart, W. D.	Buckland, J. C.
McKenzie, J.	Stout	Mackenzie, M.

Majority against, 12.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. LARNACH moved the insertion of the words "and the Borough Councils of South Dunedin and St. Kilda."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 11.

Bryce	Lake	Tole.
Buchanan	Larnach	*Tellers.*
Gore	Montgomery	Barron
Hobbs	Richardson, G.	Reid.

NOES, 22.

Ballance	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Buckland, J. C.	Menteath	Trimble
Garrick	Peacock	Vogel
Guinness	Reese	Walker.
Hislop	Richardson, E.	
Levestam	Ross	*Tellers.*
Macandrew	Steward, W. J.	Bruce
Mackenzie, M.	Stewart, W. D.	Duncan.

PAIR.

For.	*Against.*
Conolly.	Stout.

Majority against, 11.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported, with amendments.

On the question, That the Bill be read a third time,

Mr. BRYCE said he understood that the honourable member for Port Chalmers objected very strongly to tolls; yet here he was seeking to perpetuate the levying of tolls. There was an inconsistency in that which was quite appalling. However, what he wanted to say was that he feared the time would come when a sum would be required from the General Government for the purpose of freeing this bridge from tolls.

Mr. MACANDREW.—We must not be judged by the Wanganui standard.

Mr. BRYCE said he was going to quote that very instance, because he was one of those who attached considerable importance to the teachings of experience. He recollected that the House had to vote a sum of £17,000 to free the Wanganui Bridge of tolls, and also a large sum to similarly free a bridge on the Waikato River; and he feared that before long they would be asked for a sum to free this bridge of tolls. He wished to have this view placed on record, in order that the honourable gentleman

might have an opportunity of saying that such a demand would never be made upon the colony. If it ever should be made, the House would be justified in refusing to listen to it, seeing that this warning had been given.

Mr. MACANDREW said it would be very hard for him to make the statement that a demand would never be made upon the colony; but he would say this: that he had no reason to suppose that such a demand would ever be made, and certainly it would not be so long as he was above the ground. He did not like tolls; but they must recognize facts, and they could not expect to have this bridge unless they submitted to a toll.

Mr. GORE said that, although he had spoken against the Bill at previous stages, he must again say a few words against it, for he felt very strongly that, if this project was carried out, it would have a most prejudicial effect upon the Otago Harbour. The Bill had now come out of Committee an entirely different Bill from what it was when it was committed. As originally introduced it recited, "whereas the local bodies herein named are desirous of constructing and maintaining a bridge across the Otago Harbour, with the object of bringing the road districts herein named more conveniently into communication with the City of Dunedin." Now, those representing those districts had entirely repudiated any connection with this measure, and had declined to be rated. In one case the Borough Council had carried a resolution against this Bill, and in another case a large meeting of ratepayers had objected to the Bill, and therefore the rating-power was cut out of the Bill. Then, it was said that the construction of the bridge would do equal good to the Peninsula people; but he could not agree with that at all, for it could only affect the lower road. It was utterly impossible to make even a dray-track between the lower road and the upper road. It would be too steep to be of any value. But his principal objection was, that it must affect the navigation of the harbour, and in that way it must affect prejudicially every resident in the district; for, if expense were incurred in working a drawbridge, and vessels had to be towed through, the cost would be added to the price of goods, and every consumer would have to pay so much more. Then, why should not the Borough Councils of South Dunedin and St. Kilda have a voice in the matter? They were both interested. They owned property close to the foreshore. The South Dunedin Council had reserves very close to the foreshore. There seemed no reason why they should not have a voice in the matter when they were so materially interested. The Council of St. Kilda had passed resolutions against the Bill; and the City Council, at its last meeting, on the 12th July, had passed the following resolution: "The City Council does not approve of the construction of a bridge across the bay, as it will interfere with the navigation of the Upper Harbour, and the interests of the city." Then, there was this feeling in his mind: that, if this bridge were put there, the Act made it a roadway under the Public Works Act, and there was nothing to prevent any company that might be formed to build a bridge from making a natural roadway by filling up the harbour, and thus preventing the scour, and doing harm not only to the Upper Harbour, but also to the Lower Harbour and work at the Heads. Certainly Port Chalmers, as well as other places, should be considered. If the scour was interfered with, Port Chalmers would be as much injured as Dunedin by the construction of the bridge. In order that the matter might have a little more consideration he would move, That the Bill be read a third time that day month.

Mr. MACANDREW said that his reply was this: that the citizens of Dunedin would have to determine whether this bridge should be built. Nothing could be done without their consent, and the matter might safely be left to them: at any rate, he was prepared to leave it to them. As to the meeting to which the honourable member for Dunedin South had referred, he must confess that he was very much astonished when he read the report of it. What were the reasons urged against the building of the bridge? They were most selfish reasons, and simply meant that, as the bridge would enable the people of Dunedin to reside in its most healthy suburb, and would bring within their immediate reach the means of health and recreation, it should not be permitted, and certain landowners in Dunedin objected to facilities being given to people to reside out of the city. That was very selfish reasoning, and reasoning which he thought the House would not sustain.

Bill read a third time.

On the question, That the Bill do now pass,

Mr. BARRON said he had sent down to the Survey Office to ascertain on undoubted authority — such as the House would accept, even against the Premier's — whether the Borough of Caversham owned any of the foreshore; because in Committee, when it was proposed that the Borough of Caversham should be consulted before the plans were agreed to, the Premier informed the Committee that the Borough of Caversham owned none of the foreshore, and therefore had no interest in the matter. He was not aware on what authority the Premier spoke, but he had known that honourable gentleman sometimes to risk very positive assertions upon, to put it mildly, rather slender authority. Therefore he had sent down to the Survey Office to get official information; but he was sorry to say that the messenger had not returned, and meantime he must let the matter go, on the assurance of the Premier. At the same time he (Mr. Barron) was confident that, as he stated in Committee, the Borough of Caversham had some foreshore there.

Sir R. STOUT could only say, in reply to the honourable member for Caversham, that any person who knew Dunedin foreshore must know that South Dunedin, which was at the head of the harbour, had most of the foreshore—all with the exception of a little bit at Kensington, which possibly the Borough of Caversham

might have; but his impression was that the Borough of Caversham had none of the foreshore. His impression was that the road bounded the Borough of Caversham, and he should be greatly surprised to hear that that was not so. If it were so, then the Borough of Caversham had none of the foreshore, for the land on the other side of the road belonged either to the Government, or to the Harbour Board, or to the Municipality of South Dunedin. There was no rateable property on the other side of the road, so that, if the Borough of Caversham had interests there, they were merely nominal.

Mr. ROSS said he should have opposed the Bill had he not thought that there were sufficient safeguards secured against injury to the harbour. The plans for the bridge had to be submitted to the Harbour Board engineer, who had to certify to the Board that he approved of the plans; and it was also provided that the plans had to be submitted to the Governor in Council, who would be advised by the Marine Engineer for the colony. Thus there appeared to be every precaution taken against injury to the harbour, and, under those circumstances, he did not intend to oppose the Bill.

Motion agreed to.

NELSON FORESHORE RESERVE BILL.

Mr. LEVESTAM, in moving the second reading of the Nelson Foreshore Reserve Bill, said it was unnecessary for him to detain the House by making any long speech upon it. It was a very simple Bill. There was a portion of the Nelson foreshore which was mortgaged by the Superintendent to one Thomas Cawthorn. This foreshore was, at low water, entirely dry, and was a source of great danger to the city as it was, because it was simply a fever-breeding dépôt. He did not think that there was anything in the Bill that called for explanation. It simply asked that this piece of foreshore should be vested in the Corporation, so that they might deal with it.

Mr. CONOLLY said it appeared to him that the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill had omitted to mention a most important point. This land at present was charged with a mortgage of £15,000, and, in making over the freehold to the Corporation, it was expressly provided that they were not to be liable for that £15,000, and therefore the colony was to part with the land and to pay the £15,000. It was therefore an endowment or a present to the City Corporation of Nelson of the sum of £15,000. He did not say whether the advantages to be derived from so doing were commensurate with the expense. He (Mr. Conolly) was aware that it was of great importance that this foreshore, which was now a pestilential mud-flat, should be reclaimed, for the benefit of the health of the inhabitants; but it was another question whether the Corporation which would have the reclamation of this land, and be able then to deal with it and to obtain a revenue from it, should also be presented with the sum of £15,000. He thought the honourable member had hardly treated the House fairly in leaving every member of it to derive that information from the Bill, instead of stating it when moving its second reading. He desired to mention this, so that the House might be distinctly aware what they were voting for, for it would be for a gift not only of the land, but of the sum of £15,000 to be paid by the colony, which had hitherto been chargeable upon this land.

Mr. ROLLESTON thought the House had a right to expect to hear from the Government what it thought of this Bill. If the Corporation of Nelson was to have a present of this land, he could not see why they should not at once proceed to give reserves away generally to municipalities, for there were many municipalities that were badly off for want of reserves, and had made application for them. Those applications had been refused on the ground that they were not entitled to give to the municipalities the colonial revenue. He knew of no reason why this reserve should be handed over to the Nelson Municipality; and at the present time it was under engagements to tenants of the Crown. At any rate, it would be a fair thing to leave the settlement of this question until such time as the leases fell in. He thought they ought to hear from the Government their view of the case.

Mr. LARNACH said that, so far as the Government were concerned, there was no objection to the Bill being read a second time, as he would propose certain amendments in Committee; and if the Corporation reclaimed a large portion of the ground, which was a pestilential part of the harbour, it would do a great deal of good. So far as the mortgage was concerned the Government had not agreed to change its position in respect to it, or to take it over entirely in the interests of the Corporation.

Mr. BRYCE wished to know if the consent of the Crown had been given to the introduction of this Bill.

Sir R. STOUT.—Yes.

Mr. H. HIRST did not think the Minister of Marine had given an answer to the question put by the honourable member for Picton. The question was, Was the colony to be responsible for the £15,000 mortgage upon the foreshore?

Sir R. STOUT said it was responsible for it now.

Mr. H. HIRST said if it was to be responsible for it that matter should be taken into consideration.

Mr. BRYCE said it appeared to him that the Minister of Marine must be in error with regard to the Bill. The 4th clause of the Bill was as follows: "The said Corporation, or the revenue or funds of the said city, shall not be liable for the payment of any principal or interest-moneys secured by the said mortgage." "The said mortgage" was explained and set out in the preamble as the mortgage given by the Superintendent to one Thomas Cawthorn to secure the repayment of the sum of £15,000 and interest; and the clause referred to absolutely specified, and when passed would enact, that the Corporation was not to be liable for it, although the land under the Bill was to be

conveyed to the Corporation. Clearly, as he read it, the Government was giving up this sum of £15,000, which was secured by the piece of land, if it gave up the title to the Corporation.

Mr. MONTGOMERY said it appeared that the land might be worth a great deal or it might be worth very little, but in either case the Government was responsible for the payment of this money; and he would like to know whether, in handing the land over to the Corporation, the Government would be able to divest itself of that responsibility.

Sir R. STOUT.—We hope to do so.

Mr. MONTGOMERY said the man must have his security, and he could not be deprived of that by Act of Parliament. The question was, whether this land which had been held in trust for the whole country should be handed over to the Town of Nelson. The Prime Minister should explain the matter, for, although the honourable member for Nelson might explain it justly and fairly, still that honourable gentleman was anxious to get the Bill passed.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Why should it not be kept as a harbour endowment?

Sir R. STOUT.—Because there is no Harbour Board at Nelson. The position of the matter was simply this: He was not aware of a single piece of land like this in the colony—a piece of land useless, which was covered with water at high tide—that had not been handed over to a local body. He might say that the mortgage would still remain over the land, and the Corporation would take the land subject to the mortgage, and would have to pay interest on the mortgage out of the proceeds of the land. That would be a saving to the colony, which was getting nothing out of the land at present.

Colonel TRIMBLE had to point out that the Government were liable for the interest on the £15,000 at the present time, and that interest was paid by the Government; but, under this Bill, the House was going to hand over to the City of Nelson land which it must be presumed was worth £15,000, and in the very same Bill they were asked to exempt the Corporation of Nelson from all liability in relation to the mortgage on the land. The land was not to be exempted, but, if it were found that the land was not sufficient to pay off the £15,000, then the Corporation was to be free from all liability to make up the deficiency. That meant that some other party must make it up.

Sir R. STOUT.—Who makes it up now?

Colonel TRIMBLE.—The colony; and the colony would therefore be liable for any deficiency in the future. It was said that this would be a very valuable endowment; and, if so, why could not the Government in some way satisfy the debt out of the thing itself?

Mr. LEVESTAM, in answer to the objection raised by the last speaker, that the Town of Nelson was to be free from all liability in regard to the mortgage on this land, might point out that the money was borrowed for two purposes, one, to build the lunatic asylum; and the other, to erect the wharf. If the land in the Harbour of Nelson had not been mortgaged, and the money found in that way, the colony would have had to find it; but whether they found it or not was outside the question, as the colony had taken over both the lunatic asylum and the wharf. The mortgage on the land would still remain. It was said that the land was not worth £15,000; but, if it were reclaimed by the Corporation, and they spent a large amount of money in making it more valuable, surely the risk the colony ran would be much lessened. The land was at present perfectly useless, because there was a rise and fall of tide in the harbour of from 12ft. to 14ft.; so that the land was covered at high water, and at low water it was a mud-flat, on which all the refuse of the town was deposited, causing fever and other diseases. It was therefore imperative in the interest of health that the land should be reclaimed; and, as there was not the slightest probability of the Government or colony doing it, the only way was for the Corporation to do it. The money which had been raised on the land had been expended on works which had passed into the hands of the colony, and therefore the colony might fairly be asked to retain its responsibility. He trusted the House would agree to the second reading.

Bill read a second time.

NEW PLYMOUTH HARBOUR LOAN BILL.

INTERRUPTED DEBATE.

Colonel TRIMBLE said it would be recollected that, when he was last speaking, he was calling attention to some misrepresentations made in reference to the sailing of the ship "Gairloch" from Waitara Harbour. At that time he quoted from a letter from the Chairman of the Waitara Harbour Board giving the real facts of the case. He had now to say that two days ago he received a telegram from the captain of the "Gairloch," which completely confirmed what he said on the previous occasion. The captain referred to two matters. "I adhere," he said, "to all I said about the 'Clansman' entering the Waitara River." That was in reference to a statement by the captain of the "Gairloch" and the captain of another vessel which traded regularly to the port as to the depth of water required by the "Clansman" in entering the river, which showed that it could go in, at spring-tides, full of cargo and passengers. The telegram was in reply to that read by the honourable member for New Plymouth on the second reading of the Bill, and went on to say: "I deny that 'Gairloch' was detained in Waitara for want of water. Did arrive in Auckland to catch Sydney boat with butter.—FINDLAY MACARTHUR." The allegation had been that the water was so low that the "Gairloch" could not get out, and that in trying to do so she stuck on a bank; and in reply to that he had shown that she was detained for two days on account of a north-east wind which sprang up, and which prevented the shipping of the cattle that were waiting. Another allegation was made in regard to the influence of the New Plymouth Breakwater in lowering freights. He had replied to that

sufficiently so far as freights from Onehunga were concerned; but he had not then exact information as to freights from elsewhere. He now had the exact figures. Timaru, amongst other places, was mentioned, as well as Wellington and Lyttelton. He would now read the following telegrams :—

"Mr. Samuel stated in the House freights Timaru to New Plymouth seventeen shillings and sixpence. I am a regular trader to Waitara, and have been for years. My freight is fifteen shillings from Timaru, and twelve shillings and sixpence from Lyttelton.—E. A. BAILEY, master and owner of schooner 'Colonist.'"

"The 'Cora' has been running to Waitara regularly about three years, drawing eight feet six inches, with no mishap whatever; and I consider it a safe workable bar. Sailed in on the 19th.—GEORGE MARTIN, master, 'Cora.'"

"The Freezing Company have received an offer to convey all freight from here to Wellington at ten shillings per ton.—THOMAS BAYLY."

Yet they were told that an enormous expenditure was requisite at New Plymouth to get cheap freights. He thought he had quite proved to the House that, if the people wanted cheap freights, they had got them now; and it was not a question of cheap freights, but of other things, if the trade did not pay. Then, with regard to the capacity of the Waitara River for improvement, of course they had been told over and over again that it had not been improved and could not be improved. He did not think the honourable member for New Plymouth was as good an authority upon that point as Sir John Coode. The conclusion that Sir John Coode arrived at, after careful inspection of the harbour, was as follows :—

"The south breakwater would terminate in 12ft. at low water or 21ft. at high water of spring-tides; whilst in the case of the northern arm the depths would be 9ft. and 18ft. respectively, which latter would represent the depths that could be relied upon as available for navigation on completion of the piers to the full extent above described. The channel in the entrance would be subject to some temporary reduction in depth, say, to the extent of 2ft., after heavy on-shore gales; but the normal depths above named would be speedily restored on the recurrence of settled weather. It will thus be evident that, subject as the entrance would be to the temporary reduction of depth just explained, training-piers of less length would fail to afford such an approach to the Waitara as would be desirable if any material improvement is to be effected."

Sir John Coode said that if they carried out those improvements they would give 21ft. at one pier and 18ft. at another. Allowing 2ft. for "send"—and that would be considerably more than the "send" in the river—they would be able to bring in at spring-tides vessels drawing from 16ft. to 19ft. of water. That would give sufficient depth for the ordinary steamers that traded on the coast of New Zealand. He would now give some information about the cost. The whole cost of the works actually carried out upon the recommendation of Sir John Coode, deducting the wharves and other things which were incidental to the trade of the place, and apart from repairs to the bridge, had been about £16,000. Mr. Thomson, the engineer they had had in charge of the work—who was now engineer at Gisborne, and, he maintained, the best-trained engineer in the colony for harbour works — stated that something like £20,000 to £25,000 more would carry out the whole of the uncompleted works recommended by Sir John Coode. Without one penny-piece expense to the colony as a whole—without a penny of rating on the district—the works recommended by Sir John Coode could be carried out, and the whole trade of the place for the next fifty years could be accommodated. In regard to the completion of the work at New Plymouth, he would turn to what the same great engineer had said; and he (Colonel Trimble) said the amount was something frightful. Sir John Coode gave alternative schemes. The cheapest of those schemes, when completed, would cost very nearly a million of money—over £940,000. The interest on the cost of the work contemplated by Sir John Coode and by the people of the district would amount to as much as the whole cost of the works at Waitara, which would give sufficient accommodation for at least a generation. He was not one to say that in the course of time it would not be requisite to look for other accommodation; but the natural thing was to take what accommodation they had as sufficient until it was proved to be insufficient. Supposing they went on with the trade of the place until population had increased to two or three hundred thousand, he could very well understand people saying that Waitara was not sufficient for the trade, and that they should have a larger and more expensive port. He would accede to that, in case of need; but for a small population like theirs—under seventeen thousand in the whole provincial district—to go into this huge expenditure meant that the trade of the place could never pay for it, and the burden upon the people must necessarily crush them to the ground. With regard to this taxation, he had a word to say. From time to time he told the people in the district, both in public and private, that the time was rapidly coming when the rates would be upon them. But all the so-called authorities—the Harbour Board, and the newspapers, and all those who believed in the work—maintained that this was not true. In fact, the word "lie" was used freely in reference to it. Now, what was the case at the present time? Why, the newspapers in the district were up in arms, saying, "Oh, you will have a tax, and you are going to have one immediately. You may thank Colonel Trimble for it. He is the man who is bringing the tax upon you." They no longer deny the tax; but they are looking round for a victim to sacrifice to their own folly. There was to be no tax whilst they were trying to inveigle people into their schemes; but now that they were in the position of seeing the tax was close upon them they said that the people

to be blamed were those who were trying to open the eyes of the public. Now, the object of this loan was that the tax might not come, and so long as there was money in the treasury the tax would not come, but the interest would be paid out of loan. As long as there was plenty of money in the coffers there was a way of evading the due liability of the district. The honourable gentleman told the House that, although the nominal revenue from the dues and endowments together last year amounted to only £440, and although the Harbour Board itself had to acknowledge that that was a bogus figure, and that the real surplus was nothing at all, yet there must be in future an enormous surplus, because they were getting 60 per cent. more revenue during the last five months than during the corresponding months of last year. Supposing it were so, would anybody say that would give them the revenue the honourable gentleman talked about? What would 60 per cent. upon nothing be, so far as the net result was concerned? Why, of course, it would be nothing at all. The argument looked very grand indeed until they began to analyse the figures. It was stated to the Local Bills Committee that the Board had about £33,000 in hand with which to pay interest and sinking fund, it being accumulated Land Fund, and interest on it while invested, he presumed. The Committee recommended that this money should be used in extending the works, overlooking the fact that the Act of 1877 said most emphatically that the receipts from the Land Fund should be used for no other purposes than payment of interest and sinking fund; and therefore the Committee's recommendation was against the law. At a meeting at Inglewood the Chairman stated that the Board would be able to use this money on the works; and he (Colonel Trimble) warned him at the time that he was making a mistake, and that if the members of the Board did not mind what they were doing they might get into serious peril. Since then, through the discussions in the House, the Board had learned what they ought to have known years ago—that if they used the Land Fund for any other purpose than payment of interest and sinking fund the members would be personally liable for the money. Now, what were they going to do? They had devised a notable scheme. They had a very clever Chairman, who had found out that the Board had accumulated interest—and even compound interest—derived from the investment of the Land Fund, when it accumulated faster than it had been used; and this accumulation made up a part of the total of £33,000, and they were going to use this portion on the works. Now, he said publicly, as a warning to the Board, that if they could do so it was only by an evasion of the law. He did not believe that legal advisers would venture to advise them to act as they said they were going to do. He mentioned this now so as to show the House how incompetent the Board seemed to be to look its position fairly in the face. The Board [illegible] eyes to its position, and, having done so, thought the eyes of every one else were shut to what it was doing and proposing. Now, what would be the effect of taking from the works a fund clearly set apart by Act for the security of the bondholders? Every member of the Board would be personally liable for the amount so taken; and they should not imagine that the English bondholder would be like their own neighbours—easy-going, careless, or poor people. When the English bondholder found that there was no money for his coupon when due, he would naturally ask why it was; and, having found that the Board had used funds for other purposes which the law said should be used only to meet interest and sinking-fund payments, was it to be supposed that the bondholder would have any bowels of compassion for people sixteen thousand miles away, whose folly had brought the trust into that condition? It was a very serious position that these gentlemen seemed to be driving into, and he said now, clearly and publicly, that he did hope they would pause in time, and strictly conform to the law in the application of the funds. It had been said that the clearing of bush land added four times to its value; and this had been used as an argument to show that the Board would in a short time be able to extend its rating over a much larger amount of property than now—that was to say, that the total rateable value of the district would be much increased—and that there would be no difficulty whatever in raising the requisite funds. That statement was like all the others made by the honourable member for New Plymouth in his advocacy of the Bill—it was purely guesswork, and made at random; and the honourable gentleman did not and could not know anything personally about the matter. He would like to be told what the best bush land in Taranaki had increased in value, say, since 1875—when he settled there—above the total of its first cost and the cost of clearing and grassing it. He spoke of what he absolutely knew, and he said it had not increased in value one penny-piece. Within a mile of where he lived there was land alongside the railway which was for sale now for less than its first cost and the cost of clearing and grassing it, leaving out the cost of fencing and other improvements. That was the actual position of affairs; and it was not a new position, because it had been so since 1879: and there seemed to be no likelihood of improvement at present. Those who know anything of the bush districts know that it took a long time to form settlements in them. Taking up open land, a man ploughed it, and immediately got production from it; but, with bush land, it took at least three years before the settler who took it up could sell anything produced from it. During that time the settler had great difficulties to undergo, and if he had not capital he must either go off the land altogether or he must work for wages for other people. The consequence was that settlement in bush districts progressed very slowly. There were no roads, and access to the land was difficult, and very few people

could afford to face the situation. Taking all these things into account, it would be found that settlement in Taranaki could not progress with the rapidity the honourable member for New Plymouth stated, but very slowly. What he (Colonel Trimble) said was borne out by actual citable facts. In 1875 the land in his own district was opened for sale, and he was himself one of the first buyers. During the first two years very large settlement took place, but in the next five or six years there was very little land taken up. It always went on in that way—by fits and starts. The income of the Board at one time from the Land Fund was very considerable. While the Waimate Plains were being sold the Board's share of the land revenue amounted to as much as about £40,000 in one year. But what was the case now? Last year they got only £4,900 from land revenue, and the Surveyor-General estimated that this year the Board would get only £4,100 from that source: so that at the present time the income of the Board from Land Fund was only about a tenth of what it had formerly been; and the amount was getting less. The amount of Crown land unsold in the Taranaki District was about half a million acres; but it was not surveyed, there were no roads, and, in fact, it was not in the market, and it must take a long time before the greater part of it could be got into the market. So that year by year, instead of the Board's income from the Land Fund increasing, it would probably decrease, as the deferred-payment settlers completed paying their instalments—a very large proportion of them would complete their payments at the end of next year. Therefore, while the total of the Land Fund still to accrue to the Board might be a large sum, the amount to be received in any one year must henceforth be small, and always getting less. On the other hand the charges the Board had to meet were fixed. If the Land Fund was enough to meet the whole yearly charge on the old loan—£14,000—and gave a surplus they would, in time, be able to clear off the debt, and, in fact, to extend the works with the means from that source; but the fact was, they were not getting anything like that amount of Land Fund, and year by year the position in that respect was becoming worse, and the situation would become more and more dangerous. Before the Bill left the House he would conclusively prove to the House—as he had already proved to the Committee—that when the Land Fund was used, even with the full rating-power exercised, there would be a large deficiency every year in the amount due to the bondholders; and he believed the House would agree with him when he had finished that the net amount the bondholders must lose, unless the House stepped in and made up the deficiency, would be something like £3,000 a year at the very least.

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

EDUCATIONAL FRANCHISE BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 3.—Definition of "householder."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 23.

Ballance	Levestam	Steward, W. J.
B.-Bradshaw	Macandrew	Stewart, W. D.
Bruce	McMillan	Stout
Conolly	Moat	Taylor
Garrick	Reid	Walker.
Hatch	Richardson, G.	*Tellers.*
Hursthouse	Ross	Cowan
Larnach	Smith	Fulton.

NOES, 27.

Allwright	Kerr	O'Conor
Atkinson	Lake	Pearson
Barron	Lance	Russell
Brown	Macarthur	Seddon
Buchanan	Mackenzie, M.	Wakefield
Buckland, W.F.	Mitchelson	Whyte.
Grey	Montgomery	*Tellers.*
Harper	Moss	O'Callaghan
Hislop	Newman	Rolleston.
Holmes		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Duncan	Dargaville
McKenzie, J.	Peacock
Turnbull.	Thompson, T.

Majority against, 4.

Clause struck out.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the Chairman leave the chair.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 30.

Allwright	Kerr	Richardson, E.
Atkinson	Larnach	Rolleston
Ballance	Mackenzie, M.	Russell
Barron	Menteath	Smith
Bryce	Mitchelson	Stout
Cadman	Montgomery	Wakefield
Dargaville	Newman	Whyte.
Fraser	O'Callaghan	*Tellers.*
Garrick	O'Conor	Buckland, W. F.
Grey	Pearson	Hislop.
Holmes		

NOES, 26.

B.-Bradshaw	Hatch	Richardson, G.
Brown	Hursthouse	Ross
Bruce	Lake	Seddon
Buchanan	Lance	Steward, W. J.
Conolly	Levestam	Taylor
Cowan	Macandrew	Walker.
Duncan	Macarthur	*Tellers.*
Fulton	McMillan	Moat
Harper	Reid	Stewart, W. D.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Dargaville	Duncan
Peacock	McKenzie, J.
Thompson, T.	Turnbull.

Majority for, 4.

Motion agreed to, and the CHAIRMAN left the chair.

DOG REGISTRATION BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND moved, That the Chairman do leave the chair.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 23.

Allwright	Hakuene	Newman
Ballance	Hislop	Ormond
Bryce	Hobbs	Pere
Buckland, J. C.	Hursthouse	Richardson, E.
Dargaville	Levestam	Richardson, G.
Dodson	Macarthur	*Tellers.*
Fitzherbert	Mitchelson	Buckland, W. F.
Grey	Moat	O'Conor.

NOES, 37.

Bruce	Kerr	Steward, W. J.
Conolly	Lake	Stewart, W. D.
Cowan	Lance	Stout
Duncan	Larnach	Te Ao
Fergus	Mackenzie, M.	Thomson, J. W.
Fraser	McMillan	Tole
Fulton	Montgomery	Turnbull
Garrick	O'Callaghan	Walker
Gore	Pearson	Whyte.
Guinness	Reid	
Hatch	Rolleston	*Tellers.*
Hirst, H.	Ross	Buchanan
Holmes	Seddon	Wakefield.

Majority against, 14.

Motion negatived.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND moved, That the Chairman report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 21.

Ballance	Hirst, H.	Newman
Beetham	Hislop	O'Conor
Bryce	Hobbs	Pere
Buchanan	Levestam	Smith.
Dodson	Macarthur	*Tellers.*
Fitzherbert	Mitchelson	Buckland, W.F.
Grey	Moat	Hursthouse.
Hakuene		

NOES, 35.

B.-Bradshaw	Lance	Stewart, W. D.
Bruce	Larnach	Stout
Conolly	Macandrew	Taylor
Cowan	Mackenzie, M.	Te Ao
Duncan	McMillan	Thomson, J. W.
Fergus	Montgomery	Turnbull
Fulton	Pearson	Wakefield
Gore	Reid	Walker
Hatch	Rolleston	Whyte.
Holmes	Ross	*Tellers.*
Kerr	Seddon	Barron
Lake	Steward, W. J.	O'Callaghan.

Majority against, 14.

Motion negatived.

Clause 2.—Local authority may fix 20s. fee for dogs.

Mr. SEDDON moved the addition of a proviso that the section should not apply to dogs kept for the management of live-stock, or to destroy rabbits, or to any dog belonging to any aboriginal native.

Mr. O'CONOR moved, That the word "aboriginal" be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question "That the word be retained."

AYES, 41.

Ballance	Gore	Steward, W. J.
Barron	Grey	Stewart, W. D.
Beetham	Hakuene	Stout
B.-Bradshaw	Kerr	Sutter
Brown	Lake	Taylor
Bruce	Lance	Te Ao
Buchanan	Larnach	Thomson, J. W.
Conolly	McMillan	Tole
Cowan	Montgomery	Wakefield
Dargaville	O'Callaghan	Walker
Dodson	Pearson	Whyte.
Duncan	Pere	*Tellers.*
Fergus	Rolleston	Reid
Fulton	Ross	Seddon.

NOES, 12.

Bryce	Macarthur	Turnbull.
Buckland, W.F.	Menteath	*Tellers.*
Fitzherbert	Moat	Levestam
Hislop	Ormond	O'Conor.
Hursthouse		

Majority for, 29.

Word retained.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the proviso be added to the clause."

AYES, 33.

Ballance	Hakuene	Stewart, W. D.
Beetham	Kerr	Stout
B.-Bradshaw	Lance	Sutter
Brown	Larnach	Taylor
Bruce	McMillan	Te Ao
Buckland, W.F.	Newman	Thomson, J. W.
Cowan	O'Callaghan	Tole
Dargaville	Pearson	Walker.
Dodson	Pere	*Tellers.*
Duncan	Seddon	Buchanan
Gore	Smith	Steward, W. J.
Grey		

NOES, 24.

Barron	Lake	Rolleston
Bryce	Macarthur	Ross
Cadman	Mitchelson	Turnbull
Conolly	Moat	Wakefield
Fergus	Montgomery	Whyte.
Fitzherbert	O'Conor	*Tellers.*
Fulton	Ormond	Hursthouse
Hislop	Reid	Levestam.
Hobbs		

Majority for, 9.

Proviso added.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 8.

Fitzherbert	Macarthur	*Tellers.*
Hobbs	Moat	Buckland, W.F.
Hursthouse	O'Conor.	Levestam.

NOES, 38.

Ballance	Buchanan	Cowan
Barron	Cadman	Dargaville
Bruce	Conolly	Fulton

Takuene	Pere	Te Ao
Holmes	Reid	Thomson, J. W.
Kerr	Richardson, E.	Tole
Lake	Rolleston	Turnbull
Lance	Smith	Wakefield
Larnach	Steward, W. J.	Walker
Macandrew	Stewart, W. D.	Whyte.
McMillan	Stout	*Tellers.*
Montgomery	Sutter	Duncan
O'Callaghan	Taylor	Pearson.

Majority against, 30.

Motion negatived.

Mr. O'CONOR moved the addition to the proviso of the words "and dogs used for house purposes."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 16.

Buckland, J. C.	Hursthouse	Reese
Buckland, W. F.	Macarthur	Turnbull.
Duncan	Menteath	
Hirst, H.	Moat	*Tellers.*
Hislop	Moss	Guinness
Hobbs	Newman	O'Conor.

NOES, 27.

Ballance	Holmes	Steward, W. J.
Barron	Kerr	Stout
Bruce	Lance	Sutter
Buchanan	Larnach	Taylor
Conolly	McMillan	Thompson, T.
Fergus	O'Callaghan	Walker.
Fulton	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Gore	Reid	Cowan
Harper	Rolleston	Pearson.
Hatch		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Dodson	Thomson, J. W.
Fitzherbert	Macandrew
Wilson.	Vogel.

Majority against, 11.

Amendment negatived.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause, as amended, be a part of the Bill."

AYES, 23.

Bruce	Holmes	Steward, W. J.
Buckland, J. C.	Kerr	Stout
Cowan	Lance	Sutter
Fergus	Larnach	Taylor
Gore	McMillan	Walker.
Guinness	O'Callaghan	*Tellers.*
Harper	Reese	Pearson
Hatch	Reid	Rolleston.

NOES, 11.

Conolly	Lake	O'Conor.
Duncan	Macarthur	*Tellers.*
Hislop	Moat	Buckland, W. F.
Hobbs	Newman	Hirst, H.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Macandrew	Fitzherbert
Thomson, J. W.	Dodson
Vogel	Wilson
Wakefield.	Hursthouse.

Majority for, 12.

Clause retained.

Mr. DUNCAN moved a new clause limiting the operation of the Bill to the Provincial District of Canterbury.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 7.

Hislop	Moat	*Tellers.*
Hobbs	O'Conor.	Buckland, W. F.
Macarthur		Duncan.

NOES, 25.

Ballance	Lance	Stout
Buchanan	Larnach	Sutter
Conolly	McMillan	Taylor
Cowan	Peacock	Walker
Gore	Pearson	Wilson.
Harper	Reese	
Holmes	Reid	*Tellers.*
Kerr	Rolleston	O'Callaghan
Lake	Russell	Steward, W. J.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Buckland, J. C.	Barron
Dodson	Thomson, J. W.
Fitzherbert	Macandrew
Guinness	Bruce
Hursthouse	Wakefield
Levestam.	Turnbull.

Majority against, 18.

Motion lost.

Bill reported, with amendments.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 23rd July, 1886.

First Readings—Second Reading—Third Reading—Local Bodies' Loans Bill—Unemployed—Stoats and Weasels—Counties Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Otago Harbour Bridge Bill, Auckland Harbour Board Loan Bill, City of Christchurch Municipal Offices Bill, Oamaru Harbour Board Loan Bill, Waimate Racecourse Trustees Empowering Bill.

SECOND READING.

Otago Harbour Board Leasing Bill.

THIRD READING.

Companies' Branch Registers Bill.

LOCAL BODIES' LOANS BILL.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN brought up the following report of the Managers of the Free Conference on the Local Bodies' Loans Bill:—

"The Managers, on behalf of the Legislative Council, of the Free Conference on the Local Bodies' Loans Bill have the honour to report that, having met the Managers on behalf of

the House of Representatives, they have been unable to come to any agreement."

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—Sir, I desire to say, in reference to the report, that the Managers, taking their instructions from the vote passed by the Council on this subject yesterday, insisted on the majority of the votes recorded being the basis of any negotiations; but it was found that this point would not be conceded by the other side, and the Managers had therefore no other course to pursue than to report that they were unable to agree on the subject.

UNEMPLOYED.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES asked the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Whether the Government will take into consideration the propriety of organizing some mode of giving outdoor relief, in the shape of food or otherwise, and with or without the condition of a labour test, to persons who are unable to obtain employment otherwise, and to their families? He said he had noticed in the newspapers the last two or three days that considerable distress existed at Auckland and Dunedin; and it was stated that in both places there were several persons on the verge of starvation. In similar cases at Home it was usual to give assistance partly in food, with a view to affording relief to those in danger of starvation. In the apprehension that the tendency was here rather to give employment, he put this question suggestively to the Hon. the Colonial Secretary.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said his honourable friend had been good enough to confer with him on this subject previous to placing the question on the Order Paper, and he might state that the Government had the matter under their very serious consideration, and the Minister for Public Works was taking every possible means to find employment for those who were in need of it. He gathered that the giving of food was an element in the consideration of the question: but such a system would be very difficult to organize. He might add that he had never heard of any one suffering from starvation, or even being on the verge of it. Means, however, would be taken to meet the requirements of the case.

STOATS AND WEASELS.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Captain BAILLIE.—I have very few words to say with respect to this motion, which I most cordially support, especially after the information supplied to the Council on this subject by the honourable the mover yesterday, and I think, in view of that, the Council will not hesitate to agree to the motion. I am rather of opinion there should be a restriction on the importation of the mongoose. In its domestic state this animal is like a good tomcat about the house, but in its wild state it is a most vicious animal. I have had personal experience of them, and can testify to that. A friend of mine—Mr. Richmond—imported some of these animals a year ago, and turned them out, and shortly afterwards found them scattered twelve miles away. They would therefore soon scatter all over the country and do much mischief.

The Hon. Mr. WALKER.—I listened with very great pleasure to the speech delivered yesterday by my honourable friend Mr. Reeves, and was pleased with his straightforward, incisive eloquence. In regard to stoats and weasels I think the very qualities on account of which they are condemned are the qualities on account of which we ought to introduce them. It has been said that the measure has been proposed on account of a panic: but panics sometimes do good. We had a panic a few years ago—the Russian scare—and the result of that was the erection of magnificent batteries all over the colony. But I deny that there is a panic in this case; and, unless this rabbit nuisance is dealt with energetically and immediately, the ruin of the country stares in the face. Then, again, the honourable gentleman quoted the last paragraph of the report not in a quite intelligible manner. He seemed to infer that, as those means previously resorted to to stamp out the pest had not been sufficient, so the importation of stoats and weasels might not be successful in that respect. But we have not yet got stoats and weasels here in any large numbers, so that I cannot see how he can come to such a conclusion. I hope the honourable member will not allow mere sentiment to interfere with the importation of these animals. They will be turned out on the high waste lands of the Crown, and, if they do come down on the small farms, two hundred yards of wire-netting at 6d. a yard will stop them.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—Sir, it was not my intention to address the Council on this subject, because I have not had sufficient experience in the matter to enable me to speak authoritatively upon it. But I rose to refer to some remarks made by my honourable friend Mr. Bathgate. Those remarks gave me considerable pain, and, in my opinion, were utterly uncalled-for. No one can doubt that the extirpation of this pest is a thing much to be desired, and it is a pity the honourable gentleman should have introduced a class question on a subject of this kind, regarding which, if we do not agree as to the details, we are all at one in striving to attain the object aimed at. No one can doubt the mischief caused by this pest; it is a national pest, and a loss to the whole colony. I am pleased with the discussion that has already taken place. The Hon. Mr. Reeves, I think, made out a very good case; but, on the other hand, I was very much struck with what fell from the Hon. Mr. Robinson. I cannot help thinking that the introduction of these animals will fail in the object desired, and will be productive of mischief in the future. Since the debate yesterday I have seen a gentleman who has had considerable experience in these matters, and his suggestion is that a great mistake is made in poisoning in the summertime, as it only drives the rabbits from one place to another; and the only remedy, in his opinion, is to make a determined effort to

poison in the winter. That is not my opinion. Where I reside we have not this pest, and we hope to remain free from it.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—Although not an expert in this matter, yet I take an interest in it, because I think it is a question of very great importance to the colony at large. I have listened to the debate with a great deal of interest. I have also listened with pleasure to my honourable friends opposite, Mr. Reeves and Mr. Bathgate, who have certainly put their case very well. So far as I am able to judge, the evidence we have before us is really in favour of these stoats and weasels. So far, therefore, I judge that we should go on importing them until we have, to a certain extent, exterminated the rabbits, or, at all events, rendered them so few in number that they will have ceased to be the pest they are at the present time. We have not yet adopted the report of the Committee, and the consequence is that after this debate, which has been a very good one, the matter will be left in exactly the same position as before. I think we have only half done the work; and, in order to test the Council as to whether or not it would be advisable that these animals should be imported for the purpose of exterminating the rabbits, I shall propose a short amendment in the second line of the motion as printed on the Order Paper. I propose to strike out "in," in the word "inexpedient," which will give it the opposite effect to that which it has as printed. If the Council agrees to that, I believe we shall have done some good. The question is, whether it is desirable that the Government should import these animals or not. I have come to the conclusion, from all I have read and heard, that it is an expedient thing for the Government to do.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I believe we shall have an opportunity of discussing this question in connection with a short Bill which is to come before us to give effect to the recommendations of the Rabbit Committee. Before that, however, every member will have an opportunity of perusing the evidence taken by the Committee, and that, no doubt, will assist us to come to a conclusion on the subject. As honourable members know, this subject has received the very serious attention of the Legislature on more than one occasion previously. Two years ago, and two years before that, Joint Committees were appointed to inquire into the matter, and on each occasion the inquiry was exhaustive. Having been a member of these Committees on two or three occasions, I know something about the matter. On this occasion the Committee took a great deal of evidence from persons who are supposed to have much practical experience, and the conclusion drawn by the Committee from the evidence was that, while this pest has been a scourge to the colony, and has occasioned a very serious amount of loss, both public and private, and while various steps have been taken to endeavour to diminish the pest, no steps that have yet been taken will be effective to keep it within reasonable bounds—none. Poisoning by phosphorized grain has been found to be the most effective way, and it has been most effective during winter; and, owing to the action of the Inspectors during the last two or three years, the assistance of the settlers has been more systematic and continuous in laying down poisoned grain than formerly, and simultaneous poisoning has been carried on in all parts of the country with much greater effect. And yet it was found that, if the number of rabbits had been reduced to what seemed to be a reasonable extent, the few rabbits that were left bred so quickly that, if the breeding was allowed to go on undisturbed during the summer-time, the number would soon be very little less than before the destruction began. This circumstance would naturally ruin the colony, in time. Phosphorized grain is very effective; yet it involves large expenditure, and, if no other effective means are employed, this expenditure must be continued from year to year. Every witness told the Committee that his experience of poisoning during the summer was that it was less effective than during the winter; but in some cases summer poisoning has been very effective in checking the spread. The result of the inquiry has been to prove that, though the use of phosphorized grain may check the pest to a certain extent, yet it is not sufficiently effective; and that to make it alone sufficiently effective would entail very great and continuous expense. The Committee therefore came to the conclusion that no other plan could be so effective and economical as the encouraging and multiplication of the natural enemies of the rabbit. Stoats and weasels are supposed by the Committee to be about the best. Ferrets are very effective in the low country, but they are not so hardy as the other animals. The Committee also took a further point into consideration, and it is one which did not escape the practical mind of my honourable friend Mr. Bathgate, who pointed out that it would be desirable, if we introduced another natural enemy, that it should be one which would multiply exceedingly; and it was a choice of evils that the Committee had to consider. They came to the conclusion that it was far better to introduce these natural enemies, seeing that, though they would increase and become a pest when the rabbits were killed out, yet they could be afterwards easily killed out themselves; and, with regard to the stoat, its fur is so valuable that it may be made an article of commerce. The chief difference between stoats and weasels and ferrets is something in this wise: Whereas the ferret is the more delicate animal, and is supposed to deserve the reputation which it enjoys of being a mere pot-hunter, stoats and weasels kill for the mere pleasure of killing. That is the thing to be desired. I think what I have said will show that the contention of the honourable member is not one that can be sustained, and, if the introduction of stoats and weasels may lead to a nuisance, yet they are easily trapped, and, when trapped, their fur will be valuable. I hope I have satisfied the Council

that it is desirable to concur in the report of the Committee.

The Hon. Captain FRASER.—I should like to refer to what the Hon. Mr. Robinson said yesterday. He is a large property-owner, and he said he was prepared to support a Bill for the extermination of rabbits by the introduction of stoats and weasels, notwithstanding that he has valuable game on his estate, and that these animals will destroy game. He also said that the rabbit-pest had cost three millions of money to the colony. It is ridiculous to say, as has been said, that the stoats and weasels are dangerous to man. It has also been said that stoats and weasels will kill lambs; but I was on the Rabbit Committee two sessions ago, and it came out in evidence then that not a single lamb had been killed by those that had been introduced into the colony, and we know that at Kaikoura, where ferrets have been turned out, there is not a single rabbit in the place now. A stoat has been known to fix on the jugular vein of a hare and to be carried away for two miles. The rabbit-pest is ruining many of our oldest settlers, and I shall vote for the introduction of stoats and weasels, which, I feel sure, if they be introduced in sufficient numbers, will have the effect of exterminating the rabbits.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—If this goes to a division I shall vote for the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker's amendment: not because I like stoats and weasels, but because I think these are the only means of attacking the rabbits in the hill-country. The disadvantage under which we all labour is that we have no evidence and the Committee had no information as to the effect that stoats and weasels have upon the high country. We know perfectly well that in the accessible country we can keep the rabbits under by means of poisoned grain. No doubt, if you can only get at the country, and can lay down phosphorized grain, you can keep the rabbits under with the help of ferrets. But how are we going to attack this inaccessible country? How are we going to attack such country, for instance, as Wanaka and Wakatipu, referred to by one honourable member, where the mountains rise to between six and seven thousand feet above the level of the lakes? All the Governments in the world could not put poisoned grain over that country, and the only things we have yet heard of that are effectual in such places are stoats and weasels. It may be a very doubtful experiment, and it will be a disagreeable one, for I am sure that New Zealand will not be improved by the introduction of these vermin; but, of two evils, I think it is better to import the stoats and weasels, rather than to allow these large tracts of country to become simply breeding-grounds for rabbits. If there was not this inaccessible country I should vote for the Hon. Mr. Reeves's motion; but the Hon. Mr. Bathgate, and persons who reside in towns, never seem to understand the immense amount of inaccessible country there is in New Zealand. I do not know that I should be exaggerating in stating that three-fourths of the country is inaccessible. Let any one go through a mustering, and then he will understand something about it. It takes very sharp men indeed to muster sheep in these countries, and it would be impossible to deal with the rabbits there except by stoats and weasels. I believe the Committee have come to the right conclusion; and if we destroy the rabbits we can afterwards destroy the stoats and weasels by trapping: and it is also possible that these stoats and weasels may destroy the keas. It is well known that the kea-pest is only second to the rabbit-pest, and no one can tell us how to get at the keas. I cannot help referring to the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Bathgate with reference to breaking up the great estates and settling the people on the country. The amount of ignorance he displayed in that respect is surprising; and his remarks reminded me of a friend of my own, who has been twenty-four years in the interior of New Zealand—one of the most industrious men that ever entered this country, but who was obliged, in consequence of the rabbit-pest, to abandon his place in a day, and to go forth into the world again. What utter nonsense it is to talk like that! Men who have displayed the greatest energy possible have been obliged to succumb to this evil. It is of such magnitude, where the country is so inaccessible and extremely rough, that I can only hope these stoats and weasels will overcome the difficulty there. I must say that I feel extremely doubtful about it.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—There is a maxim in ethics and morals that we ought not to do evil even that good may follow. I know that certain casuists have questioned the general applicability of the maxim; nevertheless, I think it is one which on all occasions ought to be observed. No doubt it would be a very good and desirable thing, if it could be accomplished, that all rabbits should be destroyed; but I am satisfied—and I gather from the admissions that have been made even by the advocates of these vermin—that the consequence of their introduction would be much more serious than the pest for which they are proposed as a remedy. We have been told by the Hon. Mr. Menzies that stoats are of a very amiable character, and that their skins would be found to be a valuable article of commerce after the work of destroying the rabbits has been accomplished with their aid. I think the destruction of these vermin would not be at all so easy as honourable gentlemen seem to suppose. I take the weasel. Unless acclimatization should very much change the character of the weasel, I believe trapping weasels will not be easy. There is a proverbial saying that any one who catches a weasel asleep must be exceedingly smart. As for the ferrets, my personal experience of them is that they are the most sanguinary and vicious animal that could possibly be introduced. I had some rabbits on a place of mine, and ferrets were used for the purpose of destroying them. Now and then one of them escaped, and on such occasions the butchers' bill in the poultry-yard

would be something enormous. I have seen a flock of ducks killed or torn to pieces by a single ferret at one time, and that not on one occasion only. Under these circumstances, I feel bound to vote for the motion of the Hon. Mr. Reeves, and against the stoats and weasels.

The Hon. Mr. WIGLEY.—I think that my honourable friend, if he had made the same tour as I did three months ago through the lakes and the inaccessible country, and had seen the extent of the damage done by the rabbits there, would vote for any remedy to eradicate this pest. Buildings and stations once occupied and thriving were then deserted, and stations where a few years ago they were shearing forty thousand sheep were reduced to nineteen thousand. I suppose next year they will be reduced to ten thousand, and the year afterwards probably to five thousand. The country described by the Hon. Mr. Miller is so mountainous that it is impossible to reach it, and the only chance of killing the rabbit there is by trying the natural enemy.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES.—I understand that the amendment so skilfully introduced by the venerable tactician, my honourable friend Sir Frederick Whitaker, has practically deprived me of the right of reply, and therefore I take this opportunity of saying a few words upon this amendment. I have listened carefully to every possible objection that has been taken to the motion during the course of this debate, but I failed to find one single argument that has touched the real point at issue, and that is that these pests,—for all who have spoken admit that they are pests,—when they have been introduced—supposing, for the sake of argument, that they are introduced—will themselves, in turn, be as great a nuisance as rabbits; and then, how are we to dispose of them? Is it to be supposed that they will remain in the hill-country where they are to be placed—will remain there year after year—that they will not come down to the settled districts, and that they will not prove an intolerable pest to the settlers in those districts—that they will not, in fact, prove to be what in truth they are, not the natural enemy of the rabbits alone, but the enemy of every living thing which comes within their power to dispose of? That is the question, and it remains entirely unanswered; and I say that the Council has no right, by its vote on this occasion, to insist that this dangerous remedy—which all admit to be a most dangerous remedy—should be imported, even to remedy what we all know to be a most dangerous disease. I do not wish to be understood as making any reflection, in the remarks I am making, in regard to the Committee and the verdict of that Committee. That Committee has been properly chosen on account of the individual experience and knowledge of the members about the rabbit-pest as it affects the sheep-farming interest. If you look down the list you will find—and, I say, very properly—that all these members are more or less intimately connected with this industry; but when it comes to a question of accepting their dictum as to whether a pest of this kind should be introduced—which all admit to be a most dangerous remedy, to be destructive animals, and such as will spread all over the colony and become absolutely ineradicable—then I say that on that question this Committee are not entitled to decide, and their opinion is not entitled to remain unchallenged. This is a colonial question, and the opinion of every settler throughout the land is entitled to be taken before any decision is arrived at; and, even should the Council agree to the amendment, I think the Government would not be justified in attaching too much weight to that opinion, or in taking action upon it, until something much more decisive as to the voice of the country has been heard. I shall not, as I had intended to do, answer the remarks that fell from the various speakers further than to say that the logical conclusion of the greater part of their speeches is that I ought to receive their votes—especially that of the Hon. Mr. Robinson, who states that the animal is of a very dangerous character, and that probably it may attack lambs——

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—I do not think I said that.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES.—Yes; the honourable gentleman did, and he went on to say that these animals should not be introduced without fencing on a large scale—a thing which is not, at any rate, likely to be enforced; and therefore I say I have a right to claim my honourable friend's verdict. I think the debate has been an exceedingly interesting one, and I have no doubt it will have a good effect in the future.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—Sir, I should not trouble the Council any more except for the remark which fell from the Hon. Dr. Pollen, that it is not right to do evil in order that good may result. But I must remind him of another proposition, "Of two evils choose the less;" and I consider that in this case the less evil is the remedy now proposed. I said yesterday that unless fencing was carried out to some extent the introduction of stoats and weasels would not be the success that it is expected to be. Without fencing, the rabbits would simply get out of the way of the stoats and weasels, and scatter all over the country. The Hon. Mr. Reeves, who has introduced this question, has posed to-day as the friend of the small farmer. He tells the Council that we have no right to discuss this question at all.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES.—No.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—I think the honourable gentleman said that the Council had no right to give a vote on this matter, which affected the whole country. I think no other construction could be put upon the words of my honourable friend. It is admitted on all hands that phosphorized grain is very efficacious, and by it alone you can nearly extirpate the rabbits; but it has also been discovered that in summer-time rabbits will not take this grain so readily as in the winter, when food is scarce. In the summer, therefore, these vermin the introduction of which is proposed will not only destroy the young ones, but

also old ones. What reason has been assigned against the proposal to introduce these animals? The Hon. Dr. Pollen tells us that they killed his ducks. But suppose they killed all his ducks, that would be nothing in comparison to the damage the rabbits are doing. But you can rear ducks in spite of them.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I hope it will not be supposed that I was pleading the murder of my ducks as the reason why a certain great moral principle should be adopted. I only mentioned the incident of the ducks in illustration of the habits of the ferret, the animal in question.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—I have heard that these animals are never satisfied, but go on killing just for the mere pleasure of it; and that is why I advocate their introduction. I am surprised at my honourable friend saying he was deprived of his reply. He was not: he had his reply. What the honourable gentleman ought to have said was that by the amendment he was deprived of having the last word. And what has he said? That the Committee is composed of gentlemen who are entirely interested in sheep-farming, and nothing else.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES.—Hear, hear.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—To put it in the mildest way, I think the honourable member is mistaken. Looking down the list, I saw the names of one or two members who might be termed "farmers" in the general acceptation of the word, on the Canterbury Plains. The honourable member is, by this, introducing party spirit into this question. He is trying to make it appear that we are going to overrun the country with noxious vermin, which will destroy all the ducks, and so forth; and simply for the benefit of the sheep-farmer. But where these vermin are to be turned out will be in places where there are no sheep-farmers at all, and which, until we get rid of the rabbits, will never be occupied again. I shall vote for the amendment of my honourable friend Sir Frederick Whitaker.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—One after another of the honourable members who have spoken during this debate has referred to it as being a highly-interesting one. I have heard certain honourable members who have cast in their lot with the sheep interest favour in a most desperate manner the introduction of these dangerous animals, and those interested in poultry deprecate their proposed introduction. I have also heard one honourable gentleman who voted for the amendment say that their introduction was very desirable, but highly inexpedient. There was a time when I was in charge of a little Bill whose object was to prevent the introduction of noxious animals, and the little Bill nearly got through Committee but was killed in connection with a proposal to include the Tasmanian devil. Since that time these noxious animals have been introduced into this colony, including the rabbit. The recollection of that little Bill leads me to vote for the motion of the Hon. Mr. Reeves.

The Council divided on the question, "That the syllable 'in,' proposed to be struck out, stand part of the question."

AYES, 14.

Baillie	Peacock	Swanson
Bathgate	Pollen	Taiaroa
Hart	Reeves	Wigley
Johnston, J.	Reynolds	Wilson.
Mantell	Shrimski	

NOES, 23.

Acland	Grace	Robinson
Barnicoat	Holmes	Shephard
Brandon	Johnson, G. R.	Stevens
Brett	Kenny	Walker
Buckley	Lahmann	Whitaker
Chamberlin	Martin	Williams
Dignan	Menzies	Williamson.
Fraser	Miller	

Majority against, 9.

Amendment agreed to.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK.—I have a further amendment to make. I think it is expedient that these stoats and weasels should be confined to the inaccessible parts of the country. It is admitted on all hands that the low parts are pretty well guarded by the present means—the report says so; and, in order to provide that the animals should be confined to the inaccessible parts, and to prevent a worse pest than the rabbit being established, I beg to move the addition of the following words at the end of the amended motion: "Provided they be confined by proper fencing to the inaccessible portions of the country."

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I would ask my honourable friend if he is really serious in proposing that. In order to carry out his proposal it would, I need hardly say, be necessary to go to vast expense in the way of fencing.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—It is simply a practical joke. It is quite impossible to carry out such a proposal. They would climb up any fence; they even climb up trees.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—My honourable friend is proposing nonsense. I do not think he can ever have seen a stoat or a weasel.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—Order.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—I think I am quite in order, Sir, in saying I do not think he has. If he has, the honourable gentleman will put me right. His amendment would be impossible to carry out.

Amendment negatived.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

COUNTIES BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 195.—When resolution deemed to be carried.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved to strike out the first two lines down to "aforesaid," in order to insert, "If a majority in number of the ratepayers vote in favour of the proposal, and the number so voting are entitled to more than one-half in number of the votes which can be exercised by the whole number of ratepayers."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 13.

Barnicoat	Kenny	Reynolds
Bathgate	Lahmann	Shephard
Bonar	Peacock	Swanson
Brett	Reeves	Walker.
Buckley		

NOES, 13.

Hart	Pollen	Whitaker
Holmes	Robinson	Williams
Menzies	Shrimski	Williamson
Miller	Stevens	Wilson.
Peter		

The CHAIRMAN gave his casting-vote with the "Ayes."

Clause agreed to as printed.

New clause 99A.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT proposed the following new clause: "The Council may, out of the funds of the county, from time to time make such annual or other allowance to the Chairman, so long as he shall continue Chairman, by way of salary, as they may think fit: Provided always that in no case shall such salary exceed the sum of one hundred pounds in any one year."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be a clause of the Bill."

AYES, 10.

Barnicoat	Hart	Shephard
Bonar	Kenny	Swanson
Brett	Reeves	Williams.
Buckley		

NOES, 15.

Bathgate	Peacock	Walker
Holmes	Peter	Whitaker
Lahmann	Pollen	Wigley
Menzies	Reynolds	Williamson
Miller	Stevens	Wilson.

Majority against, 5.

Clause negatived.

The Council adjourned at half-past ten o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 23rd July, 1886.

Third Reading—Wairau Gas Bill—Private Bills—Government Insurance Association—Hannaford's Lighthouse—Whybrow Brothers—Public Trustee—Kauri—Justices of the Peace for East Coast—Lake District—Maori Lexicon—Postmasters and Telegraphists—Sheep-shearing—Manawatu Gorge Contract—Gorge Contract Specifications—Local Option—Midland Railway—Otago University Reserves—Kensington Siding—Auckland Railway—Beer Duty Bill—New Zealand Loan Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

THIRD READING.

Mortgage Debentures Bill.

WAIRAU GAS BILL.

Mr. HISLOP, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said, though he understood it would be opposed, he did not see how there could be any valid objection to it. The Bill was to vest the Blenheim gasworks and plant, which had been established by a private individual under an agreement with the Corporation, in a company. The gas plant had been there three or four years, and the works, he understood, were just beginning to pay. A little time since it had been decided by the Borough Council of Blenheim to prolong the time within which the works could be extended; but some opposition, he believed, had since been made on the part of the Council. He had read the petition presented against the Bill by that body, and it had been before the Standing Orders Committee; and the Committee seemed to think that the matter could properly be dealt with by a Committee appointed by the House, and they recommended the suspension of the Standing Orders, to allow the Bill to proceed. He submitted that it would be very much more convenient to follow the usual course in these proceedings, and refer the Bill to a Committee. He understood that the honourable member for the Wairau intended to propose a contrary course; but he thought the House should allow the Bill to go to a Committee, where any differences could be fought out. The statements and counter-statements that might be made in regard to the Bill could not possibly be fought out in the House with convenience. Witnesses could not be examined by the House, and the views and representations of all parties could not be so well advanced in the House as before a Committee. He therefore moved the second reading of the Bill, in order that it might be sent to a Committee.

Mr. DODSON said the last speaker was quite right in saying that this Bill was opposed. It was opposed by the people of Blenheim almost to a man, and was unanimously opposed by the Borough Council, which, as to a matter of this kind, might be taken to represent the opinions of the town. Before proceeding to discuss the merits of the Bill he would refer, shortly, to the extraordinary manner in which the Bill had reached its present stage. It was not more than a week or so ago that it came to his knowledge that a very important Bill affecting his own electorate and the largest centre in Marlborough was being promoted as a private Bill, and on making inquiries he found that on the 8th July the first notice was given of the intention of the promoters to introduce the Bill. He immediately put himself in communication with those he thought likely to have a knowledge of the matter, and received intimations from Blenheim that the Bill was very distasteful. He could not understand the reason why it was introduced, and certainly saw no reason why there should be such extraordinary haste in the matter. As soon as possible after the first notice appeared, which was on the 8th July, the Borough Council of Blenheim met. The meeting was on the 13th, so that the House would see that there was no undue delay. The Council unanimously passed a resolution asking him to oppose the Bill at every stage, and

to inquire how it was that the Standing Orders had been set aside in this case, none of them, apparently, having been complied with. He had received the Mayor's telegram conveying this on the 14th July, and immediately waited on the Examiner of Standing Orders on Private Bills, and also wrote a letter, to make sure that there should be no mistake, and with it forwarded the original telegram from the Mayor. He received an intimation from the Examiner, and then for the first time it came to his knowledge that there had been some meeting of the Committee on Private Bills previously on this subject. He thought it extraordinary that the member for the district so much affected should have no knowledge of this matter, and he went to a meeting of the Private Bills Committee on the 15th July, and there asked the Examiner if he would read the telegram and his (Mr. Dodson's) letter, and stated generally what his position was as to the Bill; and he was very much surprised, because it came to him as a new revelation, that a member of the House could not appear before the Committee and give evidence with reference to a subject greatly affecting his district. But he was informed that he had no position there, and that the first step to be taken before he could have a position before the Committee would be to present a memorial and petition from the Borough Council opposing the Bill. He took the precaution to have the telegrams and letters in his possession on the subject read before the Committee, and notice given that the Bill would be opposed at every stage, as being injurious and distasteful to the people affected; and he then left the Committee. He did not blame the members of the Committee, who were older members of the House than himself, and no doubt acted in strict accordance with the usual procedure; but still it struck him as very extraordinary that a Bill should pass to that stage without the member for the district affected knowing anything about it; and then, a thing more extraordinary still, although he had given notice of opposition, and had laid documents before the Committee, and had stated that he was certain there would be petitions sent by the next mail, the Committee agreed to dispense with the Standing Orders, and reported accordingly to the House, without waiting for the petitions. Next day the petitions came, and he sent them to the Committee; but of course it was too late to affect the decision to suspend the Standing Orders. He might read the petition of the Borough Council, as it very clearly and concisely stated the objections to the Bill:—

"1. That a Bill is before your honourable House intituled 'An Act to enable the Wairau Gas Company (Limited) to supply the Town of Blenheim with Gas.'

"2. That the Standing Orders of the General Assembly relative to private Bills require that such Bills shall be initiated by a petition presented at the Examiner's office either before the meeting of Parliament or within fourteen days after.

"3. That Parliament this year met on the 13th day of May.

"4. That the public notice of intention to present a petition praying for leave to introduce a Bill intituled as above recited is dated the 7th day of July, 1886, or fifty-five days after Parliament met this year.

"5. That your petitioners are aware that there is provision in the Standing Orders by which such Standing Orders as have not been complied with may be dispensed with.

"6. That your petitioners are opposed to any of the Standing Orders which may affect this Bill being dispensed with.

"7. That the passing of the said Bill is in no way a matter of urgency requiring the Standing Orders to be dispensed with, as there is an unexpired arrangement for supplying Blenheim with gas for a period of two years and five months from this present date.

"8. That on the 10th day of June last a public meeting of the burgesses of Blenheim, called by the Mayor at the request of several burgesses, was held to consider the Blenheim Gasworks question.

"9. That, after discussion, the following resolutions were unanimously agreed to: '(1.) That it is desirable that the gasworks for the supply of gas to the Borough of Blenheim should be the property of the borough.' '(2.) That a copy of the previous resolution be sent to the Borough Council, with a request that the Council take the necessary steps to give effect to the desire of the burgesses as set forth therein.'

"10. That, at a full meeting of the Borough Council, held on the 12th day of July, 1886, to consider the foregoing resolutions, they were unanimously agreed to, and a resolution passed that all necessary steps be taken to give effect to the same.

"11. That the Borough Council is now taking the necessary steps to place the burgesses in the position of supplying gas to the Borough of Blenheim from works to be owned by themselves.

"12. That if the Bill above named be passed great trouble and expense may be inflicted on the burgesses, inasmuch as, under section 292 of 'The Municipal Corporations Act, 1876,' it may become necessary, in carrying out the determination of the burgesses to establish gasworks of their own, to apply to Parliament for a special Act in that behalf.

"13. That, as the burgesses of Blenheim desire to supply themselves with gas from their own works, and to have the sole right of breaking up streets, and other powers necessary in connection with such works, and also to have for themselves any profits and advantages arising from gas which they are to use and pay for, your petitioners beg to submit that for your honourable House to grant such powers and advantages to any other person or company would be manifestly unjust.

"Your petitioners therefore humbly pray that your honourable House will on no account pass the said Bill; and your petitioners further pray to be heard by themselves, their counsel,

agents, and witnesses. And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c."

It was not necessary to say more upon that point, as the matter was stated very plainly in the petition; but he would like to refer to the agreement that had been made between the proprietor of these gasworks and the Corporation. It was a six years' agreement, with two and a half years yet to run. No one in Blenheim had desired to put the slightest obstacle in the way of the proprietor. On the contrary, they had given him every facility, and he was not aware that the proprietor had ever made any complaint that the people of the town, or the Corporation, had ever thrown difficulties in his way. But, on the contrary, the Corporation had had grave grounds of complaint owing to the manner in which the streets had been cut up. However, they were not desirous to push those complaints, but were willing to put up with the inconvenience rather than in any way interfere with the agreement. He might also say that the Town of Blenheim was rapidly increasing both in population and in material wealth. During the last three years the population had increased from 2,100 to 3,095, so that it had now more population than either New Plymouth or Hokitika; and a town of such importance should be entitled to some consideration at the hands of the House. In the same period the rateable value had increased from £253,879 to £390,000. That was a material increase; and a town of that size, so increasing, might, he thought, be left alone to manage its own affairs in its own way without interference by the House or by such a measure as that which was now before the House. The Corporation was one of the earliest that had been formed in the colony, and it had managed its affairs with such judicious carefulness and propriety that it was quite on a level in these respects with any Corporation in New Zealand. The town had been curiously situated. It had always this difficulty to contend with: that it was liable to floods. Despite this difficulty, however, the town had managed its affairs so well and with such care that the Corporation had incurred no debt. It had always contented itself with raising its own money and spending it, and therefore it was perfectly free of debt. It was true that a sum of £3,000 had lately been raised, but that was for specific works, and it was not yet spent. One or two members had told him that day that this Bill was similar to other Bills of the same character which had been passed; and he was referred to one passed this session—the Pitone Gas Bill. On comparing that Bill with the one now before them, it was singular to note that the two Bills ran very closely together, so closely that the only change was the change of name of the localities, but with one important difference, which he would point out. In the Pitone Bill there was a clause—numbered 47—which was very important, and bore directly on the grounds of the opposition that he was offering to this Bill. The clause was as follows:—

"Either of the Town Boards or other the local or corporate bodies for the time being exercising authority in place thereof over the Townships of the Hutt or Pitone may, at any time after the expiration of five years from the passing of this Act, purchase from the company the gasworks of the company on giving to the company twelve months' previous notice of an intention to so purchase. The amount of purchase-money, and the terms of purchase, shall be determined by an arbitration between the company and the Town Board, local or corporate body, giving such notice in the usual manner of arbitrations between private individuals."

That was the only clause which had been left out of this Bill. Why it had been left out it was for the House to determine. Perhaps it was one of the consequences of the unseemly haste which had been exhibited in pushing on this measure. However, the clause was left out, and the result was that the people of Blenheim would have no right to take over those works, as in the case of Pitone, at a valuation or on arbitration, or in any way of that kind. They were, on the contrary, to be entirely at the mercy of this private company or this private person; and so a monopoly was to be continued for all time, and the burgesses of Blenheim were to be charged just what the monopolists pleased for gas. How that had worked in the past might be inferred from the prices that they were compelled to pay the proprietor. The price charged was 17s. 6d. per thousand feet, to be reduced for lighting purposes to 15s., and for heating purposes to 12s. 6d.; so that the people in Blenheim were at a great disadvantage as compared with those living in towns not very much larger, where the charge was only 9s. or 10s. or 11s. per thousand. He thought, therefore, that the town was justified in objecting to this Bill, and that he was warranted in the course he was adopting in the matter. He had been told by a leading member of the Ministry that it was a most unusual thing to oppose the Bill at this stage; and the mover,—who, by the way, knew nothing about the facts of the case, and the effect the Bill would have,—in moving the second reading of the Bill, had treated the matter as being purely a formal affair, and had stated that, if there was to be any opposition, it should be brought forward before the Private Bills Committee, to whom the Bill must be sent. May, however, entirely supported the course taken in offering opposition to the Bill at this stage. That authority said, on page 779, "The second reading corresponds with the same stage in other Bills, and in agreeing to it the House affirms the general principle and expediency of the measure." Again, on the same page, "Where, irrespective of such facts, the principle is objectionable, the House will not consent to the second reading." Again, on page 800, "If the Bill be opposed upon its principle, it is the proper time for attempting its defeat." That was exactly what he was going to do, if he could—namely, to defeat the Bill. There were very good reasons why the people of Blenheim did not want to be handed over to the tender mercies of any one, giving

him a right to open the streets at any time he might please, for it was most dangerous to give any one power to open the streets independently of the town authorities. The people were opposed to this Bill simply on public grounds, and not from any desire to push the proprietor of the works into a corner, as had been suggested. In fact, he might say that, as there was so much feeling on the matter, he had deemed it his duty to visit Blenheim last week, in order to find out for himself what it was that the people meant, and whether they were sincere in their opposition, or whether they were trying to get the proprietor into a corner, or to make him come to terms; but he must say that he never heard a word from the Mayor or Councillors or inhabitants which would indicate that they had the slightest desire to take any advantage of Mr. Pritchard. On the other hand, they were very desirous that he should receive the fullest consideration. They were quite willing to purchase; but the purchase must take place under some sort of valuation, because the borough could not be expected to give any price that might be asked. It was not reasonable that they should be expected to do so. To show what sort of a price would very probably be asked, he might mention that when he was Mayor of Blenheim, three years ago, the propriety of the purchase of these works by the borough was decided upon by the Council and himself, and he endeavoured to negotiate with Mr. Hutcheson, who was then the owner. He then asked £10,000 for the works; but inquiries showed that the plant was only worth about £6,000. Not wishing to drive too hard a bargain, he was prepared to give £8,000; but the ratepayers had taken umbrage at the sum of £10,000 being asked, and no purchase was made. If they could have obtained the works for £8,000 the purchase would have been made. Since that time no great extension had taken place, and there had been some little wear and tear. The present proprietor became the sole purchaser of the plant, and the price now asked for was no less than £14,000. He was not prepared to say that that was too high. Personally, he knew nothing respecting its value, but it did seem a very large price for a small plant like that in Blenheim. If the proprietor thought the works worth £14,000 now, he (Mr. Dodson) was certain that, if the Bill passed, they would be worth £4,000 more, for it would give him a monopoly; and, as the town was peculiarly situated, and the people were desirous of having the sole right to open up their own streets, he was sure that the proprietor had only to ask for £18,000 and it must be given, for sooner or later the Corporation would have to buy the works, at any price. He therefore thought the House would see the reasonableness of the opposition to the measure, and the reasonableness of the course he was taking in opposing the second reading, although that course might be somewhat unusual. It had been said, in connection with this, that the proper time to oppose the Bill was when it was before the Committee—that the second reading might safely go, and then it would be sent to the Committee of Selection to deal with as a private Bill, and to take the matters he had referred to into consideration, so that, if there were reasons why the Bill should not be thrust upon the town, those reasons would be dealt with. As he had pointed out, however, the people of Blenheim were anxious to keep within the mark, and to borrow no more money than they could help; and, that being so, they were careful how they spent their money. Now, if the Bill were read a second time, and went to the Committee on Private Bills, this would take place: They would have to get evidence from Blenheim; and, knowing very well the astuteness of the legal gentleman in charge of the Bill, he would not meet him before the Committee, but must go armed with legal ability equal to his own. He would not assume the responsibility of acting otherwise. Having to get evidence, and to employ legal talent, the result, he need not tell the House, would be a heavy bill of costs, and that cost ought not to be inflicted upon a community that had done nothing to deserve it. The Bill was simply designed for the aggrandizement of a private individual, who already had the community sufficiently at his mercy. He (Mr. Dodson) had been told that there were reasons for this Bill, and that the proprietor had represented that he had been somewhat unfairly dealt with. It had been alleged that the Corporation of Blenheim, by resolution, did agree to extend the agreement for a number of years; that, in consequence, the proprietor expended a considerable sum; and that, when he had commenced to spend the money, the Corporation rescinded the resolution. If that were true, it would be a very unfortunate position for the town to have placed itself in; but he was pleased to say that it was not true. What was done was this: In February last the proprietor's agent wrote a letter to the Council asking for an extension of his agreement. The letter was a very plausible one, and admitted, practically, that the town had cause to complain of the way in which the footpaths had been broken up. There was, he might say, this extraordinary thing done under the agreement, which it was never expected would be done. Power was given to break up the streets, as required, to lay down the pipes; but, instead of laying down the mains on the water-tables or the centres of the streets, in every single instance the mains had been laid through the footpaths. The footpaths were broken up in the middle, and by the time the footpaths got into good order again they were again broken up. There had no doubt been an oversight in the agreement, and he did not blame the proprietor of the works, who no doubt was acting within the four corners of the agreement. The footpaths were raised, and afforded the most ready means of laying down the mains, and they were so laid simply to save the proprietor money. In the letter referred to it was stated that in this respect the proprietor was prepared to observe more care than had been previously exercised.

Mr. Dodson

It also contained this important passage, which he would quote, to show that there was some justification for the members of the Council thinking that it was not an unreasonable thing to give a further extension of time. The letter contained this clause: "Mr. Pritchard does not desire to have the sole right of opening streets for gas-supplying purposes. He is quite willing to take his chance of the Corporation or private individuals starting gasworks hereafter." Now, there was a frankness about that. He said that he did not want a monopoly—give him an extension of time, and then if they chose to erect gasworks themselves he would not object, and would not object to other persons starting gasworks there. If this Bill passed it would be impossible to erect other gasworks there, because it was very unlikely the burgesses would allow the Corporation to undertake the erection of gasworks in opposition to works already established. There was therefore some reason for the resolution passing as it did; but as to its leading the proprietor to undertake certain works, and then being rescinded, he would state the facts. He would quote from the local paper, the *Marlborough Express*. The resolution agreeing to the extension, in answer to the letter, ran as follows: "That an extension of the concessions for opening streets for the purpose of laying down gas-mains be granted to the proprietor of the gasworks in terms of Mr. Muir the manager's letter." That was passed at a meeting on the 19th February; and at the same meeting, before the Council separated, notice of motion was tabled that at the next meeting they would challenge this resolution, and move to rescind it. One of the Councillors present gave this notice of motion: "I give notice of motion at the next ordinary meeting to revoke the decision of the Council to-night *re* gasworks concessions." Could any one contend that the proprietor, seeing the decision was come to on a mere resolution of the Council which had been challenged the same evening, had a right to proceed to construct expensive works, and then to complain that he had been placed at a disadvantage by the resolution being passed? That was certainly not a justifiable cause of complaint. The resolution come to in favour of granting the concessions was only carried by five to four—a majority of one. The motion rescinding that resolution was carried in a fuller Council. He might say that the Mayor of Blenheim was not present at the meeting when the original resolution was passed; but he was present when the rescinding motion came on, on the 20th March. The Mayor then used these words: "Had he been present he would have given his vote and casting-vote against the concession which Councillor Riley now sought to revoke." The motion was carried, five voting for it and three against. So strongly did the Mayor feel upon this subject that he was prepared not only to exercise his deliberative vote, but, if necessary, to give his second vote to prevent so grave a blunder being made as to grant the concessions asked for. It was said that the rescinding motion was carried on the casting-vote of the Chairman: but nothing of the kind had taken place. There was a casting-vote given at that meeting, but it was on the adjournment of the debate; and the motion for rescinding the resolution passed at the previous meeting agreeing to the concession was carried by five to three. It was, he thought, clearly shown that no injustice had been done, and no attempt made at injustice to the proprietor of the works. He was aware that the mover of the resolution would have the right to reply, and he had therefore gone fully into the matter. He moved, That the Bill be read a second time that day month.

Mr. TAYLOR had much pleasure in seconding the amendment, because he sympathized strongly with the honourable the mover in connection with this matter. He held that the Corporations throughout the colony should have the sole control of lighting and watering, and by granting monopolies of this character to one man an injury was done to the community at large. He was always opposed to such monopolies, and he hoped that the honourable member would succeed in his attempt to prevent the passage of the measure.

Sir R. STOUT would not have spoken had he not been specially referred to by the honourable member for Wairau. He had informed him that it was quite unusual that there should be a motion of this kind made on the second reading of a private Bill. He was sorry that the honourable member for Wairau had delivered the speech he had given, because, if this was going to be the case with private Bills, they might as well abolish private-Bill legislation, and treat all Bills as public Bills. This was entirely out of precedent. He did not say the honourable gentleman was not within his right. Of course he was within his right, and such a thing might be done on rare occasions; but it was, he submitted, wrong to discuss private Bills as they would public Bills, and discuss special features in them. He would give the honourable member the views of one of the ablest authorities on the subject—namely, Sir W. Anson. He would read one or two extracts to show that a private Bill was quite different from a public Bill. It was of a judicial character, and the Parliament, in order to perform its judicial functions, appointed Committees for the purpose. Regarding the second reading of a private Bill, Sir W. Anson said,—

"It is then read a second time; and here, if at all, the general principle of the Bill is discussed in the House. But the effect of a second reading is not, as in the case of a public Bill, to affirm the principle of the Bill—it merely indicates that the Bill contains no obviously-objectionable features."

And again,—

"The Committee-stage is the really interesting and exciting part of the career of a private Bill, for there the judicial aspect of the House in its dealings with these measures is brought into strong light: and it appears in a judicial character, not, as in the preliminary stages of

the Bill, to insure compliance with forms of procedure, but to hear a keen and animated contest upon the merits of the Bill, conducted by counsel for the promoters and opponents, and supported by witnesses examined upon oath."

If honourable members were going to debate private Bills in pursuance of the precedent set up by the honourable member to-day, then private-Bill legislation would have to come to an end. He did not know whether the Bill was right or wrong; but, unless it contained some obviously-objectionable features, it should be allowed to go to a Committee to be treated as a private Bill. If the House were dissatisfied with the report of the Committee the Bill could be rejected on the third reading.

Mr. FULTON would ask the Premier to kindly state why the Standing Orders in this case should have been dispensed with.

Sir. R. STOUT did not know anything about that. That was a different point. It might have been right for the House to refuse to dispense with compliance with the Standing Orders.

Mr. HAMLIN said he thought he would disprove, in a few words, the statement of the honourable member for Wairau that the Joint Committee on Standing Orders had acted with extraordinary haste. A petition with reference to this Bill was duly presented at the Examiner's Office, and the Examiner reported that the Standing Orders had not been complied with. Eventually the House instructed the Joint Committee on Standing Orders to see what was to be done with the question. The Committee met, and all the members were present, with one exception. After considerable discussion they came to the conclusion that they should ask the House to dispense with Standing Orders 10 and 20. When he moved the suspension of those two Standing Orders he stated distinctly that the following Standing Order—No. 10—had not been complied with: "Every private Bill shall be initiated by a petition, which shall be presented at the Examiner's Office either before the meeting of Parliament or within fourteen days after." With reference to Standing Order 20, he had pointed out that notice had not been published in the *Gazette*. The promoter explained that, owing to certain circumstances which had taken place in Blenheim, he had not been able to comply with the Standing Orders. The Committee therefore considered that it would be right to ask the House to suspend those two Standing Orders, in order that the promoters of the Bill might bring it forward. When the House consented to suspend those Standing Orders, the Committee unanimously decided that they should not allow any further consideration of the question to take place until nine days after, in order that they could be perfectly satisfied that notice had been published in the *Gazette*, and also that notice had been published in the local papers of Blenheim. They—the Committee—said if that were done they would allow the Bill to go on, but they did not in any way say that the Bill would become law, or that no opposition would be offered to it. On that occasion the honourable member for Wairau did attend; but, seeing that it was merely a deliberative meeting, he was asked by the Chairman to retire. The honourable member for Wairau, in reading an extract from May, stopped short just where he should have gone on, when he would have seen that the conduct of the Committee was quite right. The passage in May was as follows:—

"The second reading corresponds with the same stage in other Bills, and in agreeing to it the House affirms the general principle or expediency of the measure. There is, however, a distinction between the second reading of a public and of a private Bill which should not be overlooked. A public Bill being founded on reasons of State policy, the House, in agreeing to its second reading, accepts and affirms those reasons; *but, the expediency of a private Bill being mainly founded upon allegations of fact* which have not yet been proved, the House, in agreeing to its second reading, affirms the principle of the Bill *conditionally, and subject to the proof of such allegations before the Committee.*"

The honourable gentleman had taken an extraordinary course in endeavouring to stop the second reading. He (Mr. Hamlin) did not wish to commit himself to the Bill. Until the Committee of Selection met and told off a Committee to try the Bill it was unfair to bring the whole measure here, because the possibility was that, when the Committee was chosen, it might, in accordance with the Standing Orders, throw the Bill out; and if this were done the time they had already taken up in attempting to discuss the measure at the present time would be wasted.

Mr. BRUCE said that, after listening to the speech of the Premier, he would feel bound to vote against the second reading of this Bill. The authority quoted implied that a Bill should be passed on its second reading if it had no obviously-objectionable features. Now, the honourable member for Wairau had shown that this Bill had obviously-objectionable features, as it would give a hard-and-fast monopoly; and he would therefore vote against the second reading.

Mr. SAMUEL hoped that the honourable member for Wairau would withdraw his amendment. After the lucid explanation given by the Premier, and the statement made by the honourable member for Franklin South, they must be convinced that it was not proper to test the question now whether the Bill should pass or not. It should go before a Select Committee, where evidence would be taken and counsel heard on both sides.

Mr. TURNBULL thought the House should be much more careful in future about the suspension of the Standing Orders. If the Standing Orders had been complied with they would not have been in this difficulty. However, after the explanations that had been given he hoped the honourable member for Wairau would withdraw his amendment. There was no doubt the honourable gentleman had fully

justified the action he had taken; but he thought it would be wise to take the recommendation of the honourable member for New Plymouth.

Mr. MONTGOMERY asked if the honourable member for Wairau was present when the suspension of the Standing Orders was moved. That would have been the time to raise his voice. When the Bill came before them for second reading it was only a stage on its way to a Committee which could inquire into the merits of the Bill. He thought it would be better now to allow the Bill to go before the Committee, and he trusted that his honourable friend would not think that those who voted against his amendment did not pay sufficient attention to his arguments, because he himself at the present moment considered this was a dangerous Bill; but at the same time he wished the *pros* and *cons* to be considered by the Committee.

Mr. J. W. THOMSON said the course taken by the honourable member for Wairau was not altogether without precedent. May, referring to the second reading of a private Bill, said, "If the second reading be deferred for three or six months, or if the Bill be rejected, no new Bill with the same object can be offered until the next session." It therefore appeared that it was not unusual to defer the second reading of a Bill of that kind for three or six months. That was exactly what the honourable member desired—namely, that the Bill be read a second time that day month. The Premier stated that the second reading of a Bill was an admission that there did not appear to be anything obviously objectionable in the Bill. There were objectionable features in this Bill. One objectionable feature was, as had been stated, that it was going to give a monopoly. Another objectionable feature was that the borough was not to have any power of purchasing these gasworks. The thing that weighed with him above all others was this: the great expense to which the municipality was to be put, without any good reason being given. On that ground he thought it very undesirable that the House should read the Bill a second time. He was informed that the passing of this Bill would cost the borough £200 or £300. He was also told that the borough itself was very much opposed to the Bill. That, he thought, should weigh with the House in deferring the second reading.

Mr. HISLOP said those who were opposed to the Bill on proper grounds were entitled to receive the same consideration as they would receive in a Court of justice. He hoped, therefore, that the honourable gentleman would at once withdraw his opposition to the second reading of the Bill, and allow the matter to go before the Committee constituted for the purpose. After the remarks of the Premier he thought the House would see the expediency of adopting the advice he gave, because, although it concerned the promoters of the Bill that day, it might be the turn of other honourable members on other occasions to have similar objections taken against them. The honourable member for Clutha ought to know that the promoter of the Bill would not put himself to the expense of coming to the House and running the risks he did unless he knew he had a very good case to appeal to the House upon. With regard to the principle of opposing a Bill on the second reading, he thought the honourable gentleman would find, on reference to the Journals of the House of Commons, that the private Bills he had referred to were Bills whose principles were objected to by the House. How could it be said that the principle of this Bill was objected to by the House, when already this session similar Bills had been passed? The only objection raised by the honourable member for Wairau was a Committee amendment, which, he (Mr. Hislop) had authority to say, would be considered by the promoter, and every attempt would be made to have a provision put in the Bill which would suit both parties. As to the assertion that the Bill would confer a monopoly, the Bill gave the promoter no rights additional to what he already possessed, except the security which an Act of Parliament gave him—the additional convenience which arose from special legislation. There was no monopoly at all. The following was part of the agreement, and the promoter had no objection whatever to its being incorporated in the Bill:—

"The Council reserves to itself the right to grant to any other person or persons, body or bodies, after the expiration of six years from the 1st day of January, 1883, powers and privileges with regard to the establishment of gasworks similar to or greater than those hereby granted to the contractor: Provided that, in case the Council shall at any time exercise its right under this clause, it will not in any way interfere with, and will prevent all interference by, its grantee or grantees with the present contractor's works and his right to use the same for the supply of gas to such consumers as he may have after the expiration of the said term of six years."

Under the present agreement the promoter had the power to lay as many pipes as he pleased during the term of six years from January, 1883, and after that he had full power to work them. The Bill conferred on him no greater power. Under the Municipal Corporations Act the Corporation had power to apply to the House for special provisions in order to erect gasworks of their own. He thought it would be against all justice to force the promoter to sell to the Borough Council. The very fact that the Council had altered its mind within so short a period as stated showed that the promoter was entitled to have his rights placed on a more substantial basis than they were on at the present time. It would be more consonant with the usual practice of the House, and more consistent with its dignity, that the discussion on such matters should not take place in the House; but the Bill should be relegated to the machinery which had been framed for dealing with these Bills.

Mr. CONOLLY said the authorities which had been cited on both sides seemed to poi-

distinctly to this: that the usual thing to be done was that the Bill should be read a second time, as it were, *pro formâ*, and then should be remitted to a Select Committee; but the authorities went further than that, and showed clearly that there might be exceptional cases, and also that such exceptional cases had arisen. He submitted that the case under consideration was an exceptional one, and therefore the honourable member for Wairau was clearly justified in resisting the Bill at its present stage. There was no necessity whatever for the Bill this session. The agreement referred to was in force for two more years. At present the promoter had not a monopoly, but he wished to establish a monopoly, and also to exclude the usual condition—namely, that the Council should have the right of purchase. The Bill had been brought down at a very late period of the session, and the Standing Orders had been allowed to be suspended. He must confess, as a member of the Joint Committee on Standing Orders, that he looked upon that Committee as of very little use. He was not able to be present when this Bill was under consideration, as he was Chairman of another Committee; but he had been present on the Committee on other occasions, and his experience was that whenever the Standing Orders had not been complied with the House was recommended to dispense with them. They might just as well have no Committee at all, if the Standing Orders were dispensed with in that way. He had no doubt that the honourable member for Wairau was prevented from been present when the recommendation of the Committee on this Bill came down to the House, or he would have opposed it then. He could confirm that honourable gentleman in most of what he said, and would not detain the House by going over the particulars again; but what he wished to point out was that the Premier had not alluded to the fact that there were exceptional cases, and seemed rather to try to lead the House to believe that, if the honourable member for Wairau carried his motion, it would be an entirely new practice. There need be no fear that if the amendment were carried it would be made a precedent, for honourable members, unless in exceptional cases, would always follow the usual course. Having shown the peculiar circumstances under which this Bill was brought in, and how it was opposed by the inhabitants of the district affected, it would be infinitely better for all parties that the Bill should not proceed further, with the likelihood of putting either or both parties to heavy expense by having to defend their cases before the Select Committee. If the result were unfavourable to the Bill it would be almost certain to be rejected; and, even if the Committee should report favourably on it, then he thought sufficient grounds could be shown in the House for rejecting it on the third reading. He hoped the amendment would be carried.

Mr. BARRON said this was a very simple matter. The House might be doing a great injustice to the Borough of Blenheim by passing the Bill as it came now before them. But it might be doing a great injustice to the promoters if it refused further inquiry. A reference to the Committee could not possibly do any harm, and the result of its inquiries need not commit the House to the Bill in any way. The Committee was the best means available for collecting the evidence which was required, and when that evidence was obtained the House would be able to judge of the merits of the Bill, which it could scarcely do now, as honourable members were really very much in the dark with regard to it. He would therefore vote for sending the Bill to the Committee.

The House divided on the question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the question."

AYES, 26.

Allwright	Larnach	Ross
B.-Bradshaw	Macandrew	Russell
Brown	Moat	Samuel
Buckland, W.F.	Montgomery	Stout
Cadman	O'Callaghan	Sutter
Dargaville	O'Conor	Tole.
Gore	Ormond	*Tellers.*
Hamlin	Reese	Barron
Hatch	Richardson, E.	Hislop.

NOES, 27.

Atkinson	Lake	Thompson, T.
Beetham	Locke	Thomson, J. W.
Buchanan	Macarthur	Trimble
Conolly	McKenzie, J.	Turnbull
Fraser	McMillan	Wakefield
Hakuene	Newman	Wilson.
Hirst, H.	Pearson	*Tellers.*
Hobbs	Richardson, G.	Dodson
Hursthouse	Rolleston	Taylor.
Johnston		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Vogel	Bruce
Walker.	Levestam.

Majority against, 1.

Word struck out.

On the question, That the words "this day month" be added,

Mr. REESE moved, That the words "next sitting-day" be substituted.

The House divided on the question, "That the words 'this day month' stand part of the question."

AYES, 28.

Atkinson	Lake	Thomson, J. W.
Beetham	Locke	Trimble
Buchanan	Macarthur	Turnbull
Conolly	McMillan	Wakefield
Fraser	Newman	Whyte
Hakuene	Pearson	Wilson.
Hirst, H.	Richardson, G.	
Hobbs	Rolleston	*Tellers.*
Hursthouse	Te Ao	Dodson
Johnston	Thompson, T.	Taylor.

NOES, 26.

Allwright	Buckland, W.F.	Duncan
B.-Bradshaw	Cadman	Gore
Brown	Dargaville	Hamlin

Hatch	O'Conor	Stout
Larnach	Ormond	Sutter
Macandrew	Reese	Tole.
Moat	Richardson, E.	*Tellers.*
Montgomery	Ross	Barron
O'Callaghan	Samuel	Hislop.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Bruce	Vogel
Levestam.	Walker.

Majority for, 2.

Bill ordered to be read a second time this day month.

PRIVATE BILLS.

Mr. HAMLIN, in moving the motion standing in his name, said he did not know if there was any objection to it. In order that honourable members might be fully cognizant of the effect of passing the motion he would read the two Standing Orders:—

"69. The Committee on each Bill shall from time to time appoint the day upon which they will enter upon the consideration of such Bill, and on which they will require the parties severally promoting or opposing the same to enter appearances; and two clear days' notice at the least of such appointment shall be given by the Examiner in his office."

"76. Every private Bill, as amended in Committee, shall be printed at the expense of the parties applying for the same, and delivered to the Clerk for the use of the members two clear days at least before the consideration of the Bill."

The sole object of the motion was this: There were three private Bills before one or other of the Houses, and, owing to the advanced stage of the session, it was just possible that, without any fault whatever on the part of the promoters of these Bills, they might be prevented from passing, and the promoters would then lose the £20 or £25 they had paid in fees. He simply moved the motion, and left it to the House to say whether it was desirable to suspend the Standing Orders or not; and, of course, if the House decided against suspending them the Committees on the Bills must adhere strictly to the Standing Orders, whatever the consequences might be.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That, in order to facilitate the passage of private Bills at present before this House, Standing Orders Nos. 69 and 76 of the Orders relating to private Bills be dispensed with for the remainder of the session."—(*Mr. Hamlin.*)

Mr. DODSON said, after the recent illustration of the evils of suspending the Standing Orders, he should consistently and continuously oppose all such suspensions. He did not, however, much object to the motion applying to unopposed Bills, and would therefore move an amendment to insert the words "as relating to unopposed Bills" after the words "dispensed with." Opposed Bills, however, should be allowed to proceed only subject to the constitutional safeguards provided by the rules of the House. He hoped the honourable gentleman would accept the amendment.

Mr. HAMLIN could not accept the amendment. The three Bills to which he had referred were the Wellington-Manawatu Railway Bill, the Hutt and Pitone Gas Bill, and the Cathedral Site (Parnell) Leasing Bill. If the promoters of these Bills were left out in the cold, the onus would rest on the shoulders of those members who were unwilling to trust the Joint Committee on Standing Orders on Private Bills.

Mr. TURNBULL said one of the Standing Orders proposed to be suspended related to the printing of the Bills, and the other to two days being allowed to elapse between two stages of a Bill. Surely the desire to avoid the delay that would follow from compliance with those provisions was not a sufficient reason for suspending the Standing Orders. He thought they had seen and heard enough that afternoon of the evils resulting from the suspending of Standing Orders on Private Bills.

Mr. MACANDREW thought that, if private Bills were prevented from passing through the preliminary stages—which they had invariably been allowed to do hitherto—and this, as in the present instance, owing to no fault of the promoters, the fees should be refunded. Could the motion be amended to that effect?

Mr. SPEAKER said it could not.

Major ATKINSON asked what had caused the delay in proceeding with the Bills. Was it owing to neglect of the parties, or was the delay unavoidable?

Mr. HAMLIN said it was not due to neglect. The Bills had been introduced in the proper form and been proceeded with in strict accordance with the Standing Orders; but, as it seemed that the session was to end earlier than usual, Bills of much importance might, if the Standing Orders were not suspended, fail to be passed simply through having to comply with the formalities imposed by those Orders; and he thought it would be wrong that the promoters of those Bills should be left out in the cold through no fault of their own. He had stated clearly what the effect of passing the motion would be, and he therefore thought honourable members should understand clearly the reason why the motion was moved.

Mr. SPEAKER asked if any one of the three Bills was opposed.

Mr. HAMLIN did not think so.

Mr. Dodson's amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

GOVERNMENT INSURANCE ASSOCIATION.

Mr. ORMOND brought up the following report:—

"Your Committee has inquired into and taken evidence at considerable length on the subjects referred to them, both as to purchase of building-sites and the general working of the Government Insurance Association under the present Board.

"As regards the purchase of building-sites, the Committee finds that properties were pur-

chased at Wellington and Dunedin prior to the Board coming into office, and that a purchase in Christchurch had been under negotiation, and was completed by authority of the Board; also that a site at Auckland was purchased by the Board.

"It appears from the evidence that all these purchases were made with the object of securing sites for the erection of imposing buildings, on the ground that such were necessary to influence and promote business.

"The Wellington purchase was made from the Government, the price paid being £18,000. The business of the Association at Wellington is conducted in a portion of the building, the remainder of the space being let as offices to other Government departments. The results are estimated to represent 6 per cent. on the purchase. The Committee learns it is in contemplation to pull down the present building, and erect in its place a structure estimated to cost £35,000. Plans have been prepared and paid for, and architects are engaged in preparing working plans and specifications, with the view of calling for tenders.

"The Dunedin purchase was made in December, 1884. The price paid was £35,500, costs and expenses bringing the price up to £36,029 9s. 2d. The premises have not been used by the Association, other offices being rented in another part of Dunedin at a rental of £75 a year. Portions of the premises are subject to leases which have some years to run. Some of the buildings are described as being in a dilapidated state. The present rents return £2,007. The evidence shows that to utilize the purchase a large expenditure on new buildings will be required.

"The Christchurch property was purchased from two different parties, the larger portion from Mr. Maling for £10,250, and an adjoining section from Mr. Phillips for £1,500. The Maling property has since been let to him for twenty-five years, at a rental of £500 per annum for five years and £600 per annum for twenty years. It has been proposed to build offices for the conduct of the Association's business on Mr. Phillips's section.

"At Auckland a property was purchased from Mr. Shera, the price paid being £19,000. The purchase was made on the 31st March, 1885, and the buildings have been unoccupied since the 31st October, 1885, although the Association rents other premises as offices.

"The Committee has to report, in respect to these purchases, that an outlay of £84,779 has been incurred; that, with the exception of the Wellington building, the premises are not used for offices by the Association; that costly buildings were intended to be constructed on the sites; that all the purchases must be regarded as having been made partly for speculative purposes, and that it was undesirable the funds of the Association should have been so invested.

"The Committee considers the erection of costly buildings, with the idea of thereby attracting business, quite unnecessary, and recommends that only such buildings be provided as are requisite for the proper and convenient conduct of the Association's business.

"The Committee considers it extremely advisable that any future purchases of land or buildings, and all salaries of officers, should be submitted for the approval of Parliament.

"In respect to the general working of the Association under the present Board, in the opinion of your Committee the evidence justifies the following conclusions:—

"That the disagreements on the Board, and the publicity given to these disagreements, have acted injuriously to the interests of the Association.

"That the working expenses of the Association have been considerably increased, and that no proportionate advantage has accrued.

"That the interests of the policy-holders require that a portion of the funds should be invested in securities yielding a better return than can be obtained from Government securities.

"That canvassing for lives is necessary to the success of the Association.

"Your Committee has agreed to the following resolutions, which it recommends to the consideration of the House:—

"That the present Board should be abolished.

"That the general management of the Association's business should be intrusted to an officer of high character and attainments, possessing experience in the business of insurance.

"That the Act of 1874 be re-enacted, subject to the recommendations of this Committee.

"That not less than one-half of the funds of the Association should be invested in Government securities and in debentures of public bodies in New Zealand secured by rates.

"That the remainder of the funds should be invested in advances on policies and on mortgage of freehold properties in New Zealand; provided that no such mortgage shall exceed £10,000, and the money lent shall not exceed one-half the market-value of such property.

"That all moneys lent on mortgage should be invested in the various provincial districts, as nearly as practicable, in the proportion in which the same have been derived from such districts, provided this can be done without loss to the Association.

"That applications for loans not exceeding £500, secured upon real property, should have priority over applications for larger sums.

"That for dealing with investments a special Board should be appointed; such Board to consist of the Minister in charge of the department, the General Manager, the Surveyor-General, the Property-tax Commissioner, and the Public Trustee.

"That no investment by mortgage or loan should be made without the unanimous vote of all the members of the Board present at the meeting at which such loan be considered, and that in all cases the assent of not less than three members shall be required.

"That canvassing for lives should be continued, and that every encouragement should be given to the issue of small policies."

Mr. ORMOND asked whether the Govern-

ment intended to deal with the matter this session, or, if not, whether they would give the House an opportunity to consider the matter.

Sir R. STOUT replied that the Government did intend to deal with the matter, and a Bill would be introduced at once, so that there would be a full opportunity of discussing the question.

HANNAFORD'S LIGHTHOUSE.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND asked the Minister of Marine, If his attention has been drawn to Hannaford's newly-invented "iron skeleton windmill bell-tower lighthouse;" and if he will grant Mr. Hannaford clerical assistance towards making working-plans for the same? He hoped that some assistance would be afforded to Mr. Hannaford, because it was possible that a very important discovery had been made, and one that would be the means of saving thousands of lives on these coasts.

Mr. LARNACH said that his attention had been called to Mr. Hannaford's discovery or invention by a petition which was presented last year to the Government. That petition was referred to the Marine Engineer and another officer of the Marine Department, and the report was adverse to having anything to do with it. As far as he was aware, clerical assistance had never been given to inventors for the preparation of plans or otherwise, and the Government did not think it at the present time desirable to begin in that direction.

WHYBROW BROTHERS.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON asked the Native Minister, If it is the intention of the Government to introduce a Half-caste Grants Bill this session; and, if not, whether he will include the grants to the brothers Whybrow at Otara in the Special Powers and Contracts Bill? In asking the question he would remind the Native Minister of the promise he made last session that a Bill should be introduced to deal with this matter; but, owing to the lateness of the session, it was to be feared that a Bill would not be introduced, and he would like to get a favourable reply to the latter part of the question.

Mr. BALLANCE replied that it was not intended to introduce a Bill this session. He had hoped that information would have been obtained by the Royal Commissioner on these claims, but he found he had to wait for special legislation. He did not propose to include the matter in the Special Powers and Contracts Bill, but would submit it to the Royal Commissioner.

PUBLIC TRUSTEE.

Mr. O'CONOR asked the Premier, Whether he is aware that in the case of Lowe and Others *versus* the Public Trustee, heard in the Resident Magistrate's Court at Westport, judgment has been recorded against the Public Trustee, *eo nomine*; that a distress warrant in the above case has been issued, and returned *nulla bona*; and whether Government will make provision to give satisfaction to the public in similar cases where judgments may be obtained against the Public Trustee? He wished to explain that some time ago a miner in the district he represented died, and his property fell into the hands of the Public Trustee. The Public Trustee sold the property, and subsequently there were some receipts accruing on the property, and the Trustee's agent at Westport claimed the amount, although he had sold the property to the parties mentioned in the question. When the parties entitled to the money heard this, they claimed the money, and, not getting it, sued the Trustee and got a verdict against him; but, instead of getting back the whole of the money the Trustee had received wrongfully, he returned the amount less expenses he had been put to in defending the case. In this way the persons getting the judgment had been wronged to a considerable extent, and deprived of the money which was lawfully theirs, and of the costs awarded to them.

Sir R. STOUT said the facts, as he understood them, were these: The Public Trustee was simply acting as the administrator of a deceased person, and distributed the money in March, 1884, according to an order of the Court, paying the creditors something like 4s. in the pound. The estate was sold to Lowe and party, and there was a dispute between the Trustee and the purchasers as to an amount of £17 1s. 10d. They claimed the money, and he claimed it, and the Trustee, as he did not doubt that the money belonged to the estate, said that, unless good reason were shown, he should treat it as belonging to the estate. Instead of showing good reason to the Trustee, these persons brought an action for the amount, which the Trustee defended, and for the defence two guineas were paid; Lowe and party obtained judgment, and the Trustee handed to them the amount less the cost of defending the action. Of course the Trustee had no money beyond that, and it would be a monstrous thing to hold that, if there were insolvent estates, the Public Trustee would have to make up any balance to the creditors. That would be a new use to put the Public Trust Office to. No more could be got out of this estate, and therefore no more could be paid out of it.

Mr. O'CONOR said that the money was wrongfully retained.

Sir R. STOUT said that was a point that had been raised and decided by law.

Mr. O'CONOR.—Judgment was given against the Public Trustee.

Sir R. STOUT said that all the money there was in the estate had been handed over in satisfaction of the judgment, and, unless more money came to the estate from some source, that was all that could be given.

KAURI.

Mr. CADMAN asked the Government, If their attention has been directed to the large amount of balk kauri timber now being exported to Australia, in order to save the Customs duty imposed in the Australian Colonies on our sawn and dressed timber; and, if so, will they devise some legislation whereby this

colony may reap the benefit of having our kauri timber manufactured before being exported? This question referred to kauri timber only; because the export in balk of rimu and kahikatea—or white-pine, as it was generally called—was very trifling. He understood that balk timber was admitted into the Australian Colonies free, while sawn and dressed timber had a duty ranging from 1s. 6d. to 3s. per 100ft. superficial charged upon it. The result of this was that the export of balk timber from New Zealand had been increasing, while there had been a corresponding decrease in the export of sawn and dressed timber. The Government were of course aware that a large amount of labour, machinery, and capital was required to convert logs into building materials; and this labour, machinery, and capital were now being utilized for the benefit of Australia, a large portion of the produce of New Zealand forests being transferred there. This was being done while there were unemployed here asking the Government for assistance, and it was with a view to alter this state of things that he had asked the question.

Sir J. VOGEL said this was a question to which he had given a great deal of attention, but he could not say that his mind was made up respecting it. In all the colonies there was a differential duty upon dressed and log timber, and the difference was very large. In our own colony we made a very large difference. Whilst we admitted logs free of duty, we charged 4s. per 100ft. superficial on dressed timber, and 2s. on undressed. All the colonies followed the same plan. It was undoubtedly the case that a large quantity of kauri went away in logs, and last year the amount was larger than it had been for two years previously, being not less in value than £27,000. It seemed hard that we should have to send away our forests, and he noticed that it was actually the case that in some of the island groups, where kauri timber was required, it was found easier and better to get it from Sydney than from Auckland. The question, however, was a very large one, and could only be dealt with in connection with other tariff changes, and he need scarcely say that the House was not inclined to take at all a lenient view of encouraging local industries by means of the Customhouse. It was certainly not a question that could be dealt with singly, but it was one which, he thought, must come up for consideration whenever the question of the adjustment of the Customs tariff had to be considered by Parliament.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE FOR EAST COAST.

Mr. BEETHAM asked the Minister of Justice, If the Government will appoint Justices of the Peace for the east coast of the Wellington Provincial District? He did not wish to make complaints, and had no doubt that the Minister of Justice would tell him that the pressure of business had been so severe that he had not had time to consider the matter. If that were the case he had not much to say; but the honourable gentleman would bear him out in the statement that he had brought before him and the Government a great many times the necessity for some such appointments. There was a stretch of a hundred miles on the east coast of this provincial district where there was not a Justice of the Peace to be found, and he was aware that in many cases settlers who wished to sign various documents had to make a journey of thirty or forty miles to the nearest Justice. It could not be said that there was no one fit to undertake the duties of a Justice of the Peace upon that coast, and he was sure the Minister of Justice would admit that the names he had mentioned were unexceptionable.

Mr. TOLE had not thought it possible that there could be a stretch of country of a hundred miles in this colony without a Justice of the Peace, but he found now that that was so. The matter should be considered after the session.

LAKE DISTRICT.

Mr. BEETHAM asked the Government, If they will consider the advisability of meeting, to a certain extent, the claims for assistance from the Natives of Tarawera and the Whakatane district by purchasing the Lake district for the purpose of securing so interesting a locality as a national park? He thought the present time the most opportune one for considering this great question of the advisability of establishing a national park in New Zealand, and would, in few words, state what had been done in America on a similar question. He alluded to the Niagara Falls. The New York Legislature in 1885 passed an Act making a State reservation, at a cost of $1,400,000, and on the 15th July the Niagara Falls Reservation was formally opened to the public. The Canadian Government considered the matter, but they were not able—he supposed, from want of funds—to deal with it in the same spirit. But this was what was done: In November, 1884, Sir A. Campbell, on the part of the Dominion Government, held a conference with Mr. Mowat, Premier of Ontario, in reference to the best steps to be taken for expropriating the required territory on the Canadian side of the Falls. It did not appear that either the Dominion or the Ontario Government would undertake the duty of establishing the proposed International Park; but it was agreed to incorporate a private company to which the land owned by the Government should be given, with power to acquire additional land for a park; the company to be compelled to keep the park and the view of the Falls always free to the public, but to have the right to construct tramways and build hotels in it, subject to control of rates by the Government. It had been urged upon him that this was not an opportune time to bring forward a motion of this kind, and that the Natives would very likely, when the matter was brought before the House, open their mouths too wide, and require too large a price from the Government. But he thought honourable members would see that if that were the case—if they felt themselves in a position to demand such an excessive sum for the purchase of their land

that the Government could not consider the question of making this reservation — then these Natives were not fit recipients of public charity. He considered that the extortionate demands by the Natives of the Lake country by way of tolls in the past rendered some action by the Government a necessity.

Mr. BALLANCE could only assure the honourable member that the Natives of the district attached very great value to the part of the country where the hot springs were. It was quite true they were in a state of destitution at the present time, but that did not at all affect the estimate of the value which they attached to these springs, and he did not think it right to bring pressure to bear on them in consequence of that fact. Representations had been made to the Tuhourangi section of the Arawa Tribe respecting a proposed exchange for the place where the terraces were, and round about Rotorua; but he could not say that much progress had been made. The Natives were not apt to come to a conclusion quickly.

Mr. ROLLESTON would like to get an assurance from the honourable gentleman that in the meantime the Government would not relax the operation of the Thermal Springs Act.

Mr. BALLANCE could assure the honourable gentleman that the Government had not the slightest intention of doing so. He had intended to say that the Thermal Springs Act did, to a certain extent, stand in the same position as the enactment of the New York Legislature to which the honourable member for Wairarapa North had referred, and in a sense it made the whole of this country a public park, although the land really belonged to the Natives.

MAORI LEXICON.

Mr. SAMUEL asked the Native Minister, What progress has been made with the Maori Lexicon, on which Mr. Colenso has been employed since the year 1864; when the work is likely to be completed; and what will be its total cost to the Government? In 1861 the House affirmed the desirability of obtaining a Maori lexicon. In the early part of 1864 the Government agreed with Mr. Colenso that he should furnish such a work, together with three small school-books, for £300. The work was to be completed by the beginning of 1866. Before the time for completion arrived another agreement was entered into with Mr. Colenso, who received £200 a year for some time; and subsequently another agreement was entered into that he should receive £500 on the completion of the work, in addition to any moneys previously received. In the session of 1884 he (Mr. Samuel) asked a question on this subject; and the Native Minister, who, by the way, had only just taken office, gave a full explanation of what had been done, or rather of what had not been done, to carry out the resolution. A sum of £1,180 had been paid to Mr. Colenso, but only twenty sheets of matter had been supplied to the Government. Last session he put another question on the Order Paper; and the honourable gentleman then informed him that things were going on very well, and that there was a prospect of something being obtained for the money spent. He was therefore anxious to learn what had passed during the recess.

Mr. BALLANCE said that some progress had been made, as they had got to the end of the letter "A," and that meant about 249 pages of foolscap. They thought they had made a satisfactory arrangement with Mr. Colenso last year; but he was sorry that the correspondence had come to a deadlock, pending some proposed arrangement that Mr. Colenso had submitted for the consideration of the Government. He could not say when the other portions would be ready. It was intended to publish the work in parts. The Government had done all they possibly could to bring this matter to a satisfactory conclusion. There was no expenditure at present being incurred in connection with this work, and it was not the intention of the Government to incur any expenditure without a specific arrangement. It might be possible to make some arrangement with Mr. Colenso to pay so much for each part when supplied.

Mr. SAMUEL asked if the honourable gentleman would consider whether any steps should be taken against Mr. Colenso for breach of contract.

Mr. ORMOND did not think the honourable member for New Plymouth had acted fairly in introducing debatable matter. To his knowledge, Mr. Colenso had broken no contract.

Mr. BALLANCE said there had been a kind of contract in the shape of correspondence, but no definite contract; and the position was very much the same as that which existed a hundred years ago, when Dr. Johnson was called upon to complete his "Lives of the Poets." He promised from time to time, but he never did it; but when a requisition was made upon him which touched his honour he completed it at once. The Government had tried to touch Mr. Colenso in the same sensitive part; but they had not succeeded up to the present moment.

Mr. DODSON thought that at the present rate of progress the Maori language would be a dead one when the lexicon was completed.

POSTMASTERS AND TELEGRAPHISTS.

Mr. SMITH asked the Postmaster-General, If the gratuities promised last session have been given to those country postmasters and telegraphists who have to keep their offices open between the hours of seven and eight p.m.; and also whether these gratuities will be continued this year? The Postmaster-General was asked last year if a sum would be placed on the estimates for paying a small bonus to those officers. The reply was that he would not put a sum on the estimates, but that a small gratuity would be given. He was not aware whether that had been given, but, if so, he hoped the honourable gentleman would see his way to do the same this year.

Sir J. VOGEL replied that no gratuities were given last year, as the department con-

sidered that the attendance referred to was part of the departmental work, and that no extra payment should be made for it.

SHEEP-SHEARING.

Mr. DODSON asked the Government, If they will instruct the Sheep Inspectors of the colony to furnish, in their annual reports, the number of shearers and other hands employed at the principal shearing at each station, and the kind and size of buildings in which the men so employed have to sleep; such information to apply only to stations having four thousand sheep or upwards?

Sir R. STOUT said that the Government had no objection to give instructions to the Sheep Inspectors, if it would not cost any additional sum of money. He could see the object of the question — namely, that shearers and other hands should have proper lodging-places when on a station. That, he thought, was very necessary, and he was reminded that he had moved himself in this direction in the Provincial Council of Otago many years ago.

MANAWATU GORGE CONTRACT.

Mr. ORMOND asked the Minister for Public Works, Is he aware that, in calling for tenders for the Gorge contract on the Napier to Palmerston line, the specifications are so indefinite and open to misconstruction as to be likely to interfere with advantageous tenders being received, and will he take steps to have the specifications amended? He had put this question at the request of a party who was an intending contractor, who had written to him stating that the specification as it now stood was in a condition which prevented anybody from estimating by many thousands of pounds what he was contracting for. This work lay along the face of a precipitous gorge. The specifications declared that there should be a lump sum for the work, but the contract was framed in such a way that the Engineer was to be the sole judge as to whether it was to be rock formation, or some other formation which would have an entirely different slope; and this would mean that the contractor might, on the judgment of the Engineer, be ordered to spend many thousands of pounds more or less, as the case might be. This could be got over if the contract were specified to be on a particular basis, founded upon contract prices per yard. That would put the work within the reach of a large number of contractors who under present circumstances could not look at it. He was told that the contract was quite unusual, and almost prohibitive, except to a man who was able to run great risks. He was sure the Minister would not like contractors to be put in such a position with a piece of work like this. He would suggest whether it was not possible to alter the specifications, so that there should be a maximum quantity of rock or other formation which should be chargeable at schedule prices. By so doing the price of the contract would be largely reduced.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said great pains had been taken to show the different classes of material in the contract referred to, and he did not see how any great difference of opinion could come in the carrying-out of the contract. Although the decision rested with the Resident Engineer, questions could be referred to the Engineer-in-Chief. The practice adopted in this colony in regard to specifications was precisely the same as that adopted at Home, but it was different from the practice in Australia. Although there had been very great difference of opinion in this matter, he was assured by New Zealand contractors who had worked in Australia that they much preferred the system adopted here—that it was open to fewer disagreements than was that in Australia, where a schedule of prices was given for the different materials. A very large number of contractors were looking into this particular contract, and, so far, he had not heard any question raised as to the terms of the specifications. On the other hand, some of the principal contractors in the colony had approved of the alterations which had been made in the specifications of this particular contract.

Mr. FERGUS moved the adjournment of the House. He did not know where the Minister got his information that a number of contractors were pleased with the alterations which had been made in the specifications of this contract. Not a day passed but he (Mr. Fergus) received bitter complaints from contractors from all parts of the colony as to the specifications of this particular work. He could mention the names of a dozen contractors who strongly objected to the specifications. What the contractors complained about was this: that the work was purely and simply a gambling transaction. The Minister for Public Works said that a considerable amount of expense had been gone to in opening up cuttings to show the kind of material. He (Mr. Fergus) was informed that nothing had been done in the way of digging trial-pits. In the present case contractors were absolutely and irrevocably in the hands of the officer in charge of the work. The Minister for Public Works said that mode of tendering obtained in the Old Country. Did it obtain in the case of the Tay Bridge, or in the case of other large works? Did it obtain at the present time in any of the Australian Colonies? The Minister said it might be a question as to what was certain material; but that could be very easily got over by saying that there should be an average slope, and, if extra work was required, then the contractor should be paid for it. It was in the power of the Resident Engineer either to give to the person who obtained this contract an absolute fortune or to ruin him altogether. That was too great a power to put in the hands of anybody. There should be absolute fairness and justice to all contractors, irrespective of the amount of influence or personal popularity with the Resident Engineer, who, in respect of the work under consideration, was made the sole judge of what was right. The Government had no right to put such arbitrary power in the hands of any man. The Minister for Public Works said he had heard from New Zealand

contractors that they approved of the system adopted in New Zealand with regard to contracts. Would the Minister mention any names? He (Mr. Fergus) could mention the names of twenty contractors who held opposite opinions to those expressed by the Minister. The universal opinion on this subject had been expressed again and again in petitions presented to the House, and also by a number of members—that the conditions were most arbitrary and unjust. The result would be that very many of the best men would not tender at all for this work; some men would tender because they thought they had power and could bring influence to bear on the House to get off easily. Could the Minister name any man at all of standing in the contracting line in the colony, or any engineer outside the Public Works Department, who approved of the present system? Some Government Engineers had expressed their opinion that the thing was iniquitous, but that, in order to make the required alterations, there would have to be a larger staff than the present one. It was simply and purely a gambling transaction, and the officer in charge of the works had power to make the fortune of the contractor or to ruin him.

Mr. ORMOND said he put the question on the Order Paper for the sole object of asking the Minister to rectify what seemed to be a mistake. It had been plainly shown to him that there would be too much risk for any reasonable man to tender for the work referred to. If that was so, it seemed to him to be an undesirable thing to let any contract in that way. The honourable gentleman who had just spoken had a technical knowledge of these things. He (Mr. Ormond) had not; but it appeared to him perfectly plain that there was undue risk to the contractor in undertaking the work, as had been explained so clearly by the honourable member for Wakatipu. He hoped the Minister would consider the matter. It was undesirable that the Government should let any contract which could not be competed for by all persons who were capable of doing the work and had the means to do it. His opinion was that men could not enter into the contract under the conditions which were imposed.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said the House had listened to a dissertation from the contractors' point of view. He had to look at the matter from another point of view, and that was, the interest of the colony. He would look into the question and see if there was anything unfair in the conditions. The work contracted for in the colony for some time past had been upon specifications much more stringent than those which applied to the present work; and the prices had been considerably lower than those paid in Australia during the same period of time.

Motion negatived.

GORGE CONTRACT SPECIFICATIONS.

Mr. ORMOND asked the Minister for Public Works, If it is correct that, while plans and specifications of the Gorge contract on the Napier and Palmerston line are not available to intending contractors at Napier, such plans and specifications are available at Wanganui; and whether it is also correct that one intending contractor at Auckland has been specially furnished with such information? He had lately asked the Minister for Public Works whether he would have these plans and specifications made available for contractors at Napier to see them, and the honourable gentleman had replied that it would be too expensive to do so, as they were very lengthy, and that he did not think it necessary. He might say that he believed there were several contractors at Napier who would be ready to tender for the work if they had an opportunity; but the Minister had refused to send plans and specifications to the place which was most interested in this work, and had sent them to Wanganui, where there was not likely to be any competition. He could not speak from his own knowledge on the subject, but this was what was told him by one of his constituents, who also told him that when a contractor at Auckland asked for the specifications they were furnished to him, although they had been refused to the people at Napier.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that, from some extracts from local papers which had been sent to him within the last day or two, statements very similar to those contained in this question had been made by a gentleman who was until recently Resident Engineer of the Napier District. The fact was that, from motives of economy and other reasons, that gentleman's district was done away with, and was merged in the Wanganui District; and, as the headquarters of the District Engineer were at that place, the plans and specifications were sent there. With regard to the second portion of the question, he might say that the only ground for such a statement was that contractors at all places in the colony could see plans and specifications between the hours of half-past four in the afternoon and nine o'clock next morning, the Engineer in Charge arranging that they should take them in turn. No special plans had been given to any particular contractor. However, he might add that he found that duplicate copies could be made of the plans and specifications, and he had given instructions to have them sent to Napier, and, if not gone already, they would soon be sent.

LOCAL OPTION.

Mr. FULTON asked the Government,—(1.) Whether their attention has been called to the action of the Waireka Licensing Committee, who lately granted, as it is alleged, in defiance of a local-option vote to the contrary, a license to one Jeremiah Kenny; and to the case of the police against Kenny, tried in the Police Court at Oamaru, from which it appears that the decision renders nugatory section 45 of "The Licensing Act, 1881"? (2.) Whether they will consider the propriety of testing such decision in a higher Court? At the last local-option vote in the Waireka Licensing District it was

decided that no new licenses should be issued; but, three years subsequently, at the election of a Committee, two persons appeared and elected a Committee. One of those two electors was named Jeremiah Kenny. The Committee afterwards met, and, in defiance of the local-option vote, granted a license to the same Jeremiah Kenny. The police then took action against him for selling without a license, and the case was tried in the Police Court, when it was shown that he held a license. The Magistrate decided that he could not go behind that, and also expressed an opinion that his Court was not one by which the right of a man to sell liquor could be taken away if he held a license, and that the question would have to be tried in the Supreme Court.

Mr. TOLE had observed this case, and also the decision which was mentioned in the question; but he thought it was not one in which the Government could interfere. The remedy seemed to be in the hands of the people themselves, who elected the Licensing Committee, and who would doubtless refuse to re-elect men who had defied the law. He would make further inquiries with regard to the second part of the question.

MIDLAND RAILWAY.

Mr. PEARSON asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will direct the attention of the contractors for the Midland Railway to the report of the Oxford Road Board in reference to the existence of an alternative route on the north side of the gorge of the Waimakariri River? Two years ago the Oxford Road Board sent their officer—a gentleman of considerable experience, and one whose work was recognized by the Land Department as very valuable—into the country to supervise the construction of roads to open up land; and he reported as to this alternative line. His report had been sent to the Minister for Public Works, and he (Mr. Pearson) would be glad if that honourable gentleman would call the attention of the contractors for the Midland Railway to the report. He might say that the report was not that of Mr. P. T. Williams.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that he held the report in his hand, and would submit it to the contractors when they arrived.

OTAGO UNIVERSITY RESERVES.

Mr. J. McKENZIE asked the Minister of Education, Whether he has received from the Otago University Council any return of the names of the tenants of the University reserves who have refused or neglected to pay their rents; and, if so, has he any objection to name them?

Sir R. STOUT said that when notice of this question was given he had no knowledge of the matter; but he had since referred it formally to the Registrar of the University, and had received the following reply:—

"William Doherty, for whom C. Begg acts as attorney, is owing £1,700, due 1st May, for Benmore Run. Previous rents have been paid by R. Campbell and Sons' cheque. Legal proceedings are now being taken.

"W. H. MANSFORD,
"Registrar, Otago University."

KENSINGTON SIDING.

Mr. BARRON asked the Government, Whether they will now comply with the frequent requests conveyed to them by residents in the district for a public railway-siding at Kensington?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON replied that all action in connection with this matter had been suspended for some time past, as there was an action pending in the Supreme Court. As he was not aware that that action had been settled, he could not say when anything would be done.

AUCKLAND RAILWAY.

Mr. DARGAVILLE asked the Minister for Public Works what action he was taking in reference to the petitions of R. Warnock and others and Patrick Mullins and others, representing the wishes of a large section of the population of the City of Auckland, and whether he would proceed with the necessary survey and inquiry respecting compensation, so that the sum of £23,000, proposed to be appropriated out of loan for the purpose of doubling the railway-line out of Auckland, might be devoted, if found fairly practicable, to the construction of such double line by the western route.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON replied that the survey, for all practical purposes, had been completed, and the question had now resolved itself into the matter of compensation. A large quantity of land would have to be taken for this purpose, and steps had been taken to ascertain, in a rough way, what amount of compensation would be likely to be asked for. He had received a communication that day suggesting that a new terminus should be erected, but he had replied that the Government would not consent to erect a second terminus, as that would entail enormous expense.

BEER DUTY BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Sir J. VOGEL moved the addition of a new clause prohibiting brewers, under a penalty not exceeding £20, from carrying on the business of manufacturers of aërated waters; the clause not to come into operation for twelve months.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be added to the Bill."

AYES, 32.

Atkinson	Johnston	Stout
Ballance	Lance	Taylor
Barron	Larnach	Thompson, T.
B.-Bradshaw	Macandrew	Thomson, J. W.
Cowan	McKenzie, J.	Tole
Duncan	McMillan	Turnbull
Fraser	Montgomery	Vogel
Fulton	O'Callaghan	Walker.
Harper	Reese	*Tellers.*
Hobbs	Richardson, E.	Dodson
Holmes	Stewart, W. D.	Sutter.

NOES, 36.

Allwright	Hursthouse	Richardson, G.
Beetham	Kerr	Rolleston
Bevan	Lake	Ross
Bruce	Locke	Russell
Bryce	Macarthur	Samuel
Buckland, J. C.	Mackenzie, M.	Seddon
Buckland, W. F.	Menteath	Steward, W. J.
Conolly	Mitchelson	Trimble
Fitzherbert	Moat	Wilson.
Guinness	Moss	*Tellers.*
Hatch	Ormond	Buchanan
Hirst, H.	Pearson	Fergus.
Hislop		

Majority against, 4.

Motion negatived.
Progress reported.

NEW ZEALAND LOAN BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. FERGUS.—Sir, we have had a considerable latitude allowed to various speakers in this debate; and, indeed, a number of gentlemen who have spoken seem to have fired off shots which were intended to be addressed, or should have been addressed, more particularly to the Financial Statement. I propose to-night to confine my remarks as far as I possibly can to the subject-matter of the Public Works Statement, only touching very lightly on side-issues which have been raised during the debate by a very few speeches—and effete speeches I may say—which have been made by those gentlemen who support the Government at present sitting on those benches. It has been the proud boast of the Ministerial supporters, and especially of the members who are always loudest in their own praise—and self-praise, we know, is no recommendation—and of the Ministerial Press, that the administration of the Government was good. However much we may condemn—and Goodness knows the whole country and the whole House, both sides of it, do condemn—the policy of the Government, which is simply one of adaptation—they have learned how, like Macsycophant, to "boo" and not to stand erect in the presence of one greater than themselves, that is, public opinion—it has been the custom, I say, of the Press to commend them for one thing, and that is their administration of the affairs of the country. I know right well that when you repeat any statement again and again, be it ever so absurd, the time will undoubtedly come when it will take root in the public mind and people will absolutely believe that which in itself is utterly untrue. I, for one, utterly deny, and have denied—and I say there has been no speech made on the floor of this House which has proved to me, or even endeavoured to prove to the House and the country—that the administration of the present Government has been good in any one particular; and least of all has there been any improvement in that department in which I hold we had a perfect right to expect an improvement. In the administration of some of the departments of the Government service there are mere tiros, and we can pardon their mistakes, and hope that the time will come when they will learn a little better and improve. But when one who is blazoned from north to south of the colony, and held up to our veneration as everything that could be desired—who should be qualified for his office by experience gained from a very considerable life—gained as an engineer and as an official in the Civil Service of another colony—gained, too, as a contractor and one who had the carrying-out of large works in the colony—gained, too, in the service of the colony, having previously occupied politically a responsible situation in the Government of the country—when, I say, a gentleman of this character holds one of the most important Ministerial portfolios, we have a right to expect better things. I hailed with extreme satisfaction the advent of that honourable gentleman to office, for I deemed that the time was come when the stable would be cleaned out and a new system of things inaugurated. I looked to the undoubted ability of the honourable member for Kaiapoi, the present Minister for Public Works—to his vast experience—to his minute knowledge of everything appertaining to the public works of the colony and of other colonies—for something to be done to amend what I consider to be the disgraceful state of things which exists at the present time in the colony. And, although I thought he had got into very questionable company—as I have no doubt he himself thought at that time, and as he has, no doubt, since found out—I did think that he had sufficient backbone, sufficient stability of purpose, to carry out to a successful issue the broad lines he laid down when he joined that most miserable of all Governments. Why, in his Statement in 1884 what did we find the honourable gentleman doing? He speaks with no uncertain sound. It is said, "If the trumpet gives forth an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?" He gave no uncertain sound, but, in clarion tones which rang right through the land, he told us what he was going to do. When I find in his Statement of 1884——the honourable member for Christchurch South interposes his musical laugh here; but he, too, believed, I know, in the Minister for Public Works, and was as confident as I was that, whatever department of the Government might go to the wall, this one at least would be pointed to as one that was well and wisely administered. Let me bring the honourable gentleman to task. In that celebrated Public Works Statement made by him in 1884, I find he used these words: "Although I am not as yet prepared to state to what extent reductions can be made, I am of opinion that the staff is much larger than is necessary for the due supervision of the works the colony now has in hand." That was the deliberate opinion of the experienced Minister for Public Works. We could have pardoned him during the first year, without special experience, and when he was driven from pillar to post even by his own colleagues—because it is a noteworthy fact that they never could agree on any subject.

But what has the honourable gentleman done since then? Where are the savings, where the officers who were to be dispensed with? How much has the country gained by the honourable gentleman's experience? Nothing at all; and he sits there to-night confounded by his own Statement. He said he would make a reduction in the administration of the Public Works Department; but he has done literally nothing to justify the opinions he then expressed. This matter of the public works expenditure is a very serious one. If honourable gentlemen will come down to the consideration of the subject, they will find that the cost of our surveys, our official and engineering expenses, is something truly enormous. We have spent but a very little sum on railways in the colony. What do I find when I take the various figures? Why, that the cost of official and engineering expenses has been no less a sum than £657,081. In other words, we have been absolutely paying for the engineering of our paltry railways about 6 per cent. on our entire capital. That does not include for a moment the cost of supervision. The cost of supervision is charged to each particular work; and neither I nor any other member of the House can obtain information as to what that is. You see vast sums put down on various votes; but these sums are unaccounted for, and we cannot trace them in any way. By no departmental inquiry can you find where these sums of money have gone. If the Minister for Public Works would take example by the cost of engineering on the Manawatu Railway, he would find that it would come to infinitely less. I am informed—and, I believe, truly — that it has not cost one-half what it costs on ours. The honourable gentleman knows right well what such class of work should cost; and why did he not justify the opinions he laid down in 1884, when he said he would clear out many of the superfluous officers in the department? There is another matter of which the honourable gentleman spoke in his celebrated Statement. He spoke of making our railways up to paying points, and said,—

"It was to this 234 miles of unfinished railway that my honourable colleague the Colonial Treasurer principally alluded when he stated that it will be our endeavour to push on to a speedy completion the various unfinished portions of lines, so as to add this extra mileage to our revenue-producing railways."

How has the honourable gentleman dealt with that particular part of his avowed policy? Why, he has left it in as great a mess as ever it was in. It has been said that it was the Atkinson policy to keep all parts of the colony going with a little bit of railway here, a little bit there, and a little bit yonder, in order to satisfy the multitude of claims for public works; but this Government was going to abandon that policy altogether. The Minister for Public Works said it was a policy most disastrous to the country; and he was going to set his gigantic mind at work, and bring all the powerful influence of his Government and their numerous supporters to bear on the question, and bring all those unfinished railways to a payable point. Has he done so? He has done nothing of the kin He has never attempted it. If it was t policy of the Atkinson Government to co struct fragmentary pieces of railway throug out the country, he has out-Heroded Her and, instead of sticking to the schedule pass by the House in 1884, which I proved wou cost ten or eleven millions, he has initiated number of other railways, and thus render the completion to a payable point of lines th under construction still more remote. T honourable gentleman has quietly sat there receipt of his Government salary, and in t proud position of a Minister of the Crown, a allowed all his professions and protestations 1884 to melt into the thinnest of thin air. It a very serious matter for this colony to think the amount of money which we have lying id in the various unfinished lines throughout th country. Would it surprise this House to fin that we have considerably more than 10 p cent. of the money which has been actual spent upon the Government railways lyin absolutely dormant at the present time? An this Government have not in any way mad an endeavour to bring those uncompleted lin to a payable point. The entire amount money which has been spent up to the 31st o March, 1886, is £13,726,166; the money which has been spent on opened lines is £12,472,000: leaving a balance of £1,253,352, which is lying waste and useless. I venture to say that, if those gentlemen remain in office much longer, and the Minister for Public Works continues to adorn those benches, the time will come when a very large amount of that money will have to be borrowed again, and a great deal of the work done now will have to be done again, to the infinite detriment of the colony. I have very briefly alluded to what the honourable gentleman has said and done in the matter of public works and engineering—that is, with reference to the construction of railways. Now I come to another point—and this is a very much more serious charge against the honourable gentleman. When he accepted office he told the House distinctly, in 1884—and we believed him—that he had accepted office only on certain well-defined conditions. Here is what he said:—

"Without wishing to cast any reflections on the present General Manager of Railways, I unhesitatingly express my opinion that the condition and management of our railways are in a very unsatisfactory state. My honourable colleague the Colonial Treasurer recently said that in many of the railway systems not nearly so large as that of ours in New Zealand it would be thought absurd to leave to one man the virtually irresponsible control and management, without any one to consult, on the many difficult points which arise from day to day. Yet such is the case here; and I fear no great change for the better can be expected till the whole system is altered.

"I have been of the opinion ever since our first railways were opened that such a system of management as at present prevails could not produce satisfactory results; and as each year

has passed by that opinion has been strengthened. And, if anything was wanted to convince me that a great change was wanted, the short time I have held office has afforded me ample proof that it cannot be made too soon.

"It is a matter of the deepest regret to me that, owing to the late period of the year, the Government have come to the conclusion that it will be impossible to carry through a Bill this session creating Boards of Management which would be responsible for the working of our railways; and, did I not feel convinced that the Government and the House were determined to take this course at the earliest date possible, I should not have consented to take office."

Those are the words of the honourable member who became Minister for Public Works in 1884. The year 1885 passed: we gave him a considerable amount of tether, feeling quite sure that what he then said was not a mere empty boast. Now 1886 has come, and still he sits there without ever having attempted to justify his action. Year after year he sits there and takes credit for being a good administrator, for having carried on the Public Works Department and the Working Railways Department in a satisfactory manner, and yet he has not attempted to bring down and pin his fate to a measure for the creation of Boards of Management. If his words meant anything they meant this: that the honourable gentleman was determined to revolutionize that system, after years of consideration—for he was no novice in the business. But year after year we have been irresistibly driven to the conclusion that the honourable gentleman did not at all mean what he said in 1884, or he would rise up from those benches which he now sits on, and, if his speeches are to be taken for anything, does not adorn. He ought to rise up and leave the Government if they will not bring in a measure to accomplish these much-needed reforms. There is more than that. I should not consider that the inactivity of the honourable gentleman was to be condemned in the slightest degree if it was not productive of a very considerable amount of mischief. People sometimes, on the spur of the moment, and without thought, talk of things of which they know nothing, and which they do not mean; but what did that Statement, laid down with so much vigour and force in 1884, do? I will tell the House. It has rendered every superior officer in the Working Railways Department, from Auckland to the Bluff, insecure in his position. They were all expecting that changes would be inaugurated, and no man knew when his time would come. What is the result of that? That we have been losing, and are likely to lose, some of the very best men who fill responsible positions in the Working Railways. The honourable gentleman in 1885 took credit to himself and the railway system because they had trained Mr. Alison Smith, who had obtained a high post in Victoria. But we do not find him this year congratulating the House and country on losing the services of a man who, I believe, was just as capable and fulfilled his duties as well in his line as Mr. Smith. We have lost the services of the District Manager in Canterbury, Mr. Back; and he has gone to another colony—not because he obtained a better position there. He took a position in that colony even at a lower salary. No doubt he felt perfectly dissatisfied with the way things were being carried on in this country. He felt, undoubtedly, that the Minister for Public Works was so weak and vacillating that he did not know the day when some drastic change would be introduced. The honourable member for Port Chalmers says, "Oh!" I wonder what he is "Oh"-ing at! I am not repeating any conversation. I say that in my opinion he felt so: I did not say that he told me. I know this is a matter of fact: that half a dozen of the best officers in the service in this colony at the present time applied for the very position which Mr. Back obtained. These men are the very best men; but I am not at liberty, for obvious reasons, to divulge their names. And it is all owing to the insecurity which they feel in the department at present, presided over as it is by a man who does not seem to know his own mind from one year to another. There is another matter which I should like to refer to in the speech of 1884; and it is necessary for me to go back so far, because last year I did not criticise the public works proposals of the Government at length. One thing which brought those gentlemen into power, and kept them in power on the first division, was the hope on the part of the House that a better system of local government would be inaugurated. This has been referred to by the honourable member for Napier; and he has been, as I have been, very much disappointed with what has been done. The Minister for Public Works shadowed forth a very drastic change which was to be to the advantage of the country districts. He said in that celebrated Statement,—

"Taking the present year as a starting-point, the object after this year will be to bring the expenditure charged on the Consolidated Fund within the means of that fund without the aid of the property-tax. We foresee that that can easily be done by shifting to local expenditure some of the present charges made on the Consolidated Fund — notably the charitable expenditure and some other small items, let us say, amounting, with the charitable aid, to some £100,000 a year. It is clear that the local bodies cannot undertake this without an additional revenue, and, to dispense with needless points of controversy at present, we may suppose that the £100,000 is supplied by either a property-tax or a land-tax."

These were the proposals which were made by the Government, sanctioned by the Government, and brought down to this House by the Minister for Public Works in 1884. True it is they have shifted from the Consolidated Fund on to the local bodies the charitable-aid expenditure. They have given subsidies towards it, and have proposed, by a measure which they have introduced this year, to shift the maintenance of school-buildings to the local revenue.

But where is the property-tax and the land-tax when the local bodies were going to get to cease them to perform their functions? Now I come to the proposals of the Government for the future. I would be willing to treat their delinquencies in the past lightly—I would be willing almost to overlook them. If I could see evidence that they were going to mend their ways I could forgive them a multitude of sins. But not only have they adhered to the policy which they one and all denounced throughout New Zealand, not only have they accepted all the best points of the Atkinson Government, but they have taken all the worst points and intensified them. They have followed in the lines of the faults of their predecessors to such an extent that I do not think there is any prospect of amendment for them in the future. We have given them an opportunity of showing what they are going to do in the direction of bringing to a payable point the 237 miles of railways or any portion of them. By the Bill before the House we are going to borrow a million and a half of money, and that money is to be spent in the prosecution of public works. I have been to the trouble of taking out the various items in the million-and-a-half Loan Bill—although by some means the Government got into a fog, especially the Premier, about the balance at the disposal of the Government for roads and bridges. I think it will be unanimously admitted by all sections of the House that the loan must provide for all the liabilities of railways now in course of construction; I have therefore taken out the liabilities on the various lines, and I find that, while we propose to borrow a million and a half, we have to provide out of that no less a sum than £121,223 for liabilities existing on those railways, of which I may say there is no less a sum than £52,000 on the line which the Premier has taken so much credit to himself for pushing on: I mean the Otago Central. Then, there is £200,000 for open lines—that is to say, to put open lines into an efficient state of repair and running condition. Then, there is £63,000 for contingencies. If we deduct all these items we find that the Government have at the present moment £1,100,000 in order to push on this vigorous public works policy of theirs. The thing is most amusing; and if any honourable gentleman will carefully take out the figures contained in this Statement, and will apply them to the various railway-lines which are to be pushed to a speedy and successful completion, he will find, I think, that not in one individual case has the Premier provided sufficient funds in the Loan Bill to take any one railway to a successful completion or to a payable point. The Colonial Treasurer is simply playing with the country—he is simply playing with this House. If they want a policy which would be acceptable to the bulk of the people of this country, and to the common-sense of every business-man, I would say this to them: Call in an independent Commission of suitable and substantial men, whose opinions would be of some value, and let these men go from end to end of the country and put down, one by one, the various unfinished railway-lines, and then let the colony bind itself to complete those lines—in the order recommended by these men—to payable points; and instead of having so much money lying idle as we have now, we should have the Minister for Public Works fulfilling the law he laid down in 1884. When the East and West Coast Railway Bill was before the House in 1884 I showed, I think, incontestably that it would take a very much larger sum than the estimate of the department to complete the railways which had been shadowed forth and which the colony was bound to proceed with, and which have been retouched and reauthorized by the present Government. But let us think of this: We are embarking on a new borrowing and public works policy. Up to the present time we have borrowed something like twenty-three millions, and we have only spent about half that sum in the construction of railways. According to this Loan Bill the Government are going to "ear-mark" every item, and are going to spend the bulk of the money—that is to say, a million—on railways; but I do not believe they are able to do it. I think that what has obtained in the past will obtain in the future; and that, while we know that it will take something like twelve millions of money to complete the operations to which the Government are at present committed, if we add something like 23 per cent. to that, we shall find that it will take something like sixteen millions of money to bring to anything like terminable points the railways the Government at present have in hand. I want to know a little more. I should like to know if the House would appoint a Commission to inquire into the expenditure of the Public Works Department, and show us where the various sums of money go. We are told that on the Otago Central Railway sums have been expended, and liabilities incurred, amounting to £318,421 5s. 1d. I have taken out, at some considerable trouble, the contracts which have been let on that line, and I find that there have been let contracts amounting to £189,238 5s. 10d. These contracts were let as follow: By this Government, £98,065 18s.; and by previous Governments, £91,172 7s. 10d.: that is a total of £189,238. There are liabilities amounting to £51,203. Where has the balance—£129,182—gone to? Does any one mean to tell me that work to the value of £318,000 has been done on that line? The thing is utterly monstrous. It is the laughing-stock of the colony; and we do not find a single man acquainted with the administration of public works, or a single expert, who approves of what has been done. We presumed and hoped the Minister for Public Works would have seen that the expenditure was made justly, and that the money was laid out in the most judicious manner. But what are the facts? On that line no less than £129,000 has gone—no one knows where!

Mr. HOLMES.—Spent by whom?

Mr. FERGUS.—I do not care by whom; but

I say the greatest part has been expended by the present Government. It is going on now, and I thoroughly believe that the number of inspectors, of overseers, and of gangers on that line exceeds the number of men employed. The Minister for Public Works said the departmental expenditure was much greater than the work which the Government had in hand justified: but still those expenses are kept up. Indeed, I believe that since he has taken office the expenditure has very much increased. The honourable member for Christchurch South asks me by whom this expenditure has been made. I will tell him of one work on which there has been a great deal of expenditure which we cannot trace — the North Island Trunk line. Previous Governments had very little to do with that. I find there has been spent on that line £145,047. I have taken out the contracts on the line, and I find that they amount to £106,000, leaving a balance of £38,000, or between 30 and 35 per cent. of the whole, which, I unhesitatingly say, has been frittered away in objects which were never contemplated when we voted the money. If we are going on in that way with the rest of the line we shall find that it will require something like two millions to complete the railway. The manner in which work has been let in this country has always seemed to me to be wrong; and in this I do not specially blame the present Minister for Public Works, although hitherto we have not had in that office a gentleman so thoroughly acquainted with the carrying-on of work, both from the engineering point of view and practically, as the honourable gentleman. I find that, out of the whole 1,613 miles of railway constructed in New Zealand, which cost £12,472,000, the average cost per mile of railway constructed by the Government has been something like £7,949. The district railways, seventy-seven miles of which we have purchased, have cost the colony £3,675 a mile; so that we have this staring us in the face: that the railways constructed by the Government have cost something like £4,000 a mile more than the railways constructed by private companies. I say that, as far as departmental expenses are concerned, this heavy extra expense is caused through having fragmentary lines going on simultaneously throughout the colony. It is, of course, necessary to have inspection and supervision on all these lines, which causes extra expense; but, even then, I think the staff is far too great for the work done. I appeal to the Statement of the Minister for Public Works in 1884 to confirm what I am saying; and I have only to express my regret that he should continue a system which at that time he condemned in lively terms. He has been boasting of getting work done cheaper than elsewhere; but let me call attention to one piece of work on the line between Masterton and Woodville. It was tendered for at £14,000; but the Government, in their wisdom, took it over; and, according to a local paper, this work is costing the colony £39,000, it has been so bungled. I say the honourable gentleman is responsible for that. And what else do we find?—that everywhere, from the north to the south of the colony, on all these railways which the colony has made, the bridges are decaying, the cuttings are falling in, and the banks are giving way; and on the Otago Central line so bad has the work been which has been done by the unemployed that it will absolutely take more to put the line in order again than the original estimate of the Engineer. So it is with all these fragmentary lines. I could find some justification for the Minister for Public Works if he had stopped even at the vast number of lines which were proposed in 1884; but what do we find the honourable member doing at present? He is going from north to south of the colony, and doing a little piece here and a little piece there of lines which any business-man must know will not be finished for years to come. But he is doing more. This House has given authority to construct a railway from Brunnerton to Springfield and to Nelson, and it is also true that we authorized the construction of a railway from Hokitika to Greymouth; but the Minister for Public Works comes down to the House and tells us that there is a proposition to take that railway by way of Kumara. In other words, this colony is going to construct a railway two-thirds of the length of which will run through land owned by a private company. There can be but one of two reasons for such a thing: it is either to enhance the value of the company's shares in the London money-market, or else it is to catch the votes of the members for the district. Then, there is another line—that from New Plymouth to the North Island Trunk line—which is to be constructed at the small cost of £8,000 a mile—a line which the people do not want in any way. Again, we have the Lawrence-Roxburgh line, which will cost considerably more, and there are surveyors at work there now. Then, there is another line, and upon this I cannot speak with so much certainty—the line in the Gisborne District. They are pledging the colony right and left to an expenditure which they cannot justify, which no colonist could justify, and an expenditure which we shall not be able to overtake. The conclusions I draw from all these premisses are these: that in 1884 the Government did not mean what they said; and that they are perfectly unable to carry out the proposals they are now making. The Minister for Public Works has passed the day when he was able to tackle the expenditure of the office of which he is the head. I give him credit for sufficient knowledge, and I say he is all the more blameworthy; but I cannot—in the face of all the facts I have stated—give him credit for the ability and backbone to carry out what are undoubtedly the deliberate opinions which he has formed after a long career and great experience—opinions which, if he could carry them to a final and just issue, even if to do so it were necessary that he should leave the colleagues with whom he is now associated, would cover his name with renown, and all colonists, and we and you, Sir, and every one would feel that he was worthy the position he

occupies, and, indeed, too good for the society into which he is cast.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Sir, in the very brief remarks I intend to make I shall not travel outside the Financial Statement and the Public Works Statement. I shall not go back to what has been said during the recess, nor, indeed, shall I do more than touch upon any matter which has already been spoken on. This matter of the £800,000, of which so much has been said, and which the Treasurer has acknowledged, so far as I can make out, to be a great mistake, I shall only touch upon to this extent: It is proposed to purchase material worth £290,000 already in hand, and which was purchased out of the proceeds of former loans, out of the loan we are about to raise. We are to purchase it in this way in order to provide means for carrying on works other than railways. Now, in my opinion, had the honourable gentleman put a sum of £290,000 in his Loan Bill for roads and bridges, and other miscellaneous works, in order to make up the deficiency of this £800,000 which is *non est*, it would have been a more straightforward course than to add a lot of figures together, as the Minister for Public Words did, and subtract others, and so leave the matter in a state of utter confusion to most minds. It would have been far better to have acknowledged that this deficiency of £800,000 would have to be supplemented from the new loan; for that is really what we are doing, and the Minister is only doing the same in a roundabout way, which is not worthy of the Treasurer or of the Minister for Public Works. It would have been better frankly to have owned that there was not so much money left as they expected, and that it would be necessary, in addition to the million and a half for railways, to ask for £290,000 for other works. I merely speak of that £290,000 now because I think we could have arrived at a result a good deal better by putting that amount in the Loan Bill. Then, as to the £100,000 to be taken from the North Island Trunk Line Loan: it is proposed that, when eventually the land so bought comes to be sold by the Government, sufficient of the proceeds shall be paid to the credit of the fund for the construction of the line to recoup what has been taken for the purchase of land; and we are also to take care that for the future the fund for the making of that line shall be ear-marked—that the fund shall be tied down to the specific purpose for which it is raised. Now, the Act passed for raising a special loan for the North Island Trunk line says the money shall be used for no other purpose than the making of that line; and what can the House and the country think of a Minister who proposes to deliberately violate the intentions of the House by taking part of the money directed by Parliament to be used for one special purpose, and then talks about tying down and ear-marking the rest? And let me draw the attention of the House to one part of the Bill by which it is proposed to tie down the remainder of that money. After providing that £100,000 may be used for the purchase of land, and that 2½ per cent. in value of the land so acquired is to be set apart for endowments for charitable aid, the Bill, in clause 5, goes on to say,—

"The remainder of such lands shall constitute a railway reserve, the proceeds of which shall be applied, as Parliament shall from time to time direct, in the construction of the said main trunk railway, and of branch railways, tramways, or roads in connection therewith."

Sir, did we vote for the borrowing of that million of money to make tramways and branch railways? No; the House dedicated that loan to one purpose, and one purpose only — the making of the main trunk line through the Island. Then, £200,000 of what are considered to be prospective liabilities are postponed indefinitely, we are to take those off the amount of our present liabilities, because it is considered that they will not fall in till some future day. It was the intention of this House, when passing a Bill for a loan for the North Island Trunk Railway, and when agreeing to the construction of that railway, that lands should be purchased along the route of that railway before the railway was made. That was clearly expressed and laid down by Parliament, not only in the session in which the Loan Bill was passed, but at other times previously. It was acknowledged by the whole House that it would not be a right thing to spend a great deal of the money, or any portion of the money in point of fact, until we had acquired sufficient land from the Natives by the sale and settlement of which a portion of the cost of the line could be recouped to the colony, and by providing that there should be settlement where possible along that line, so that the line itself might be made reproductive. I know very well that the Native Minister has said that we have purchased some land along the route of the railway; but allow me to draw the attention of the House to what the land is that we have purchased. Early in the session I asked a question on this subject, and I asked the Native Minister if he would be good enough to lay on the table of the House a map showing the locality of the land purchased, so that the House might be in the possession of the information. I did this because, having been a member of the Committee which sat on this subject in 1884, I knew, from the evidence, that much of the land along the route of the line is unfit for settlement, and wanted to see where the land bought is. Well, I have not got the information, beyond something vague that it is somewhere between Mounts Ruapehu and Tongariro and the Wanganui River, one hundred to one hundred and fifty miles by railway route from Marton. Now, the land there — that is, if I am right in the assumption, from the very little information afforded us by the Minister of the locality—was described to the Committee, in 1884, by persons who had seen it, as poor pumice-land. Of course honourable members generally can only speak in the light of what indirect information they can get — possibly the honourable member for Waitotara and one or two other members know the locality; but

in the absence of a map, other members have no definite information as to where the land is.

Mr. BALLANCE.—It is on the railway-line.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I know. Now, the land there, according to the evidence taken by the Committee, is pumice-land: I have looked up the evidence to-day, so as not to have to trust my memory. The quality of the land is shown by the fact that the trees have no tap-root, but that the roots are forced to go out laterally to find sustenance; and therefore, when a tree blows down, the roots bring up with them a mass, as one witness described it, "as big as a house." That is as to the land which is covered with timber, which is considered pretty good land; and the open pumice-country is very much poorer. I venture to say that that is not the class of land we should purchase at the present time, because it is not land on which we can settle a large population. I grant that that land should be purchased, but I say that the land which should first be acquired is the land for twenty-five miles on each side of the line for the fifty miles between the Mokau Range and Te Awamutu. That is the land we should acquire for settlement, but the Natives will not sell it. I understand that the Native Minister speaks of that land as not having yet passed the Court.

Mr. BALLANCE.—It has passed now.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—The House understood, when it sanctioned the railway and passed the Loan Bill, that we should not make a railway to greatly increase the value of that land—and it must raise it very greatly—until the Crown had acquired large portions of it for settlement; because that is a district that could bear the settlement, probably, of a hundred thousand people. The Government has not acquired any land there, but we have passed a Bill which will allow the Natives to sell their land—through Government Commissioners acting on the advice of Native Committees—at the increased value to be given to it by the construction of the railway. I do not believe my honourable friend the Minister of Lands will think I am saying this out of hostility to him, but I consider it was all-important that we should have got hold of that land before a single mile of the railway was made. It is my opinion that was the intention of the House. But, at all events, the House decided, without a dissentient voice—it does not appear in an Act of Parliament, but it is nevertheless unquestionable—that we should acquire the land before the making of the railway. Now, what I am about to mention may appear a small matter, but I wish to say it has been stated by the Government that it is not proposed that we should pay current expenditure out of loan, directly or indirectly. But is it not a fact that we are asked to take out of the loan to be raised this year £35,400 for payment of rates on Crown and Native lands? It is contended that the rates paid on Native lands will be refunded at some future time; but we know the Treasurer has stated that the present value of the liabilities on account of moneys advanced by the Government for rates on Native lands is only 10s. in the pound. The taking of loan-money for this purpose is taking it in aid of ordinary revenue. It was the intention of Parliament, when passing the Act for rating Native and Crown lands, that the rates should be paid out of ordinary revenue or Land Fund; but here we are taking £35,400 of borrowed money for current expenditure! If the Treasurer can show me, in replying, that it is anything else I shall be happier than I am now, because I cannot now see that it is anything but actually aiding ordinary revenue by loan. Now I come to another matter; and I ask, does any member of this House know the total amount that these railways mentioned in the schedule to the Loan Bill will cost before they are completed? I do not mean the amount of money we are asked to vote to be spent on them this year and next year, but what they will cost to finish. When we have begun these works and spent large sums on them we know, of course, that they must be completed at some time; but does any honourable member know what the total cost of the completion of the whole of them will be? Does any one know, except the Minister for Public Works?—and he has not enlightened us. The honourable member for Wakatipu says it will be fourteen millions; but I do not assume it will be so much as that. At any rate, we are asked to vote money for a number of works without knowing what those works will cost—the information is not given to us. There is no question that, having begun each of these railways, we must finish it, or the large sums we have spent on them will be entirely lost. As to one line—that from Hokitika to Greymouth—we do not even know the direction it is to take.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—There is a short deviation.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—That deviation may be an improvement on the original route or it may not be; but, at all events, we have not the information that would enable us to judge, for, as I have said, we do not even yet know the route the line is to take. Then, as to the line between Blenheim and Tophouse, we are asked to vote £100,000 for that line, without any idea whatever of what the line will cost, for we are actually asked to vote the money before the line is even surveyed, and therefore before it is possible to know what it will cost. I will not go through all the lines, but I think that that is a question which is worth considering. Take the case of the Helensville–North of Auckland line. I see it is marked on the map as far as the Bay of Islands. That may be a very desirable line, and it may be true that an extension for eight or nine miles would be very advisable; but what information have we about it? I ask honourable members, what do they mean by voting this money? Do they mean to carry on the railways at the rate of a million a year, as was proposed by the honourable member for Egmont, or do they mean to adopt a policy which has been spoken of by the Prime Minister as a policy of "edging off"? I should like to

understand what the policy of the Government is. When the honourable member for Egmont was dealing with this question he said that we should spend a million a year.

Mr. HOLMES.—But he did not stick to it.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I know that the Prime Minister has said that it is necessary to edge off; and if we are to borrow a million and a half now, and that is to last us two years, it means that the Government propose to spend three-quarters of a million a year: but, if we are to go on with the railways mentioned in this schedule, it means that we are to spend a great deal more than the Minister proposed during the next two years, or incur liabilities which must be met after the 31st March, 1886. I want to know what the policy of the Government is. I ask, is it a wise thing to vote money to commence lines the cost of which we do not know, and as to the time when they are to be finished we have no knowledge? Then, I wish to say a few words on what the Treasurer said in his Statement. We all know that the indebtedness of this colony is very large—we know that the public indebtedness is very great, and that, notwithstanding what the Treasurer said, the fact remains that the return we receive for our expenditure on railways is very much less than the people of New South Wales and Victoria receive in respect of their expenditure. But there is one particular statement of the Treasurer's to which I wish to call special attention. He said that our private indebtedness is nothing, it did not count, because we should look upon the people in England who lent money to persons in the colony as being partners in the transaction—that they risk their money, and are, in fact, partners. But they are partners who take all the security. The farmer—the person who improves the land—has his land pledged. If he is able to pay interest and make a comfortable living, well and good. But if he is unable to pay his way, if he is unable to pay interest, the money lender takes care to terminate the partnership. To speak of the money-lender—the foreign capitalist—as being a partner with the people to whom he lends the money is equivalent to saying that the absentee landlord is a partner with his tenants. The money lender lends his money through agents, and these agents must get their interest. If, indeed, we had the money lender or the landlord living in this country he might have some bowels of compassion, and might perhaps forgive the unfortunate farmer a part of his debt, as many people in this country have done, but when the transaction is carried on through an agent the uttermost farthing is sure to be paid. The partner at home gets all the crown, and the skimmings go to the man who does the work. That is not a desirable partnership. There is only one other point to which I wish to refer. I know that there are many who have spoken, and have to speak, in defence of the Treasurer of the Treasury benches. Not one of them has ventured to deny the statement made by the honourable member for [illegible] that the Premier and the Minister for Public Works had [illegible] the colonists [illegible] public men, who have dared to say that the country is as they believe it to be. I wish to say that these men whom the Treasurer has denounced—of whom he has said that they are decrying the credit of the colony and injuring its financial position—have their homes here, their families are here, the colony is their home, and it is not likely that they would injure the land in which they live and which they regard as their home. If the Premier of this colony—who is almost a son of the soil, for he came here when he was but a lad, and is entitled to speak about the colonists—had said this, if he had deprecated the utterances of public men, and said he regretted the statements that had been made, we should have known that he had been prompted by the aspirations of a true colonist, and, though we might have disagreed with him, at any rate we should have respected his opinions; but I do not respect the opinions of the Colonial Treasurer when he denounces the public men of New Zealand.

Major ATKINSON.—I confess that I feel somewhat disappointed that neither the Premier nor the Minister for Public Works has thought it necessary to rise in reply to any of the very important speeches which have been delivered by several members of the House, and I can only conclude that the speeches are unanswerable. There the honourable gentlemen have sat—I do not exactly know how to describe their position, but I have been watching them most carefully. I am a soft-hearted man, and I have really felt for them—there the honourable gentlemen have sat, dumb, unable, I suppose, to answer the speeches that have been made. I can only suppose that their object has been to get all the speeches on the other side delivered, and then to cover up the facts in a cloud of words, and so mislead the public. That is the only conclusion that I can come to. But I may tell them this: that if they think they are going to conduct the business of the House in this way they are greatly mistaken; for, if their speeches require answering, answered they shall be before the end of the debate, and the responsibility for lengthening the debate must rest upon the head of the Government. We were willing to give them every assistance in our power, but they are shirking their duty to the House and to the country, and to the Opposition, and they must suffer for it. Before beginning the remarks which I am about to make, I wish to know if the honourable gentlemen opposite will be kind enough to tell me what it is that they propose to expend upon Native land next year. I was under the impression that I understood the estimates, like my honourable friend the member for Waitotara, until the honourable [illegible] got up and said the member for Waitotara had entirely mistaken the estimates, and that the amount was only for this year's expenditure, and that they intended to spend another certain sum—I do not know how much—next year. Now, I wish to say a few words on the facts as they stand, and will [illegible] as many figures, and I shall [illegible] if the honourable gentlemen

will tell me, roughly—I do not wish to tie them down to a few thousands—what they propose to spend next year. Can the honourable gentlemen tell me that?

Mr. BALLANCE.—We have not thought of next year.

Major ATKINSON.—Not thought of it?

Mr. BALLANCE.—Certainly.

Major ATKINSON.—Well, I ask the House to think of that. These honourable gentlemen, having undertaken to purchase large tracts of land along this North Island Trunk Railway, tell us now that they have not even thought of what they are going to spend next year. I just ask the House to think of what sort of finance theirs must be! What sort of finance must be possible when they declare that, and apparently with a light heart? I have never heard such a confession.

Mr. HOLMES.—You would not confess it.

Major ATKINSON.—No; I always looked a year or two ahead. I knew what I was going to do. I suppose the Colonial Treasurer agrees with what has been said by the Native Minister; and I suppose the reason that they have not thought of what they are going to do next year is, that they will have no money to pay for any land.

Mr. HOLMES.—And a very good reason, too.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes, I accept that as a reason, as a very excellent reason, for gentlemen who are content with voting away all the money they have got, trusting to something to turn up next year to provide for their necessities. I can understand that sort of finance: but I want the country to understand it, and I want the House to understand it. And now we have it confessed by the Minister of Lands and by the Colonial Treasurer that no provision of funds has been thought necessary for the Native lands which those honourable gentlemen have determined to buy—for they have determined to buy them. Honourable members will recollect the interruption the honourable member for Waitotara met with when he assumed—and was justified in assuming, according to these estimates—that the £100,000 was for expenditure during the two years. Now, the Colonial Treasurer was very kind the other night, and, as it is a very unusual thing for the honourable gentleman to be so kind and solicitous, the commencement of his speech did take us a little by surprise; but he failed altogether in persuading the Opposition, at any rate, that after the speech which he made it was unnecessary for us to refer to the matter. He was kind enough to say he was going to put the matter in such a clear light, that he was going to reconcile the Financial Statement and the Public Works Statement in such a clear manner, that it would be quite unnecessary for anybody else to say a word upon it. Well, I admire the honourable gentleman's statements very much, especially if they are intended not to convey the true facts of the case. I say this simply in a parliamentary kind of way, but I know nobody who can make what is called a clean breast of it and yet not supply a single fact better than the honourable gentleman can do it. That was very much the position the honourable gentleman took up the other night when he came down and let us into two Cabinet secrets which were no secrets at all, and which the world had known for I do not know how many months or weeks. Now, I am not going to lay a general bill of indictment against the Government on the present occasion. I shall probably, before the end of the session, have to catalogue some of their sins—not all, for that would take up a greater quantity of *Hansard* than I should be justified in taking at so late a period of the session, but I shall probably catalogue some of their sins, for convenience of general reference. They have hidden them up so well in this padding of the Financial Statement and the Public Works Statement and other documents of that kind that it is necessary to catalogue them, to sift the chaff from the wheat, in order that the public may get at the real facts of the case. But to-night I am going to confine myself to a few remarks upon the Public Works Statement and the Loan Bill which is under consideration. Now, with regard to the Statement itself, I want to say that, as far as I can see, in matters of detail the Statement is full and business-like. With the notable exception of pages 17 and 19—to which I shall have to refer presently—it seems, in all matters of detail, to be a fairly business-like and full Statement; but those pages were evidently written either with the object of clouding wisdom by a number of words, or they were written without a proper knowledge of the facts which they pretend to elucidate. With these exceptions, the Statement generally, so far as matters of detail go, seems to me to be a fairly business-like and full Statement. But when I have said that, I have said all I can, for it is perfectly guiltless of any attempt at policy. There is nothing like a policy in it; there is not even what we may call a reference to policy. The honourable gentleman has evidently been instructed by the Cabinet, because, if pledges and promises go for anything, there is no doubt that, if he had been, as the honourable member for Waikouaiti described it the other day, "loose off the chain" when he wrote this Statement, it is clear he would have sketched out for us a little more policy in the matter: he would at any rate have given us some reasons for his proceedings; but it is evident that here was the conflict between the Premier and the Treasurer. The Premier, knowing very little about these things, at length woke up, very late, to what was being done; and, having suddenly determined, "We must curtail our expenditure," no doubt he cautioned the Minister for Public Works on no account to commit the Government to anything like a scheme. "We must gradually draw in," said the Premier. But there is no doubt the Minister for Public Works also got a word from the Colonial Treasurer, who said, "Although you do not give a general scheme, be careful to be lavish in expenditure." And it is these contradictory orders that reflect themselves in the Statement, as I shall show before I sit down. Now, I want to say a few

words about the management of our railways, first of all. And here I am not going to say very much, because it was so ably dealt with by my honourable friend the member for Wakatipu that I need not go very much into the matter; but I do want to know from the Minister how it is that he has so completely changed his opinion, or how it is that he sits upon those benches. There is no doubt at all that the honourable gentleman told us, when he came into office, that the railways were the most wretchedly-managed railways that were known to exist upon the face of the earth; that they were mismanaged in every possible way—mismanaged as to the trains, mismanaged by waste of money; and that, generally, they were the most inconvenient and most expensive lines one could well imagine for such a country as this. Now, the honourable gentleman spoke as an expert, spoke as a man knowing what he was speaking upon; and he told us that he was so impressed with this matter that he would not have joined the Government if he was not fully satisfied that both Parliament and the Government meant to place those railways under the charge of two Boards—one for the North Island and one for the South. That was the distinct pledge of the honourable gentleman; and then this year we find the honourable gentleman saying—I do not like to say "whining;" but, if that is a parliamentary expression, it seems to me that that is really what the honourable gentleman does in this Statement—that it is useless to attempt it. He says, "I still believe in it"—though he does not say that so distinctly as he did—"I still believe in it; but neither Parliament nor the country will, apparently, listen to me. The Government are afraid Parliament will not have it, so I must do the best I can." And the honourable gentleman in this matter is not singular, for exactly the same spirit pervades every member of the Government. Every member puts off responsibility on somebody else—"Somebody told me to do it." Why, Adam and Eve are nothing to it. Somebody told him to do it; and that is a full answer—as it used to be if the honourable gentleman could only say, "The late Government did so." Now the late Government has passed out of view for a little time, and they have got into the habit of saying, "Somebody told me to do it." There is the Treasurer with his millions: where are they? His tools have not attended him, prosperity has not come, every promise is gone; yet the honourable gentleman is still content to administer the affairs of the country in the way in which the Opposition will permit him to do it. I might go over all the Ministers, one after another, and show just the same thing; but I do not want to take up the time of the House, and it is practically useless, because it is admitted. The honourable gentlemen seem rather to glory in it, and their idea of Responsible Government is not that they are responsible, but that somebody else is responsible; and they are willing, apparently, to do anything anybody else directs them to do, satisfied with the plea, "They told us to do it." I leave them there at present. Now I want to know from the Minister how it is that this change has come about. If he had come down boldly and said, "My two years' experience has taught me that I was wrong; I see that the railways can be managed better by a Minister," I could have understood his position. It would have been quite right and honest of him to do that; but still, to believe in these Boards, and to sit there—I confess I am astonished that the honourable gentleman should submit to that! Then did he not, apparently, administer the railways in a most wretched manner, as shown by one of the great supporters of the Government? and I hope always to be saved from such supporters, except in this one respect, and this covers a multitude of sins: The honourable gentleman always votes right. There was the honourable gentleman last night—he got up in his place and showed that the trains the Minister for Public Works had formerly picked out for special animadversion were still running at the same times and doing the same work as the honourable gentleman described as a disgrace to any civilized community. I am referring to the honourable member for Wanganui. I confess that I did think that on this matter—and there is no matter of much more importance than the management of our railways—the Minister for Public Works, on taking office, would have changed it, and I say that to tell the House that he cannot change it is not fulfilling the duties of a Responsible Minister. It is not the duty of a Minister to sit there and see the whole country mismanaged—the whole of the railways being mismanaged—because the Government of which he is a member have not the courage to face the position. Well, next I come to the proposed works; and these I must divide into three classes—the railways, roads and miscellaneous works, and the land-purchases. And now I want to call honourable members' attention to this: The great cry of this Government from the very beginning has been, "We will make railways, and not roads." That is a distinct policy. It is quite right, if the honourable gentlemen hold those views, that they should give effect to them; but what I do dislike, and what I say this House should condemn, in Ministers is professing one thing and doing another. They have told us distinctly that railways are what they believe in, and not roads.

Sir J. VOGEL.—No, no.

Major ATKINSON.—What, another change of front! Well, I have seen it and guessed it was coming for some time. I was coming to that presently. What I wanted to do was to put Ministers in a right position. If they are really in favour of roads and not railways I will not find fault with them—a late repentance is better than no repentance—even a death-bed repentance, and that has very nearly come now. Well, the honourable gentleman is in favour of roads, so he tells us; but he disguises very much from the public and from this House. I am sure the House had no idea that the honourable gentlemen were in favour

of roads. They were in favour of roads being constructed by local bodies, and out of local finance entirely: at any rate, no assistance was to be given—the Roads and Bridges Act was to be repealed, and their wonderful Local Bodies' Powers and Finance Bill was to take its place. That was laughed out of the House, of course. The honourable gentlemen have come round gradually, in their legislation this year, so that this House must help to make roads. It is quite evident now that the Treasurer is for declaring for a roads policy, instead of railways. If he has not declared so in words, he has practically done so in the Statement I am criticising, and not only in this Statement, but in his action from beginning to end. It may be that he did not know it; but, at any rate, anybody who looks on the amount spent by those honourable gentlemen in roads and bridges will see it is the fact. This was a Government of railways, as I was saying. That was what they preached, and they told us the reason why—Because railways are reproductive, and upon reproductive works we must spend our money. But after the Treasurer had been all over the country, and had acquired some knowledge of the requirements of the local bodies, and had submitted to the humiliation of last session, the honourable gentleman arrived at the conclusion that a million and a half a year should be spent on railways, and half a million on other works. Then he went on to say that some provision would have to be made to take the place of the Roads and Bridges Construction Act; so he is gradually coming round. But, still, he persisted, and on several occasions he had to interpret the Premier. The Premier made a celebrated speech at Invercargill, in which he said he was not going to submit to unlimited borrowing for railways or anything else. But the Treasurer was not at all satisfied with the speech of the Premier, and he had to interpret it to the public. He said it was a great mistake to suppose that the Premier had any idea of limiting borrowing for railways. The borrowing was to be practically unlimited; but only a limited amount was to be spent upon roads. That was what the Premier meant by gradual curtailment, the Treasurer told us. He interpreted it to the Wellington people in the first instance, and to us since. I suppose that was the interpretation, as the Premier has never denied it. But it looks a little doubtful when we consider the acts of the present session. Those works were to be reproductive. Now, if they were to be reproductive, this House had a right to expect that, when a scheme of railways was proposed, and a loan to carry them out, we should be shown the reason for executing the particular works. I should like it to be explained by some Minister—the Minister for Public Works, if he has sufficiently recovered from the speeches delivered; or, if not, the Premier. Of course, the Premier is always ready to speak on any subject—I will not say on any side, because that would be disrespectful in this House. But we know that in another place the honourable gentleman is prepared, on proper representations in the way of fees, to talk on whichever side may be necessary. I should not like to say anything about it here; but, at any rate, I hope that the Minister for Public Works, if he has sufficiently recovered his spirits, will be able to tell us to what class these railways belong. I have a special right to ask for this, because it will be in the recollection of honourable gentlemen that the Treasurer told us this, when he was foreshadowing his great schemes:—

"As regards railways, besides the main-trunk lines, there are hundreds of miles for which a cry comes up from different parts of the country. We propose that, in future, there shall be three classes of railways: Forest railways, the cost of which the State forests will defray; district railways, for which the local bodies recommending them shall defray one-half the yearly interest in excess of receipts; and main-trunk lines, for which the colony shall be wholly liable."

Now, it is quite clear that in those days the honourable gentleman had some idea of a scheme that he was going to give effect to: and he has been full of schemes ever since. It is quite clear from his own Statement that he did not intend to borrow ten millions; but it is evident that he intended to borrow some large sum—perhaps eight or nine millions—in order to map out the colony in railways, and gradually to pursue them to completion. Now, I want to know, if that has gone, what other position has the Government taken up? If that is not the case, how is it that the Minister for Public Works has not told us to which class these railways belong—that he has not told us whether they will be reproductive, and to what extent? It is quite clear that a great many of these railways have no business in this Bill at all: and we shall probably have a word or two to say about that presently. I do not think they can be said to come within any of the proposals that the Government have made in their speeches to this House or the country. The very same year that that Statement was made to the House the Treasurer suddenly saw another scheme looming in the distance—the celebrated Meiggs scheme. Honourable members will remember that that was to be the opening of a new era in the colony. There were glorious vistas of railways connecting Taranaki, Napier, Gisborne, and I do not know where else down south. No doubt, had the Treasurer submitted the scheme founded on the proposals to Meiggs we should have railways classified as forest, district, and main lines. But again I ask, why are they not classified now? Why are we not told what these railways are, and what return may be expected from them?—because this is not a Government carrying on railways by little bits here and there, but they are pursuing a continuous policy, completing first the main lines, and then carrying on the railways only to such points as they think will pay. But, if this is so, where is the information, and why have we not got it? I just want to ask the House to look at their proposals this year, and I want to

refer to what they really propose with regard to railways. I may here compliment the Minister for Public Works upon the change in the way in which he proposes to take the estimates. I have no doubt he will be sorry for it afterwards, and especially if he ties it up too much he will get into very great difficulty. I am not sure that the public will be very much benefited; but there is no doubt it is an attempt to let the House see what is being done, and to that extent it is very laudable. I think it is quite well worth while trying the experiment, although I would advise him to allow himself sufficient means, and not tie himself up too tightly, or I foresee that considerable difficulty may arise. But what is the proposal here? The Government propose to spend and to commit us to liabilities during the current year to the extent of £2,350,000; and out of that there is only £1,273,000 set down for railways. For departmental expenditure £14,000 may be added, so that you may say £1,280,000. That is all. Is that carrying out their policy? Very little over half of the money to be voted now for expenditure and for liabilities to the end of the year is to be applied to railways. Do not let me be misunderstood. I am not saying that the expenditure upon roads is unwise. What I complain of is this: that those honourable gentlemen have no right to go to the country and pretend to the country that they are only spending money on reproductive works, while they come before members as providing everything that is wanted for the various districts. Then I come to the question of land-purchases. I confess I was astonished at the answer the Native Minister gave to the honourable member for Waitotara, if answer it could be called. It was no answer whatever. It was simply a defiance of the law and of this House, because the honourable gentleman had neglected his duty in beginning the purchase of this land at the proper time. What excuse did he give for returning to this wretched system, which will cost the country thousands of pounds—the commission system? He covered it—as Ministers are in the habit of doing — with a cloud of words. He says this House was insisting upon the purchase of land along the North Island Trunk Railway-line. The House said it was to be done, and in his anxiety to fulfil the desire of the House he was obliged to employ agents on commission. There was not the slightest occasion to employ those gentlemen on commission. I say nothing against those gentlemen; but there is no doubt that there is grave reason to suspect political influence in the matter, and it is my business to say so. If honourable gentlemen will see who those men are who are receiving commission they will see that there is grave reason to think that there are other motives at work than merely a desire to get the land speedily. I say that if more officers were wanted they should have been appointed for the department. The officer conducting the negotiation is a thoroughly capable man; and I say that to employ an ex-member of this House, and an avowed candidate at the next election, for this purpose is not justifiable under the circumstances. There can be no reason for it whatever; and the officers of the department should have been employed. There is no doubt this matter was very carefully considered by the House, and deliberately at a large expense, the House got rid of the wretched system; and yet, despite the law of the land—which can only be got over by a quibble, if it can be got over at all—despite the law, which says that no land shall be bought on commission, the honourable gentlemen go on, simply on the plea of "urgency," and employ agents, at 2d. an acre, to buy land. There is no question that large quantities of land will be bought which are utterly worthless; and then the honourable gentleman gets up and says, "The Natives are not to fix the reserves: they are to meet the Government officers and determine where they are to be." If the honourable gentleman knows anything of the purchasing of Native land he knows that the Natives always select the reserves in the first instance—the Natives know well where the reserves are to be. If the honourable gentleman thinks the Natives are to be put off with a bit of pumice, and that he is going to get the good land, he will be grievously mistaken. There is no excuse whatever for returning to this wretched system, and I hope the Government will announce, before this debate is over, that they intend—in accordance with the law of the land—to give up this system; and, if not, I hope the House will take steps to see that this system shall be discontinued at once. Except for this wretched necessity of making up for forgetting the liabilities, how is it possible for the Treasurer to reconcile with the repeated statements made to this House that he was going to ear-mark these loans his asking this House to take away £100,000 from the North Island Trunk Loan for the purchase of land? Of course it is only done to relieve the £800,000. The object is clear enough, and the honourable gentleman had not the courage to say so. I only wish that this North Island Trunk Loan Bill had not been brought down before I made that statement, and I venture to say this clause would not have been in the Bill at all, because the honourable gentleman told us in the Financial Statement that this £800,000 was available for the purchase of Native land, and now no Native land is to be charged against it. If we had had that Bill down before, no such clause as this would have been in it. I hope this House, when this clause is proposed, will strike it out. It is all very well to put in the clause that land is to be set apart as a railway reserve, and that it is to be sold from time to time to recoup the main trunk line, and that we are then to make branches and tramways. If the honourable gentleman had said nothing about the main trunk line and had merely said that the money was to be applied to branches and tramways, I could have understood it, because there is no doubt about this: If the main line is not to be completed until that money is in hand, in 1890 there will be no Exhi-

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came to see what each Minister could spend they found it was not enough for what they wanted. Then he looked about, and I think the honourable gentleman who suggested the plan they adopted must have known something of the Province of Auckland, which, as honourable gentlemen will recollect, lived for some time on the proceeds of the Onehunga rails. So they discovered that they had a nice little asset in the way of permanent-way and rolling-stock, and they determined to transfer this also to the new loan. In other words, they transferred nearly £700,000 to the new loan, and, practically, that amount of the loan has been spent in that way. There is no question about it that that operation is exactly the same as if the honourable gentleman had placed the £290,000 in the schedule of the new loan. But, with all the ingenuity of the honourable gentleman, I wonder he did not go a little further. I should like to ask why he did not buy the earthwork that is completed, as well as the permanent-way and rolling-stock. What is the difference between the two? There is a wrinkle for him. I would suggest to him that he should direct the Public Works Department to estimate what the earthworks would sell for, and then transfer that to the new loan, and so get more for general purposes. We therefore see that the new loan is used to relieve the old loan from railway matters to no less an extent than nearly £700,000. Now, I want to ask upon what principle that is done; for I can see no other than expediency—if you can call that a principle. And he does this in order to get money to carry out works which those honourable gentlemen themselves have told us are not wanted. The amount of money which has been spent on roads and bridges and public works generally is something enormous. Out of the last loan I fancy there must have been something like half spent on works other than railways—indeed, I have very little doubt that it would be found to be more than half; and, practically, out of the new loan the honourable gentleman has spent half upon roads and other works not railways. I speak in round numbers, and I say that by transferring these two items he has already spent that amount of the new loan. They were fair charges in proportion against the £800,000, and nothing but the honourable gentleman having forgotten them could have induced him to act as he did; because if he had thought of them in the first instance he would have told the House, and would not have said, "I am going to borrow a million and a half for new railways." At page 18, paragraph 2, of his Statement the Minister for Public Works says, "Assuming that the loan of a million and a half is authorized for new railways;" and there can be no doubt that passage was written before those celebrated pages which I have quoted were written. Of course we cannot think in any way of new railways, with such liabilities as these against the loan. We now come to the question of roads and general public works; and to this I wish to draw the particular attention of the House, because it is evidently a very serious matter. The Colonial Treasurer in his Financial Statement told us there was £829,000 available for expenditure on roads, bridges, public buildings, and the purchase of Native lands. That was free for us to vote on those purposes, the honourable gentleman told us. But the Public Works Statement tells us we have got not only the £800,000, but also £290,000 which the honourable gentleman got by the purchase of these celebrated rails and rolling-stock: so that the Minister for Public Works tells us we have £1,119,000 available for what I may term general public works. That has got to meet the liabilities, less the £386,000 for railways. The first thing the honourable gentlemen proceed to do is this—and it is very cleverly done, and I have no doubt that, like the question of the land-purchase, they have never thought any more about it, for it is a matter not worth considering: The first thing they do will be found on page 3 of the public works estimates, where a note to this effect will be found: "These amounts are exclusive of £202,145, prospective liabilities on account of Native-land purchases, which do not enter into this year's transactions." I ask honourable gentlemen to remember that —"this year's transactions." But he does not venture to say that it will not enter into next year's transactions. We know, if he keeps faith with the Natives, a considerable amount of this must enter into next year's transactions. The House will, no doubt, be astonished that we hear no more of this, when it is remembered that the whole of this scheme is supposed to provide for two years' expenditure; but, as this £200,000 is not required for this year, it disappears altogether. I ask, what sort of finance is that? I want to know what is to become of it, and how the honourable gentlemen are going to provide for it. They tell us nothing about it, and it has disappeared; but I say that half of that amount is a charge against the £1,119,000, and I must ask honourable members to remember that, although it has disappeared out of the accounts by that note. It is very important that honourable gentlemen should bear this in mind, because they will be greatly disappointed when they see the effect of what I am now explaining. It is quite clear that the House does not understand it. I do not know whether the Minister for Public Works understands it, but I almost fancy not, for in the two celebrated pages from which I have read he has confined himself to generalities. If he does, however, we shall, no doubt, have a satisfactory explanation, and I shall be very glad if one is possible. Out of this £1,119,000 the honourable gentleman proposes to spend during the current year on these votes £709,000, and he asks us to vote on these estimates £950,000. Now, supposing we agree to transfer the £200,000 to the new loan, the liabilities being a charge against the £1,119,000, I ask honourable gentlemen to think how much there will be left at the end of this year. Mind, these are two years' estimates. At the end of the year there will be left £170,000. This is all we can apply to new

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votes next year. But what is there against this £170,000 which must be provided for, whether we like it or not? First of all we have the subsidies. It is curious, but I see the Treasurer again asks for £75,000, and talks as though he paid that amount to local bodies in subsidies; and the country is under the impression that we are getting £150,000 in aid of local bodies. But that is not so at all. Double the amount of subsidies paid to local bodies is £122,000, judging by last year and by the way they will be paid this year. Now, this year the honourable gentleman has asked for a vote of £75,000 to meet the subsidies for the current year; and there are liabilities against that of £21;000. The subsidies, therefore, will not be £75,000, but, in round numbers, £61,000; so that the honourable gentleman this year, having only asked for £75,000, has to provide actually £86,000. He will have to pay away before this House meets next year £86,000, if he does not hold back the subsidies to local bodies as he did last year—that is to say, £11,000 more than is voted. So there will be carried over till next year, against this £170,000, liabilities of £11,000 on that account. That makes £72,000 for subsidies next year that we must provide for next session. Then, the Minister for Public Works tells us in his Statement that £40,000 is held for harbour defence. Then, there will be also at least £10,000 for the purchase of Native land. If honourable members will just add these amounts together, they will find that there is practically "ear-marked" out of the £170,000 left no less than £122,000; so that there is only £50,000 left to provide for this £200,000 which you have lost sight of, to provide whatever is wanted for the purchase of Native land above £10,000, and to provide for school-buildings, public buildings, for the extension of telegraphs, and for all the other miscellaneous works which appear in the public works estimates. There is only £50,000 to provide for all these. Well, I ask, what sort of finance is that for two years? And yet this proposal is made to honourable members, and honourable members are led to believe that there will be £400,000 free to spend for new works during the next two years. Now, I tell honourable members that they cannot have a single halfpenny more than there is in these estimates next year for roads, bridges, school and public buildings, or for the extension of telegraphs. It is all gone in these estimates.

An Hon. Member.—There will be a fresh loan next year.

Major ATKINSON.—I am coming to that. That is the difficulty. The Premier will not agree to a new loan next year. I want to impress on honourable members that they are now voting all they can vote for two years under the proposals of the Government. I do not know if the Government know it. They have said they are bound to tell the House the position, and they led us to believe that there was plenty of money to carry on these necessary works. Now, I have shown that there is £50,000 at the outside to provide for the whole of these necessary liabilities next year, of £200,000 on account of purchase of Native land, for public buildings, school-buildings, and all the numerous purposes which are enumerated in the public works estimates. I ask the Ministers, do they believe it possible to carry on the country with such finance as that? Do they think the House will be content next year to vote nothing for all the purposes outside of railways? I venture to say that Ministers cannot answer a word upon that. At any rate, I do hope that perhaps the Minister for Public Works will, now that I have spoken, pluck up sufficient courage to get up and tell us. I hope he will, and I hope he will be successful—selling his earthworks is too little an item to help him much—in finding ways and means to carry on during next session and after. Now, the Premier has told us, at Invercargill, at Dunedin, and in this House, that we are gradually tapering off borrowing, that the loan expenditure was less than before, and that that was what he intended. No doubt that expresses his real aim, and if he could only see his way to attain it no doubt he would. Perhaps the Opposition may help him a little, if his own side will not. We helped him out of terrible difficulties last session, for if we had not carried the resolution of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay we should not now be asked to vote a loan of a million and a half or two millions—that would not now do for us, but we should have had to borrow three millions, if we had allowed those honourable gentlemen to have full swing last session. What is it the Government propose to do this year? Although the Premier has told us they are tapering off the spending, they are going to spend a million and a half this year. That is what they ask us for. The Minister for Public Works is very frank with us, and he puts a special column in his estimates showing that the amount to be spent this year is £1,538,000. But does the Premier know what we spent last year? That is a quarter of a million more than we spent last year. That is like a Dutch auction. Is that the way the honourable gentleman is going to taper off? The honourable member for Waimea gives me the key. He says the Premier considers that we spent last year not only the million and a quarter actually spent, but the half-million we struck off. I should never have thought of that if a Government supporter had not told me. But, in all seriousness, I ask the Premier how he is going to permit this. He says he will have the expenditure gradually tapered off. Then, I want to know how he is going to spend a quarter of a million more this year than last year. No doubt the honourable gentleman will explain that presently. But I may be told that, although the Minister for Public Works takes a million and a half, he is not going to spend it all, but that he wishes to have a little over to look a little better next year—to be able to say that, though the money was voted, it was not all expended, and that he has spent only £1,400,000. Well, let us take off that, and still we have £150,000

more than was spent last year. How is the Premier going to justify that? I hope he will instruct the Minister for Public Works to reduce his estimates, and gradually taper down. The Opposition, according to the Premier, did great harm when, with the assistance of the Minister for Public Works, they last session made reductions. I hope that this year the reductions will be made in Cabinet, and that the Opposition will not be troubled to do it, and then I know only such reductions will be made as will be for the good of the public service. In criticising the Financial Statement I said to the House that it was apparently moderate, but that, although it was apparently moderate, it would really necessitate, if effect were given to it, the borrowing of at least another million and a quarter. My words are absolutely borne out by the Minister for Public Works. It is impossible that the honourable gentleman can give effect to that Statement without borrowing at least another million and a quarter next year. Now, the Premier has assured us that we shall not have any borrowing next year—I beg pardon, though: he did not tell us that, but, with his usual caution, he said the spending of this loan would be extended over two years.

Sir R. STOUT.—I said it was intended to provide until the 31st March, 1888.

Major ATKINSON.—Does the Premier adhere to that?

Sir R. STOUT.—I do.

Major ATKINSON.—I am glad to hear it. But then we shall want very material modifications in the public works estimates; and I would suggest that as soon as the honourable gentleman has answered me the House should adjourn for a day or two to give the honourable gentleman time to make them.

Sir R. STOUT.—We shall have Saturday and Sunday.

Major ATKINSON.—The honourable gentleman would not work on Sunday?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh, yes!

Major ATKINSON.—Oh, no! He does not spend his Sunday as I and my honourable friend do. He has his Lyceums, and other things in connection with them, to attend to. But I am quite serious in what I say; and I say it is absolutely impossible, and when the honourable gentleman considers what I say he will see it is quite impossible, to give effect to these proposals of the Government without borrowing next year a million and a quarter. I venture to think the Treasurer must know it. I am just going to put it in a nutshell, so that honourable gentlemen will see. According to the Minister for Public Works, if this year, instead of spending a million and a half, he spends only £1,400,000, he will have just the same amount to spend next year. And when he comes to the end of next year where will he be? He will have spent every halfpenny of his money, and Parliament will not meet for some months after. Is he going then to bring the public works policy to a close? He will have his liabilities, and nothing to meet them. The Treasurer knows as well as I do that he must take authority next session to borrow about the sum I have named, if he is going to give effect to this Public Works Statement. The Minister for Public Works has told us that he is going to spend £1,400,000 this year, and the same sum next year; and that is the total amount available up till the 31st March, 1888, and Parliament will not meet for two or three months after the money is all spent. Why, it is preposterous to tell us that this finance is practicable. The Premier must look into it, and he will see that he must come down next year and ask for power to borrow if these proposals are to be carried out. Now, I hope one of two things will happen: I hope the Minister for Public Works will be able, with the help of the Premier—whom I believe to be serious in what he has said—to cut down the estimates. That would be the gradual tapering-off the Premier has spoken of: because we spent a million and a quarter last year; and if he continues the tapering, and spends only £800,000 next year, then we shall be able to get on with a very much smaller amount than the million and a quarter which we must borrow next year if these proposals are given effect to. Is the Premier going to be true to his promises, and to realize the hopes he has raised in the country? He told his constituents there should be reductions, and to carry out that promise the honourable gentleman must remodel his estimates. If the honourable gentleman is going to be faithful to his promise, as I believe he is, he must remodel these financial proposals; and there is no other way in which he can keep his promise to his constituents, to this House, and to the country. And now I have done so far; but I just want to say a few words with regard to people who express opinions. The Treasurer has been pleased to say that I have discredited the colony—that statements I have made have discredited the colony. Now, I claim to be a colonist, I claim to have as deep a stake in the colony as any one in this House or in the country, and, as a colonist, I claim the right of free speech, and if I think the colony is going wrong I will speak and use my influence to bring it back in the right line in any direction where I think that influence will have effect. And the same freedom which I claim for myself I desire to give to every fellow-colonist. And, although I do not sympathize at all with people who are called "croakers," knowing the men they are, I say I respect them; and I say, further, that they have a perfect right to express their views, whether they are in accordance with my own or not. I may regret it; but I say they should not be made the subjects of attack by such a high official as the Colonial Treasurer. I would use, as I have often done, all the influence I had to counteract the influence of those gentlemen; but it should not be by personal abuse. That was what the honourable gentleman really resorted to the other day. He called them "slanderers of the colony"—there is no doubt about it. But if we want to preserve the credit of the colony we need not go and look abroad. In this House

it must be done; and no one has such a power for good or for evil during the time they are in office as the Government of the day. And I venture to say that, if the credit of the colony is suffering at the present time at Home, it is not owing to what the colonists are saying, but to what the Government are doing at the present time. And if such a finance as this is to go forth to the world as what is called "a prudent finance," then not only will the reputation of the Premier be wrecked, but I fear greatly that the colony will have to pass through a very difficult time. I am not, and never have been, one of those who doubted the inherent soundness of this colony, or that it is well able to bear the burdens imposed upon it; for I think it is able to bear burdens to a very much larger extent if there were occasion for it: but if we are to allow the colony to have another chance, and to avoid difficult and dangerous times, we must not go on heaping burdens on ourselves as long as we can stand them.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Sir, it is not my intention to trouble the House at any very great length. In the first place, I think, so far as this debate goes, I have very little reason to complain of the criticism that honourable members have passed on the Public Works Statement. Certainly, one or two members have spoken, I might almost say, in bitter terms; but the House well understands the reason for their taking up the attitude they have taken towards the Government. First, then, I may refer to the remarks made by the honourable member for Egmont. And I shall take the last portion of his speech first, because it appeared to me, if I understood him correctly, he made out that at the end of the present financial year we should only have £170,000 available for fresh votes, instead of about £400,000, as shown by me in the Statement.

Major ATKINSON.—Available for fresh votes! The honourable gentleman will have £300,000 extra unspent. He will have re-votes. He is asking the House for £950,000 in column 3, and the whole of that, I understand, he will have spent for let contracts. Out of the £950,000 he proposes to spend £700,000 during the current year. The balance he proposes to have in contracts let and liabilities at the end of the present year; so that there will only be £170,000 for re-voting.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—As far as that is concerned, the only difference between the position now and that which is referred to in the Public Works Statement is this: that, owing to the action of the House, the Government will have to find the money for school-buildings from other sources.

Major ATKINSON.—Then there is the purchase of Native lands.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Sir, I will not go further into these details. As these estimates now stand there will be £40,000 available for the purchase of Native lands for the year beginning on the 1st April next out of the funds provided by the North Island Trunk Loan. All I wish to say, therefore, is that I followed the honourable member for Egmont as closely as I could; but I could not discover in his figures any practical difference in regard to any of those in the Statement. There is no doubt, however, that some other provision will have to be made for the school-buildings, as the House has objected to the proposals of the Government in that direction. The honourable member knows perfectly well that the expenditure will not come up to £1,538,000; and an estimate has been made which brings the amount to £1,400,000. That will leave £1,300,000 for expenditure during the next year; and if the House chooses to be moderate, that amount will carry us on during the year. There is no question about that.

Major ATKINSON.—I question it, though.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—I am not going to follow the honourable member through all his speech. I shall only take three or four points which strike me as being necessary. The honourable member referred to the necessity for further information about the railways. I can only say that I shall be glad, when the proper time comes—when the estimates are going through, or when the schedule to this Bill comes up for consideration—to tell the House exactly how far the money will go that we ask the House to vote this year, and also to state what will be required to complete each of these several lines. I think I shall be able to show that the proposals we have made are, with one or two exceptions, simply for the purpose of completing lines which had been commenced when we took office. As to the Livingstone line, to which the honourable member referred, and said that it ought never to have been gone on with, I can only say that in the Public Works Statement of 1883, made by the Minister for Public Works in the Government of the honourable gentleman, it was then stated: "Extensions have been made, or are in progress, on the following branches: Little River, Ashburton, Albury, Livingstone, Palmerston, Catlin's River, Tapanui, and Seaward Bush." And the Engineer-in-Chief then said, in his report,—

"*Ngapara-Livingstone Branch.*—The only work in progress during the past year is the tunnel at Rakis Table, which is now nearly finished. On account of the softness of the limestone rock through which the tunnel is driven, it was considered advisable to line it throughout. Tenders are now advertised for the second tunnel, 286 yards long, which practically completes the formation for twelve miles."

Thus the House will see that the line was commenced a considerable time back, under the approval of the honourable gentleman's own Government, that it was being constructed when we took office, and that what we are doing is simply to take votes for permanent-way and station-buildings at a cost of £15,000, being all that is necessary to complete and bring into working order this line, on which some £54,000 has been already spent. I think the honourable members's statements with regard to this line were hardly candid. I cannot see why that work should be abandoned, seeing

that so much has been expended upon it; but, apart from that, it passes through very rich country, and there should be enough traffic to pay a reasonable amount of interest. The honourable gentleman has stated that the lands being purchased on the line of the North Island Main Trunk Railway are utterly worthless; but, far from that being the case, I understand that the land purchased is above the average, and that the great bulk of the land is of a very fine description. Then, the honourable gentleman said we are not going on vigorously with the construction of railways. I would point out that during the year 1881–82 his Government spent on railways £454,333, in the year 1882–83 £436,054, in the year 1883–84 £662,046: whilst this Government spent during the year 1884–85 £663,063. Last year we spent £544,028, and this year we propose to spend £709,400: and that, I think, is quite as fast as we are warranted in going. Further, with regard to the Otago Central, which railway our friends opposite persist in saying we have so much neglected, I find there was spent in 1882 £20,939, in 1883 £24,894, in 1884 £11,830; and by this Government in 1885 £29,353, in 1886 £75,829; and we propose spending this year £87,000. Then, the honourable gentleman had a good deal to say in the way of complaint about railway management. I am not going into details now; but I wish just to say this: that he and several other honourable members would have acted more fairly if, when referring to what has taken place since I have taken charge, they had alluded to the fact that during the past year over 130 more miles of line have been opened, and that, though this necessarily involves large additional expense, not only have I done without increasing the expenditure, but the expenditure has been decreased. It also has to be remembered that there would have been £50,000 or £60,000 more revenue had not the rates been altered for the purpose of assisting the industries of the colony. Any one who will look at the question of railway management from a practical point of view will admit that these changes must have had a material effect upon the revenue; but I think that the results of the working of our railways will compare favourably with the results obtained from railways in other countries, and the more so where the circumstances are at all similar. Then, the honourable gentleman charged me with having departed from the opinion I expressed when I took office with regard to the question of the general management of the railways—whether the present system should be continued, or whether there should be management by Boards. Speaking generally, I may say that my opinion is very much the same now as it was when I took office; but I have found this: that when a Bill, carefully drawn, for the purpose of constituting Boards was submitted to members of this House—and I think I am not far wrong in stating that the opinion of the honourable gentleman, as well as that of his Minister for Public Works, was the same—the House was not by any means inclined to accept it. Besides the unwillingness of the House to accept the proposal, I had this fact before me: that if the Bill were carried into effect there would necessarily for two or three years have been an increase in the expenses, owing to the fact that two or three of these Boards would have had to be created, and that there would have had to be two or three separate accountants' departments created; and this expense we were not prepared to incur at the present time. There has been a proposal mooted that we should have Boards of Advice, and two separate Bills have been prepared with that object; but I see very great difficulties in the way of creating these Boards of Advice, because, unless they spent a considerable time in mastering the details of railway management and its intricacies, particularly that of the goods-traffic, they would be practically useless except, perhaps, to the Minister, who could use them as a buffer between the public and the Government. And then, if you got the Boards of Advice, I am afraid that their advice would consist mainly of a repetition of that pressure which business people are now constantly bringing to bear upon the Minister to secure reductions in freights or extra conveniences. There is no doubt that great difficulty surrounds the whole subject, and I am not at all sure that this House would consent to such a buffer being set up between the people and the Minister. I can only further say in that regard that it has been stated by one honourable member, who certainly, I suppose, ranks with those who are called the friends of the Government, that during the time I have held office I have done nothing to fulfil the pledges I made, or to correct the abuses which I stated existed at the time that I took office. I would just say that many changes in the working of the railways have been made since I went into office, and those changes are now going on to a larger extent than previously. It can be shown—and if the honourable gentleman looks in a table towards the end of the Public Works Statement it will be seen—that the classification has been very largely altered, and that the rates have been revised. That has been going on during the whole of the time I have held office. I can say no more in that respect except this: that so long as the pressure continues for additional accommodation, unless you have a Board or General Manager who will clearly and honestly advise the Minister to decline any additions, accommodation, or reduction in charges excepting such as are really required, the proceeds—the results—of the railways must be anything but encouraging. The honourable member for Egmont made a considerable point of the question of expenditure on open railways, for which we have estimated the amount to be taken out of new loan at £200,000.

Major ATKINSON.—It was £200,000 in the Financial Statement—reduced now to £150,000.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—There is £150,000 for works upon lines and £50,000 for rails, sleepers, and rolling-stock. I was simply going to say that the applications for these

additions are, I think, at something like the rate of £400,000 a year. That is the rate at which they have been made during the last year, at all events; and certainly one of the most difficult things a Public Works Minister has to deal with is this question of continuous applications for additional accommodation. The public at large seem to forget that these railways are not of the class of railways they have been accustomed to in the Old Country, and that in many cases in a great part of the country they are railroads, in place of railways in the ordinary acceptation of the term. The people of the country want the same accommodation as they received in the Old Country; but if we can only continue to hold out against this pressure, and convince those who use the railways that they need not expect the accommodation which has been so much asked for in past years—and, I think, too readily given—we may hope to reduce the annual expenditure on these open railways still lower than the Government estimate to be required for this and next year. The honourable member for Waitotara seemed to me to have misunderstood the reading of the third column in these estimates, because he brought out the most astonishing results with regard to liabilities which would exist at the end of the year. He is not here, and I shall not refer to his remarks further; but what I have to say is that he appeared to expect that the amounts in the third column would be expended during the year, in place of having a large amount left in hand. That seems to me to be the explanation. Now I come to say a few words with regard to what fell from the honourable member for Napier. The honourable gentleman is not in his place; but I shall nevertheless refer to his remarks, because he laid very great stress on the failure of the Government to carry out what he said was the main feature of our policy, and that was, to press on the trunk lines, and not to go on with little bits, as he called it; and he took as his examples the Otago Central and Napier-Woodville lines. Now, with regard to the Napier-Woodville line, he gave us an account of two or three or four interviews which he said he had had with me on the subject of the continuation of that line. In 1884, when the Government took office, one of the first things I did was to go over the list of these railways; and, as regards the Napier-Woodville line, I was informed that it had been the fixed intention of the former Government not to proceed with that work beyond Tahoraite, and that with that object in view a very large expenditure had been gone to in the shape of special accommodation for a terminus there. The Government took a different view of the matter, and expressed an intention of pressing on the construction of that line. The honourable member for Napier put a question to me in the House, and afterwards saw me privately; and my impression of the interview which he had then is that it had reference more to continuing the line on to Woodville than on to Palmerston. Certainly, I could not help knowing, and I am sure the honourable gentleman, if he thinks of it, must know, that no survey was made through the Gorge at that time; and that it was impossible that I could have said, or that he could have thought I meant it, if I did say it, that the railway should be finished in two years. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay referred to that interview, and he made a very much modified statement—that we then intended to have the line completed by the time that the Manawatu line was opened. That, no doubt, was the then intention of the Government; but I think it would have been more honest if the honourable member for Napier had stated that the prosecution of the work was prevented by a vote of the House last year. We had then the information which would have enabled us to at once call for tenders for the line through the Gorge; but the money for that work was taken off by the House, and therefore the liability could not be incurred; and the consequence was that the construction of the line through the Gorge had to be delayed for one year. In regard to the Otago Central exactly the same thing occurred. I am quite prepared to acquit the honourable member for Napier of any intention to mislead the House, but he ought, before making such a charge, to have ascertained what were the facts of the case, and he might easily have made himself acquainted with them. If he had looked at the Public Works Statement made by myself last year, he would have seen that I drew special attention to the fact—and even in 1884 I think I drew attention to it—that all the work which had been done on the Otago Central line had been done beyond a great viaduct or gap left seven or eight miles away from the main trunk line; and, consequently, that it was useless—utterly useless—to go on to any great extent with the railway till that gap was filled up. Immediately on taking office that work was put in hand, and it is now going on satisfactorily. If the honourable member had looked at the present Public Works Statement he would have found that the contracts were let over that length, and he would further have found that provision had been taken under the present loan that would not leave that line in a place where it was of no use, but would thoroughly complete it up to—I think the place is called Sutton, where the line opens out on something like level land, at a point to which the line could be remunerative. I think the two examples the honourable member for Napier has alluded to, and laid a great amount of stress upon, were not, to say the least of it, a fortunate choice for him to make. Then, the honourable member for Waikato twitted the Government on not going on with the main trunk line sufficiently fast to carry out the intentions of the Government. The fact of the matter is that I can say there is an absolute blank of a year in the time in which that line should be constructed, owing to the reduction of the votes made last year. The works that were to have been put in hand were not put in hand, and the surveys,

to a great extent, were stopped in the same way; and consequently the works that are at present to be put in hand are largely the works that were to have been undertaken last year. The honourable member said, if I understood him rightly, that only £46,000 was to be expended on the North Island Trunk line this year; but the fact is that the liabilities proposed to be incurred this year will be £230,000, and that, I am sure, will enable the line to be carried on as fast as the country will care for. It is astonishing to hear honourable members in this respect. Some honourable members find fault because we do not go on quickly with this railway, and immediately afterwards they are answered by other members, who say we have no business to go on so quickly because we have not purchased sufficient Native land. I think North Island members would be greatly disappointed if we did not proceed with that line until we had purchased all the Native land between Te Awamutu and Mokau. It is well understood that Native land can only be purchased in a certain way; and two years ago it would have been looked upon almost as an absurdity if anybody said that the Natives there would at the present time be praying the Government to establish a Land Court there. The honourable member for Egmont and other honourable members have talked about our proposing new lines. Now, it is only a day or two ago since I was asked by the honourable member for Egmont to make surveys of a line to connect Taranaki with the North Island Trunk line. Is that not proposing a new line? No doubt the honourable member would be quite ready to assist the Government to get authority for a loan for that line. Then, the honourable member for Hawke's Bay has also been pressing for very extensive surveys of roads within the last few days. Many other honourable members have also asked the Government for expenditure on new lines, new roads, and new bridges during the last two months—requests which I have had to decline. But if they had been accepted [illegible] would have [illegible] The honourable member for Hawke's Bay instanced a particular case to show [illegible] the railways were managed, [illegible] the [illegible] at Te [illegible] A. I can say [illegible] that [illegible] the most expensive [illegible] the railways have to carry on [illegible] as far as I am aware [illegible] the [illegible] as to the rates charged [illegible] respecting the [illegible] the [illegible] the [illegible]

pense of supervision amounted to 5¼ per cent. The amount of outside work and supervision done by the department is a very large item indeed. The department is still being, to a certain extent, called upon to report upon harbours, bridges, and other works all over the colony: if a fair allowance were made for that, it would reduce the percentage for supervision very considerably below 5 per cent.; and I have no doubt honourable members are aware that the ordinary charge for supervision of railway contracts is 5 per cent. Architects get even a higher percentage on the works which they supervise. The honourable member said that in order to gain the votes of the West Coast members the line from Hokitika to Greymouth was going by Kumara. The plans as now prepared do not show that the line is going by Kumara. A petition was presented to the House, and referred to the Government, asking that the line should go by Kumara. A report will now be made as to what the cost will be of taking the railway by way of Kumara, whether such a course is desirable, and, as an alternative, the cost of constructing a branch-line. That is how the position stands. There is no determination by the Government to take the line by Kumara. There is very little doubt in my mind that hereafter this line will have to be made, either by the Midland Railway Company or by the Government. The honourable gentleman had no right to make such a statement as he did about the line from Gisborne inland, unless he had some reasonable authority for doing so. Sir, this was news to the Government and myself. All that has been done in that matter is that an exploration has been made by an engineer, and a report on the subject laid upon the table; and, if the honourable member did not know that, he must pay very little attention to what goes on in this House. I shall not trouble the House any further. I shall have opportunities to go into details on several items which appear in the schedule of this Loan Bill when the Bill is in Committee, and also when the estimates are before the House. I have no reason to complain of the criticism which has been passed on the Public Works Statement, and I hope there will be no attempt made to alter in any serious degree the proposals of the Government; as, if there is, I am quite sure it will lead to very considerable waste of time and money, and probably go far to revert to the system in vogue up to the time of this Government taking office, and undo much of the good that has been effected by the system adopted during the last two years.

Mr. J. C. BUCKLAND.—The district from which I come is one of those parts of New Zealand which have nothing to gain except from the wise expenditure of borrowed money. I quite allow that a member of this House ought to look beyond the narrow bounds of his district, and consider himself as representing the colony; and I wish that more members would take that wider view. Many members are unable to take a fair view of anything connected with the expenditure of money. I am pleased to hear the Minister for Public Works say that he is satisfied with the criticisms which the Government have met during the last few days. I rose with a feeling of commiseration for them, and with a feeling that the Government had been sufficiently battered, and therefore that they would not expect anything of that sort from me. Any stranger sitting behind your chair, Sir, and listening to this debate must have thought that a large number of members were making very rash statements, or else that the Government ought not to hold their seats any longer. That part of the debate which has dealt with the manipulation of figures I will not dwell upon at any great length. I have taken considerable trouble with those figures, but, looking at the way in which honourable members have already gone into this question, I will not do so at length now. These manipulations reminded me of the pleasure I had when a child in seeing a magic lantern. I was pleased to see a large deficit turned into a large balance ready for expenditure. This debate has been approached in the manner of an ordinary want-of-confidence debate. One honourable gentleman said that it was the duty of the Government of a democratic country like this to float on the crest of the popular wave. My opinion is that a Government should have principles, and should stand by those principles, and should endeavour to lead an enlightened country; and to say that the country is to dictate to the Government and to members is an absurdity. Members go back to their constituents with considerable experience in public matters, and, assisted by the widely-read pages of *Hansard*, have a great deal to do in forming public opinion. There is no man who more than myself allows full value to an enlightened and mature public opinion, and I say that under our various institutions men will always come forward who represent that opinion, and the men in office ought to be in accord with that opinion. They ought not to be diametrically opposed to it, like the members of the present Government. It is true that the Government has shifted about very much. The consideration of those honourable gentlemen is, how the votes of honourable members are affected. They would be very glad to lead an enlightened public opinion or to ride on the crest of the wave; but the crest of the wave on which they are riding is a wave within this House, and their object is to land themselves in some particularly safe cove. Their principles are those of the Vicar of Bray, who changed his religion four times. That celebrity, when taxed with inconsistency, replied, "Not so. I always stick to my principles, which are, to live and die Vicar of Bray." If the gentlemen sitting on those benches had been seeking to represent an enlightened public opinion, we should not have had the system of local self-government which it is proposed to enact. Local self-government, to the outside people, means that they shall have largely the management of their own affairs: not because they want to

manage their own affairs, but because they consider that they can manage their own affairs at less expense and more judiciously than the Government can. In the few cases in which local self-government has been granted there has been no reduction in the cost of the central Government. Another thing which the public desire, and which this Government manifests no desire to grant them, is reduced expenditure. If there has been one matter more than another in regard to which public opinion has expressed itself, through the Press and other channels, it is that all our future borrowing should be reasonable, and kept as far as possible within such bounds as that it will either add to the wealth of the country indirectly or be made immediately remunerative. I will show presently that our borrowing is not very reasonable; and here, again, those honourable gentlemen are not in accord with the feeling of the public. I can hardly refer to the manner in which the Government have, from first to last, abandoned all the principles which they once laid down, without travelling over ground which has already been very ably dealt with by other honourable members; but I may say this: that there is no question on which they are now making a stand regarding which they did not express diametrically opposite opinions at no very distant date. Take, for example, the purchase of Native land in this Island. The Native Minister was so opposed to the system at one time that he declared when he came into office that he would buy no more land, but would try to back out of the transactions which had been commenced, and he always advised the Natives to sell no more land; but now he is going in the very opposite direction. There is one matter which is rather apart from any general line that one might be supposed to take in making a speech on such an occasion as this; but I should like just to refer to it. I should like to refer to the duties of the Minister of Mines. And here I might say that great promises were made as to what was going to be done for this industry. I allow that the honourable gentleman in charge of that department is anxious to do all he can in that direction; but he is mistaken in the direction in which his efforts should tend. It is absurd to expend the large sums of money that are yearly voted for water-races on goldfields. Up to the time when that system became general the miners were ready to face any difficulty in order to get the gold, if they knew it was there; but now they depend on the Government for everything. I should like to see the Minister of Mines direct his efforts to assisting the public as far as possible in ascertaining where the gold is. If he will do that, the miners are quite quick enough to bring their appliances to bear to get the gold, if they think there is any chance of success. What the Government should do is what is done in other colonies. They should get boring-machines, and then test those parts of the country which are likely to bear minerals. I believe that, if the ten or twelve thousand pounds which are now spent yearly on water-races were spent in boring where there is any likelihood of success, we should have far more men working on the mines than we have under the present system of pauperizing a large proportion of the inhabitants. Down in the part of the country from which I come we believe that coal underlies the soil, but it is at such a depth that we are not rich enough to get machines to sink for it; whereas if the Government had machines, and would let them out at a reasonable rate, we should very soon have plenty of people employed there. Then, there are a great many places in different parts of the colony where gold is suspected to exist in deep leads, but where the people are not rich enough to bore for it themselves; but, if the Government would only prove the ground, thousands of men would come forward to work the fields without any of this expenditure on water-races. I commend these few remarks to the Minister of Mines. A short time ago, when the honourable member for Egmont was speaking, an honourable gentleman on the Government benches suggested that we should point out where there could be a saving in the expenditure on the proposed schedule of railways. Well, I am prepared to show where there can be a considerable saving on railways and other things made. And, first, dealing with the Bill itself, there is one item here which, although it is rather trifling, still it might be well to have to our credit next year: I mean a sum of £12,000 for new departmental buildings at Auckland.

Sir R. STOUT.—That is not to be spent this year.

Mr. J. C. BUCKLAND.—But it is to be voted, if I am not mistaken. I should like to know whether that sum is wanted to put a building on the Government Insurance site in Auckland.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Mr. J. C. BUCKLAND.—Then I will say no more about it. To the other part of the building vote I have no objection; and the sooner a large and well-ventilated printing-office is erected in Wellington the better. I come now to the railways, and these are evidently distributed around so as to catch the votes of honourable members. Take the Te Aroha-Thames Railway, for instance. I wonder that any man in his senses could ever think that that line would pay. I have been through all that country, and cannot think that this line can possibly pay at present; but the Government has taken the line up, and it is evidently nothing more than a political line. If you want to retrench, here is an opportunity at once, for the Upper Thames district will be admirably well served by the Te Aroha-Hamilton line, which gives it all the communication it can want with Auckland. Here is money that is going to be thrown away far more effectually than if you threw it into the sea, because you will have to keep an unprofitable line in order, after it is made. The only possible advantage it can give is to the labourers who will be employed on its construction. The next note I have made is with regard to the expenditure in clearing the

No. 21.

NEW ZEALAND.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SESSION 1886.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

23rd July to 27th July.

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WELLINGTON:
BY AUTHORITY: GEORGE DIDSBURY, GOVERNMENT PRINTER.

1886.

Price 2d.

Wanganui River. Of course, if the Minister of Lands wants to gain some patronage by having money spent in his district it is very natural that he should come to the House and try to get it; but it seems to me that this is a most foolish expenditure. We have been furnished with some very pretty pictures of the scenery along this river; but from what I have heard I believe it is a very shallow river, and that the only effect of removing the snags and other obstructions in the narrows will be to so lower the water that the river will be of very little use for navigation. At present the contractors for the tunnel contract on the trunk railway are taking their materials up on pack-horses from Alexandra, and, if all that we hear is true, it is very doubtful whether the work of clearing the river will be completed before the contract is finished. The only good that this work can be is that by-and-by it will bring down tourists who come by the central line; but I think we might very well wait, before we make provision for that, until we see how the railway itself is getting on. It may be very well then to go on with this work; but surely, in our present straitened circumstances, this expenditure is absolutely a waste of money. There is another railway also to which I should like to draw attention, and that is the Masterton-Woodville line. There is no doubt that the land between Woodville and Mauriceville is second to none in the country; but at present there are no settlers to take up that land, and to ask for a large sum of money to spend on that line now is entirely unnecessary. It is all densely-timbered land, of which far more is already opened up than can be occupied or dealt with. I should be glad to support a useful railway like that when the proper time comes; but when we know that we have such a large quantity of land open for settlement, and no one to settle on it, I think that railway might stand over for a time. Then we come to the Hokitika-Greymouth line. Now, we have spent a great deal of money on the Hokitika and Greymouth harbours. It is true that the payment of the money is so arranged that it is presumably to be a charge on the districts; but we know that in the end it will become a charge on the colony: and I cannot see the reason for spending money on a railway between two ports on which we have already spent so much money. A more utterly foolish thing to do at this time I cannot conceive. If it is said that it is to give communication to the Midland Railway, then I say let us see that railway well on its course to completion first. The Blenheim-Tophouse Railway: can any one in his senses think that money should be spent on such a railway as that? I trust that when we get into Committee on this Bill any vote for such a line will be struck out of the schedule. Then we come to the Westport Railway, which may in time be a useful line; but, if a sum is asked for now for expenditure on it in view of its connection with the Midland Railway, I think it should not be granted. We know the Midland Railway is by no means an assured railway in the meantime; and, even if it were, it will be a long time before it wants this Westport Railway. The fact of the matter is that it is merely a political railway, to catch the votes of certain members who come with such narrow views that they will not look at the interest of the colony as a whole, so long as they can get something for their own districts. I know a man puts himself in a very invidious position who gets up here and says that this or that railway should not be proceeded with; but I come from a conservative part of the colony —conservative in this way: that it gets no expenditure of borrowed money; and, though we look with friendly feeling on all the rest of the colony, and are quite willing to allow expenditure which any ordinary man of business would think right, we strongly object to this waste of public money for the purpose of securing votes. My attention has been drawn to the Otago Central line. Well, I have taken the trouble to travel the whole length of that railway, from where the works are now going on right up into the interior. I went along the main road to see what kind of country the railway would open up, and I am not so blinded or prejudiced as to say that it will be a paying line for some time; but, as compared with a large number of railways in this schedule, it is a magnificent railway, and will open up large tracts of very good country. Amongst the other railways which we have here there is the Livingstone-Windsor line—a line which ought never to have been commenced. It runs parallel to another line and only four or five miles from it, and the terminus is close to that line, which is really the railway of the district. If the Government see their way to stop expenditure on a perfectly useless railway, they will strike this one out of the schedule. I cannot imagine what support of any sort, political or otherwise, they expect to gain by spending money on this line, for the very members for the district themselves know how foolish it would be to spend money on such a railway. I have left for a moment the Otago Central, and I want now to say that that railway has not been fairly treated in the distribution of the Public Works Fund. Sums have been voted for it repeatedly, but not spent. In this proposed schedule £200,000 is set opposite this work; but no doubt there is a large amount of liabilities to come off that, and £60,000 is charged against it as the value of material and rolling-stock—as if the line would be carried during the next two years to any point at which there would be traffic requiring rolling-stock!—which we know perfectly well it will not be. We shall see repeated what has occurred before; and, really, if that line gets expended on it £75,000 out of the £200,000 put down for it, I shall be very well satisfied. Now, to conclude, I want seriously to consider the position in which we shall find ourselves this time next year. In these proposals there is a new idea about spending money: it is that of committing the colony to a very large expenditure o

a number of works, and to prevent the money in the future going in a different direction from what is contemplated now. If the proposals of the Government are given effect to, and are adhered to, there will be nothing to be voted for works next year except what is re-voted. I understand that the liabilities this year are very much the same in amount as they have been in previous years; and we may assume that next year will be no exception: indeed, the Treasurer's figures show that there will have to be re-voted at least £811,000 of liabilities; and therefore, taking these figures of the Government, there would be £418,000 to deal with anew. But against that there will be the £202,000 which has been for the moment written off, but which must be returned as a liability, and a considerable amount will have to be charged for replacing the material and rolling-stock taken at the present time. Then, if I am right, the whole of these two millions we are now raising will be exhausted except for re-voting. There may be a small balance for railways, but not one farthing for general purposes. I use the expression "two millions" advisedly, because I wish it to go forth to the country that it is not a million and a half, but really two millions that we are proposing to borrow—that is, a million and a half under this Bill, and half a million under the already-sanctioned North Trunk Railway Loan. Now, it will be an absurd thing—and I have the Colonial Treasurer's authority for saying that — to go on next year, spending money without having money borrowed to meet that expenditure. The honourable gentleman has said, if we wish to avoid future fiascos—he was then referring to the alleged fiasco of the honourable member for Egmont—we must not incur expenditure in excess of means to meet it. Well, if that means anything, it means that when we meet here next year we must be asked for power to borrow another million and a half, or else we shall have at the end of the year liabilities to that amount and a stoppage of further public works, unless the House next session authorizes the works without providing funds; and then we should have to vote a loan immediately on our meeting in 1888, and to raise the money at once; and that is a position no honourable member would like to see the country in. The proposal next year must be that we shall borrow another million and a half. I want the public to be most clearly and fully informed as to that, and that we are now borrowing two millions by a disingenuous manner of concealment, instead of a million and a half. The impression a casual reader would form from the language used would be that we are only borrowing a million and a half—we are not told that it is two millions—and that it is to last two years; and the natural inference is that next session we shall not be asked for authority to borrow anything. I should be pleased if there was to be no more borrowing for two years, and that a clause should, if it were any way possible, be put in the Loan Bill saying so; and then the Government would be compelled to leave out of their present proposals some railways that are perfectly useless. The position altogether is a very serious one, and I cannot understand the blindness with which honourable members on the Government benches are starting off on what really is the policy that was laid down during the recess, which is a new public works policy, and nothing less. I say if every proposed work now before us is carried out the country is not in a position to bear the liability that will be involved. We are building up a house of cards, and a very slight shock might at any time bring down the whole structure. There are not wanting, even at the present time, signs that some of the municipalities that have borrowed large sums of money are quite unable to meet the consequent large charges for interest; and, of course, if the interest due even from our local bodies is, in any case, not forthcoming when due in London, the effect on the credit of the colony will be such that we shall have difficulty in borrowing money; and, in fact, some of these Harbour Boards and Corporations that have borrowed so largely are going to make default presently, and then there will be nothing for it but for the colony to take up the obligation, if it is to maintain its credit unimpaired. The public in London will not distinguish between the local and the general public obligations of the colony. This house of cards we are building up on all sides at once — whichever way we turn there are debentures for debt—and so it goes on: there is an inevitable crash before us, if I am anything of a prophet, unless, as the Minister for Public Works said just now, we pull up in time. But I say that time is now, and that we should take a wise step, in voting on this Bill, by saying it is now. By going on, and not pulling up till compelled, we may have, of course, a period of comparative plenty, but there can be no other ending than that of inability to meet our interest. There is no man in the colony who wishes to repudiate our obligations, and I do not want even to use that ugly word; but, unless we take the hint very wisely given us just now by the Minister for Public Works and pull up, and at the proper time, we shall come to be in a position of being unable to meet our interest; and the outside public will then use that word which we do not like to use ourselves.

Mr. KERR.—Sir, I read in the paper the other day something said by the honourable member for the Bay of Islands, and I could not understand then what it meant; but, after the speech we heard just now, I can understand it. I was very much disappointed with the speech of the honourable member for Egmont. I should like to read this, to start with. I think it is very appropriate just now——

Mr. HOBBS.—Is it in order to refer to a past debate?

Mr. KERR.—It is out of a newspaper.

Mr. SPEAKER.—What has it to do with this debate?

Mr. KERR.—I will show, Sir, how it comes in. It is this, from a Wellington paper:—

"The member for the Bay of Islands (Mr.

Hobbs) has evidently not a very high opinion of the religious status of members of our Parliament. While officiating as chairman at the Free Methodist Church last night, he begged his audience 'to pray earnestly for members of Parliament, as they sadly needed praying for. He felt at times like a fish out of water amongst them, and would not have been there unless he realized it was the will of the Lord. He urged them to elect Christian and not Godless men if they wanted good and pure laws.' He concluded by entreating them to pray more earnestly for members of Parliament."

Now, after all the talk there has been during this debate for the last three or four days, I was waiting earnestly for the speech to be delivered by the honourable member for Egmont, thinking he would prove beyond all doubt that there was not one farthing of this £800,000 we have heard so much about; but, after his speech and that of the honourable member for Waikouaiti, I really think a chaplain would be most useful in this House, and if the Rev. Mr. Hobbs were appointed chaplain of this House I think it would be a very good thing, because it appears to me that there has been a good deal of dust thrown in our eyes, though it all ends in the one thing—"I do not blame the Government in the least." The honourable member for Egmont said he gave the Colonial Treasurer credit for making a full explanation in the Financial Statement. Well, we all know that; we all know that he gave a very lengthy and clear exposition: but the end of it was that the honourable member did not understand it. I really thought the honourable gentleman did understand it; and, if he did not, he listened attentively to the Statement of the Minister for Public Works, and seemed thoroughly satisfied with the statements given. The honourable member for Egmont went on to say that the management of the railways is very bad. Does not every member in this House know it is very bad? But did not things get into such a mess when the honourable gentleman himself was in power that the present Government have not been able to put it right yet?—and I think they are deserving of sympathy in the job they have had. The honourable member for Mount Ida winds up his speech by saying that, take it all in all, the present Government are not such a bad lot at all. But, after condemning almost everything, the honourable gentleman concluded—and I knew exactly what was coming—by intimating that all the railways in the country ought to be stopped but the Otago Central. And yet the honourable gentleman finished, in his last sentence, by saying that the Government policy was not a bad one, after all. Now, when a large number of men sit in this House day after day, expecting these big guns to go off, to inform us little ones what the country wants, and to lead us, it is really a pity that when they do speak they should not know what they are talking about. I really think that if I were talking against time I could not make so bad a speech as that of the honourable member for Waikouaiti. Sir, I really think we must have a chaplain. The honourable member for Egmont spoke about a speech delivered by one of the Ministers in Otago; but that was a speech which I think we shall all remember all the days of our life, and it was a better speech than the one that the honourable member for Egmont promised us at the time he went round on the national-insurance business. The people did pay attention to the speech of the Premier, but they would not listen to the speech of the honourable member for Egmont at all: and he promised, likewise, that he was going to stump the country from one end to the other, and he did get to Auckland; but he took good care not to come down south. If he had come down our way I can assure him that we have not forgotten him, and I can promise him that if he ever comes down there they will hold him in remembrance, because there never was more mismanagement in this country than by his Government. I think the honourable member for Wakatipu made a very good speech, and if he never makes a worse one than he did to-night I shall never have to find fault with him. I hope, if ever I return to the House, and am kept waiting like this for days by the honourable member for Egmont, that he will make a speech that we can understand. He has done everything, in the House and out of the House to assure me that there will not be a shilling left to spend next year; and yet the Treasurer comes down and shows that there will be £600,000 over. The honourable member for Egmont says we shall have nothing to spend next year: but what has that got to do with this year? The only fault I have to find with the Minister for Public Works is that he sticks too long to the money voted. I maintain it is not his duty to save a shilling of the money that is voted. I may say that last year there was a vote—a very small one—for myself, and if he had given me the money to spend at the proper time one pound would have gone as far as two pounds otherwise. However, perhaps he treats his other friends better than he does me. I cannot understand at all how honourable members like the honourable member for Egmont can possibly take the trouble to hoodwink such as me, because I really thought he did know something about finance. I thought I was a novice; but I can say that I plainly see that he did not believe what he was saying himself. Any one knows that the present Government dare not come down with a Budget and say they have more money than they have in the Treasury. If they did they would have to go to Kimberley very quick. But I will not take up the time of the House any longer. I will only say that the honourable member for Mount Ida, when he sees in print the speech he made last night, will be thoroughly ashamed of it.

Mr. HOBBS.—Sir, I wish to make a personal explanation, and afterwards to make a few remarks on the Public Works Statement. In the first place, I wish to say that I exceedi-

regret if any remarks of mine in another place and at a religious meeting, have caused offence to any member of this House. I had no intention of doing so, and I am aware that the honourable member opposite me had no bad intention in the reference he made to myself. He has simply been made a tool of.

Mr. KERR.—Sir, I rise to a point of order. I never accused the honourable gentleman of saying it in a wrong manner. I think he did perfectly right, and I think he is very useful as the chaplain of this House.

Mr. HOBBS.—It is just as well to make the explanation. You, Sir, open this House with prayers every day. Whether it is a formal matter or not, you do it, Sir, in a manner that, to my mind, is very impressive. And at churches we hear the Queen and Royal family and the members of the Legislature prayed for; and in the Legislature of America, which is often held up as a model for our imitation, they have a chaplain, and I might furnish the honourable member with some of the prayers of that official. They are not set, but are extempore. I may say that I was not joking, nor had I the slightest desire to reflect on any member of the House; and I am exceedingly sorry for one remark I made, in which, it appears, it was thought I was holding myself up as a model. One member of this House has been endeavouring to lead other members to suppose that I was anxious to make honourable members think that I was better than other people. Such an attitude or intention is very far from my thoughts. I am deeply sensible of my own shortcomings, but feel that persons who go to church and repeat responses should follow out during the week what they profess on Sundays. I have no wish to lecture the House, or to obtrude my religious views on the members of this House; and I should not have made this explanation had it not been forced upon me, though I am not sorry for the opportunity afforded me of putting myself right with the House. I will now make a few remarks on the Public Works Statement. The Treasurer, who introduced the Loan Bill, in his remarks referred to exaggerated statements that had been made throughout the country of what he said at his meeting in Auckland about the loans that he hinted were necessary, and the amount of money that was to be borrowed. I, as an Auckland member, may make a few remarks on the subject. It will be remembered by the House that the Treasurer went to Waiwera; and while there, as a skilful general, he had emissaries to supply him with information as to the feeling in Auckland on this question of large borrowing. There was considerable talk and excitement in the Provincial District of Auckland as to this large borrowing scheme, which was in everybody's mouth. I know, myself, there were gentlemen who found their way to Waiwera to discuss the question with the Treasurer, who was anxious to have a meeting in Auckland, where he could shadow forth his policy: and a meeting was arranged for and addressed by him. As I said to my constituents, there was no question that his address from beginning to end was an appeal to the cupidity of the people. There was no question that he made a very pathetic appeal, and said, "Will you not give the country another chance?" He also said that the Government were anxious to have a vigorous prosecution of public works; and, from beginning to end, his address shadowed forth a large scheme of borrowing. It was telegraphed to England, and no doubt the Agent-General thought it his duty to cable out here to know whether it was true or not. The Auckland members, as well as many others in the colony, were opposed to this scheme; and the Premier, at Invercargill, endeavoured to tone the matter down. I have thought it necessary to make these remarks, because there is no question that the Treasurer himself led the people to suppose there was to be a large borrowing scheme, and I know the people of Auckland had a most uncomfortable feeling about it. The Treasurer, in his speech in introducing this Bill, said that this Bill was to fix the railways, and then find the money to carry them on. What I complain of is that they are not doing this. The North Auckland Railway—here I may say that I feel it my duty to speak on this, because it is the only opportunity I shall have of addressing the House on the public works policy—this line was included in the original public works scheme of the Treasurer; and I think it is right I should speak on this question pretty plainly, as I hold that the Government, as it is constituted now, is to all intents and purposes a southern one. We have only one member that belongs to Auckland, and the Premier himself has only been there once, and took a flying visit to Whangarei; and the Native Minister called at the Bay of Islands; but they know not what the requirements of the country are, and they cannot realize the position. Even the Minister of Mines, when appealed to by members of the House from the southern mining districts, informs them of the importance of a work because he was there on a visit through the district. In the North we suffer very much from the Ministry being practically a southern one, and we are not represented in the Ministry as we should be. That may be one reason; but, at any rate, there is another equally certain, that the North of Auckland Railway, as shadowed forth in the original Public Works Statement, has not been carried on as it ought to have been; and now we are advocating that this work should be carried on by a syndicate or any other means so long as we can see some possibility of getting it completed. If it goes on at the pace it is going, when will it be finished? And I have this kind of feeling: I have not been emulating the enterprising Press reporter who bored a hole through the floor to enable him to hear Cabinet secrets, with the hope of being able to telegraph some news through the country, but I can easily imagine what takes place when a Cabinet meeting is held to consider the question of public works. One member of the Government will perhaps mention the North of Auckland Railway, but the mat-

ter is soon disposed of. "Oh!" will be the reply, "Hobbs and Mitchelson come from that part of the country, and it will not do to give them anything. Certainly, there is Moat—he gives us a vote sometimes. We will put £50,000 in the schedule for the line, but we need not spend very much." So it has been from the outset. Now, we see this year, by the public works estimates, that there is £6,000 to be spent on this line—a perfectly ridiculous sum to be put down for a trunk line. Why is the line treated in this manner? Why are such dribblets spent on it? Is this a vigorous prosecution of public works, which was a cardinal point in the policy of this Government? I think I have a right to complain of new works being undertaken when a line like this is treated in such a manner. Why are new works being proposed before these old works are completed?

Sir R. STOUT.—This is a new line.

Mr. HOBBS.—I differ from the honourable gentleman. It was mentioned in the very first Public Works Statement that was brought down, and before there was any loan for public works, so that it is not a new work in any sense of the word, any more than the Otago Central is. It is no wonder that we feel hurt about the treatment we receive. I feel strongly, and therefore I speak strongly. Justice should be done in this matter. If the Government would only bring down a definite scheme, and say that the line shall be finished in so many years, there would be some fairness about the action of the Government. Under the present system the railway will never be made and the country never opened up. Nor are there any votes to speak of set down for roads and bridges in the district. A former Government placed a sum of £100,000 in the Loan Bill for roads and bridges. That was provided for in the three-million loan; but since then there has been a loan of a million and a half and another loan of a million, and yet there is a balance unexpended of the sum set apart for this purpose in the Three-Million Loan Act. I say that when money is voted it should be expended, and not be kept dangling before the House year after year, leading the people to suppose, when they see the sum mentioned year after year in the Public Works Statements, that a large amount of money is being spent in the district. The people in my district have been very long-suffering in this matter. They have been paying property-tax a long time for the benefit of the South, and they feel that the time has now come when they have a right to some consideration, no matter what Government may be in power. When the proper time comes I shall have something more to say about the schedule to this Bill; but at this late hour of the evening I do not wish to detain the House longer. Perhaps I should not have risen at all were it not that I desired to make the personal explanation which I have made. I can only say, again, that it is far from my wish to hurt the feelings of any one in the House, and I am glad that the honourable member for Waimea gave me an opportunity of making an explanation.

Mr. J. McKENZIE moved, That the debate be adjourned.

The House divided.

AYES, 30.

Ballance	Lake	Ross
Barron	Lance	Stout
Beetham	Larnach	Taylor
Bevan	Macarthur	Trimble
Bruce	Montgomery	Vogel
Buckland, W.F.	Moss	Walker
Conolly	Newman	Wilson.
Duncan	Richardson, E.	*Tellers.*
Hirst, H.	Richardson, G.	Hamlin
Hobbs	Rolleston	McKenzie, J.
Kerr		

NOES, 13.

Cadman	Holmes	Turnbull.
Cowan	McMillan	
Fraser	O'Callaghan	*Tellers.*
Guinness	Reese	Allwright
Hatch	Thompson, T.	Pearson.

Majority for, 17.

Debate adjourned.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes past one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Monday, 26th July, 1886.

Second Reading—Third Reading—Salmon and Trout Bill—Civil Service Reform Bill—First Offenders Probation Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READING.

Hutt and Pitone Gas Company Bill.

THIRD READING.

Coal-mines Bill.

SALMON AND TROUT BILL.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES, in moving the motion standing in his name, said the Salmon and Trout Bill had already passed the other branch of the Legislature, where it was treated as a public Bill. The promoter did not imagine that it would be treated otherwise than as a public Bill, and therefore did not take the proper steps to have it advertised in the ordinary way. He (Mr. Holmes), however, held in his hand a copy of a petition signed by 185 persons living in the locality affected by the Bill, and comprising the great bulk of the population in that district, and they were in favour of the objects of the Bill. He therefore asked that the Standing Orders might be suspended, in order that the Bill might be allowed to pass through that branch of the Legislature. It was a Bill of only one clause, and dealt with a very simple subject.

The Hon. Captain FRASER had much pleasure in seconding the motion. In the

River there was a great flow, which brought in a large amount of fish, and these went back at the ebb. Thus there was a great wealth of fish there which ought to be utilized, and if this Bill became law they could be caught. He hoped, therefore, the suspension of the Standing Orders would, in this case, be allowed to take place.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That the Standing Orders on Local Bills be suspended so far as to allow of the passage of the Salmon and Trout Act 1867 Amendment Bill."—(*Hon. Mr. Holmes.*)

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES wished to ask the Hon. the Speaker, before making any remarks on the subject, whether the merits of the Bill could be referred to in this debate.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said this motion had nothing whatever to do with the merits of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES would regret very much that a Bill of so important a character should be set aside without the merits of the question being debated. It was a subject which no doubt would be very keenly debated hereafter. This was the first occasion on which a proposal to introduce a Bill of this character had come up, and the Hon. the Speaker had ruled that it was not now competent to deal with the Bill on its merits. He was extremely desirous of debating the Bill on its merits, because this Bill proposed, for the first time in this colony, to give a legal sanction to a proposal to establish fixed engines for destroying fish, and he would like to point out how very injurious these fixed engines had been in the Home-country. They were first established in the last century, but the fisheries were found to deteriorate so much that, in the course of fifteen years, they were prohibited by legislation, and after that the fish increased very much and the fisheries were greatly improved. Before the Council finally dealt with the subject, whatever the result of this motion might be, he should take an opportunity of ventilating the question again.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN thought that a report such as had been presented to the Council on this Bill by the Local Bills Committee ought to decide the Council at once in regard to the motion of the Hon. Mr Holmes. The Bill was objectionable, to his mind, on the ground that the Standing Orders had not been complied with, and on the ground also that it would be a most objectionable principle that, after expending a large sum of money in acclimatizing foreign fish, this Bill proposed to legalize engines for destroying them. He should certainly oppose the motion.

Motion agreed to.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—I do not think anybody can consider that this measure is a reasonable attempt to settle the large question of Civil Service reform. It does not seem to me to grapple with any one of the difficulties that exist in relation to this great question. Nor do I think that Civil Service reform will be possible in this colony until Parliament elects to constitute an independent Board and clothe it with the necessary authority for the simplification, as far as possible, of the machinery under which the departments work, and, still further, to give that Board absolute power to dispense with those officers in the departments who are either unnecessary or incompetent, and commensurately to remunerate the officers throughout the Service who are of value to the State. If honourable members will recall the return which Sir Julius Vogel quoted in his speech delivered in this city they will see the proportions to which the Civil Service has extended in other parts of the colony outside of this city. I think it will be found, on inquiry, that retrenchment is vastly more possible at the extremities of the colony than it is at the centre—though I do not say that retrenchment is at all impossible here. The first power which it is necessary to give to an unprejudiced Board is that of dispensing with incompetent servants. The next is the power of concentrating duties in the hands of capable men, and holding them responsible for the economical and efficient management of their departments. I cannot think that Sir Robert Stout considered that he had taken even the first step towards solving this difficulty when he submitted this Bill for the consideration of Parliament. Considering the view which I take in relation to the whole subject, I shall vote for the amendment on this occasion, because I am quite certain that the condition of the colony necessitates many radical reforms in the Civil Service, and the interests of the Service still more call for radical change.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—We know that, if not the Government as a whole, certainly some influential members of the present Government are great admirers of what is called the American system of government; and one peculiar characteristic of the American system of government is, no doubt, what is called the "spoils" going to the successful party for the moment in the Assembly. It is one of the most flagrant abuses, and one which the best men in America have been endeavouring to amend and modify. That system, is that upon the occasion of each Presidential election it is the custom that all the Civil servants should be turned out of their offices, and that the patronage of nomination to the different offices should be given to the successful party. The Republicans at one time, the Democrats at another, exercise this power. The moment the Presidential election is over—I do not know whether even what is proposed to be given in this Bill, three months' notice, is given to the Civil servants in America—the members of that Service are turned out of office. The operation of this Bill, if not exactly the same, would be, certainly in all its worst features, similar to the American system. At any rate, it opens the door to that; and so certainly as the door is opened for the exercise of such patronage, so certainly will it be used, and so certainly will it be abused. In this Bill there-

is nothing but those two clauses. The real question is, whether the American system is to be introduced into the government of this country. I think that ought not to be. I shall vote for the amendment.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I have heard nothing really in opposition to this Bill. It is admitted on all sides that reform in the Civil Service is essentially necessary; and I think that we should get some assistance from this branch of the Legislature, so as to obtain reform of the Service. I have learned one thing during this debate—namely, that when any measure is introduced by the Government there is always hostility displayed to it by a certain number of gentlemen in the Council.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I am sure it is so; but I am happy to say that it is of a very limited character. I am not speaking in regard to myself personally, because I have received more than ordinary indulgence from the Council; but I have been forced to the conclusion that I have stated. It is admitted that reform in the Service is necessary; and, having been admitted, the country looks to this Council to assist in that reform. The Hon. Dr. Pollen, in his speech, said,—

"Most Ministers who have had any experience of official work, if they had the honesty to confess, would admit that in the business of administration they themselves did no more than represent what are called the walking-assistants in the draper's shop, their business being to look pleasant, and make themselves agreeable to customers who have votes, and see that the shop is closed at the proper time."

No such thing obtains at the present time. I have had the advantage of the assistance of an Under-Secretary who is one of the ablest men in the colony, and I have found that the assistance which he has afforded me has rendered my position less difficult as it would otherwise have been. My colleagues and myself have never shirked our duty in this matter of reform of the Civil Service. My honourable friend says, "This is the vaunted measure of reform." I say it is nothing of the kind; it is an attempt at reform. The Premier, in introducing this measure into the House of Representatives, informed the House that by the proposed reform the Government would effect at least a saving of from £30,000 to £40,000 a year. Is that not reform? Owing to the action I took on entering the Council and subsequently in regard to reform of the Civil Service I found that I came to be looked upon as one of the greatest enemies of the Civil Service; but I say that we have in the Civil Service at this moment some of the best men in the country. Under our present system, however, I believe we are driving out really good men. By this measure the Government is trying to give the country the full benefit of the superior men now in the Service. I hope the Council will allow this Bill to go into Committee, and there we shall have an opportunity of amending it and making it a more satisfactory Bill than it is at present. Exception has been taken to nominations by members of Parliament, and it is said that that is in a great measure following out the American system. There is no such intention. Most of the Civil servants, especially the younger men, are taken from the centres of population, and generally from this city; and we desire that the Civil servants should be taken from all parts of the colony. This measure will effect a reform which, I am certain, will be beneficial to the service of the country.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—I hope the Council will allow this Bill to pass its second reading. Some reform is no doubt needed in the Civil Service. The misfortune is that when any Ministry undertakes the work of reform it meets with the utmost opposition. I do not look on this Bill as a perfect measure at all. I look upon it as a tentative measure, which will lead to something better hereafter. There are several provisions in the Bill to which I object. I do not believe in the system of nomination by members of the other branch of the Legislature. I hope the Bill will be passed, so that the Premier may be able to say that he has the support of Parliament in his attempt at reform. If this Bill is thrown out it will be said directly that Parliament is not in earnest in its wish that some reform should take place. I think a great deal of retrenchment is possible without injury to the Service. I agree with the Hon. the Colonial Secretary that the Civil Service contains now some of the best servants which any Government has ever had. I am sure also that it contains some very bad ones. The difficulty of dispensing with the bad ones is very great. I may refer to a case in which an officer was dismissed the other day for insubordination. He had already been twice dismissed. Yet it is a positive fact that this man is entitled to appeal to a Board to try him, and I believe the question is now before the Law Officers as to whether the hearing of his case shall be an open one or not. How could any person carry on private affairs on any large scale who was subjected to such a regulation as that? There is no question about it, these officials have too much power. As to giving three months' notice, that is a matter of detail, which can well be dealt with in Committee. There are several provisions which I entirely approve of—for instance, that with regard to superannuation. I think that few honourable gentlemen can doubt that that is a very vital thing. I hope the Council will allow this Bill to be read a second time, for this Bill is, I believe, an honest endeavour to bring about reform in the Civil Service; and that is much required.

The Hon. Colonel BRETT.—I wish to ask if the reports of the two Royal Commissions which were appointed some years ago to inquire into the reform of the Civil Service will be laid before the Council. I think the reports of these inquiries should be laid on the table. It is quite impossible for us to come to a decision until we know the result of those reports. In England, after the Crimean war had ended, all the offices connected with War Department had half the number

clerks dismissed, because the pressure there had been on those offices during the war had ceased. There is no doubt that during the sitting of Parliament there must be a great number of clerks appointed; and I should like to know if during the recess a reduction is made in the number of those clerks. All this information should be laid before the Council before we are asked to come to any decision regarding this Bill.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK.—I do not think that the measure before us is a perfect one, but I think it is a step in the right direction. There are several clauses in it which I think will be very useful indeed—for instance, the one referring to superannuation, and clauses 13 and 14. I think some measure of this kind should be passed, in order to give the Government some control over the Service. The 14th clause will, I think, prevent very much abuse. The question has been discussed outside for a considerable time. The other House has taken some steps towards it; and I should be very sorry indeed if this Chamber were to put any impediment in the way of an attempt being made in the direction that this Bill contemplates. I shall support the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—Sir, I was rather surprised at the complaint, I may almost say the bitter complaint, made by my honourable friend the Colonial Secretary as to the treatment the Government have received with respect to their measures during the present session. I was under the impression that those measures had been received very fairly on the whole; and if they have not, I should like to know how it is that we have not witnessed the throughout of Government measures at the present sitting. I am not aware of any having been thrown out at all, except the Sharebrokers Bill. My honourable friend has told us that this Bill is a necessity necessary, on the grounds of economy. I think my honourable friend forgets that in the original form of this Bill there was a section the object of which was to secure the economy he speaks of, but that in the Bill in its present form this clause has vanished altogether—that is, providing a Commission to investigate how much or how little a man could live upon, and to regulate his salary accordingly. Therefore I think the excuse that might be made if we threw out this Bill, that we prevented economy being exercised, has entirely vanished with the excision of the clause I mention. I know that is the general opinion, whatever may be the opinion of my honourable friend Mr. Reynolds. My honourable friend said reform was necessary, but neither in his opening remarks nor up to the present time have I heard from him anything which would show the causes of this being necessary. We have all been prepared to listen to him in any exposition he might make on that subject, and to listen in the fairest manner, and attach due weight to what he might have to say. But we have heard nothing, and it seems to me that my honourable friend has fallen into the common custom of public men in this country, whenever they have got nothing else to do, of abusing two certain institutions—the one is the Civil Service, and the other is the Legislative Council. My honourable friend has not taken up the latter part of the programme, it is true; but he has fallen foul of the Civil Service. Now, with regard to our Civil Service, I maintain it ought to be founded on a feeling of security on the part of its officers—that this should be one of its chief features. I am not at all sure that, because in some places three months are considered to be sufficient, therefore it should be so in the Civil Service. In private practice there is what will never be found in the Civil Service, and that is a feeling of absolute confidence between the employer and employed, in which competent men—and incompetent men, for that matter—may feel assured that they will never meet with any injustice at the hands of their employers. I am afraid they will not be always so situated—under this Government, or any other. But here we have the key to the solution of this Bill; and I will read a few extracts here that will illustrate my meaning: "This is the groundwork of the Bill: that the Civil Service is to be a three months' service."

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I hope the honourable gentleman is not quoting anything from a speech on this subject.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—It is not under discussion at the present time—but, however, I will not take up time by reading it. I may say that the view taken of this Bill by the Colonial Secretary is this: that in the view of the Government the Civil Service is to be a three months' service, with this object: that there is to be no permanency; and therefore the feeling of security to which I have alluded will not exist any longer: and that is the very feature which, above all others, in my opinion, is the most undesirable to introduce. I contend that my honourable friend has altogether failed to show the object for which he claimed to introduce this provision—that it was to insure that good men should be obtained for the Civil Service. He has not succeeded in showing in what way superior men are to be brought in through the operation of this Bill. I shall support the amendment.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—Sir, I merely rise to say that, in common with the majority of the members of this Council, I have endeavoured to approach this subject with a due desire to do justice to the Civil Service and to assist the Government in every way in their efforts to improve and reform that Service. The Civil Service Act of 1861 was supposed to give the Government full power to control the Civil Service and make classifications, and enable them to put it on a substantial footing. So far as I know, the Act has remained a dead-letter; but if any Government had chosen to give effect to it the Civil Service would now be in a perfectly satisfactory condition. I am aware that various spasmodic efforts have been made to do this, and up to this time these have altogether failed. It is not the fault of the Legislature, but it is rather the fault of the Administrators, and I believe that at the present

moment ample power exists on our Statute Book to place the Civil Service on a substantial and proper footing if the question were properly managed. When measure is brought before us as a Reform Bill, I think we ought to have it clearly shown that the measure is really for the benefit of the Service; and I think it also ought to be borne in mind that any measure which is brought forward should be of such a character as to establish a feeling of confidence on the part of the employé that, so long as he discharges his duty faithfully and well to the country, he shall have a permanency. I simply take the speeches made by my honourable friends Dr. Pollen—who has had a large experience in the Civil Service—and the Colonial Secretary, to the effect that they would not wish to see any children of theirs embrace the Civil Service as a profession in life; and I say that that is the best testimony that could be offered that the present state of the Service is unsatisfactory. We give no permanency to the Civil Service if an officer is to be liable to dismissal at three months' notice, and under that provision we shall not be able to get good men to enter the Service or remain in it, because it is well known that employment in the highest branch of the Civil Service is not as remunerative as that which can be obtained in the mercantile and banking professions by men of equal activity, energy, and intelligence; therefore we should never be able to insure having a satisfactory Service at all. What we want is to get people to join the Civil Service with something of a hope that it may be a permanency, and we ought to encourage among them an *esprit de corps*. In reference to the Bill, I think the Government have been singularly unfortunate in the proposals which they have brought forward. So far as I can understand the difficulty which exists at the present time in connection with the Civil Service, it is this: It is not so much the difficulty of appointing officers, because the power lies with the Government to make a selection out of the material offered them; but the difficulty is in the question of dismissal in the event of an officer being found incompetent for his position. But I maintain that by this Bill you increase the difficulty a hundredfold, because, if members of the Civil Service are to be appointed on the recommendation of members of the Legislature, you will never be able to dismiss an officer at all; and I think, myself, that members of Parliament should have little or nothing to do with appointments in connection with the Civil Service, and I would rather pass an Act to prohibit them from saying a word to the Government as to whom they shall appoint or whom they shall dismiss. Is it likely the Government would dismiss a cadet who had been recommended by a strong political supporter? As I have said, the difficulty would be increased a hundredfold if we allowed that sort of thing to be done, and we should then have the introduction of repeated changes with repeated Administrations, as one Government went out and another Government came in. This would lead to the adoption of the American system, and I think that would be a very inexpedient thing, and I hope this colony will for many years to come keep free from such an abuse of power. In this Bill I think the provision with reference to the superannuation fund should be amended so as to enable officers who have made arrangements with a life-insurance office to be exempt from the payment of the 5 per cent., as they would still have to keep up their premiums. I regret that I am unable to support the second reading of this Bill, for the reasons that I have endeavoured to state.

The Hon. Captain KENNY,—Sir, it is my intention to support the second reading of this Bill; but, in arriving at that conclusion, I find myself in a very peculiar position. I find I am obliged to state that there is hardly a provision in the Bill I approve of. At the same time I shall support the Bill, because I feel strongly that there is a necessity for reform in the Civil Service: not a reform of the character indicated in this Bill, which is a mere superficial attempt to meet the question at issue, but one that will go to the root of the matter. My honourable friend Mr. Bonar has just pointed out two distinct objects to be kept in view. It seems to me that we are to effect the satisfactory solution of this question only by keeping in view justice to the officers as well as economy in the public service. We talk about giving pensions and making allowances; but we forget that we must also pay highly, if we expect to get superior men in the public service. My honourable friend has pointed out that in mercantile pursuits the pay is much higher, and, consequently, they get better men. But, while it is admitted that in some of the senior officers of the public service we have men of undoubted ability and character, I am perfectly satisfied that they are not paid as much as men who are in private employment. In regard to the question of dismissal, I am persuaded that no Government would dismiss a really efficient officer. It is not to their interest to do so. It appears to me that the heads of departments ought to be intrusted with more power in the discipline of their departments, and the Ministry of the day should only look generally to the working of the public service. I am quite satisfied that, if that were done and there were less interference in the appointment and promotion of officers, there would be more confidence felt by gentlemen in the Service, and the process of picking out the best men and getting rid of those who are incompetent would be effected. With regard to the question of retirement, I may say that I wish to see the officers treated with the greatest possible consideration; and I hope that, when this Bill passes through Committee, a proviso will be inserted to prevent its having retrospective action, as officers now in the Service would suffer unjustly under its proposals. In regard to the future, I do not think that three months is sufficient notice. It appears to me that something more is required; however, that is a matter of detail. I only one more point to refer to, an

this: I am not at all clear that the provision for appointing cadets is a sound one. I see there are a good many exceptions made in regard to those branches which are of a more or less technical character. But I do not understand why there should be a hard-and-fast rule made that no one shall enter the other departments except as a cadet. I venture to say that there are men in the Civil Service who have entered in middle life, and who have shown themselves capable, not only from their intelligence and capacity, but from their experience of the world. Where will those youths who are to be cooped up in Government offices obtain their experience and knowledge of the world? I hope this subject, having been taken in hand by the Government, will in any case not be dropped, and, whether this Bill passes or not, that the question of the efficiency of the Civil Service will not be allowed to rest.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I should like to make a personal explanation, Sir. I understand that the Hon. the Colonial Secretary distinguished me as being the leader of the Opposition to the Government in this Council. In regard to that, I desire to say that I am, by temper and by association and habit, and always have been, a supporter of authority; and that I have in this Council always deprecated the formation of parties, and, both as a Minister and as a private member, have always set my face against it. Honourable members will acknowledge that I have never asked them for a vote; and the influence I exert here I exert simply as a unit in speaking from my place, and not as member of an Opposition to the Government in carrying out their measures. Wherever I can support the Government, I do so; wherever I cannot, I express my opinions without consult with any person, and they are taken exactly for what they are worth.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—If I may be allowed to explain also, I should like to say that I am merely taking the honourable gentleman's own words, which he has used on several occasions, that on him devolved the unpleasant course of having to take certain action in this Council. That is the kind of opposition I refer to. I am sensible of the assistance I have received from him in passing measures of the Government, and if I have chosen my words I used I wish to at once retract them to that extent.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I find that the part most objected to in the Bill is section [illegible]. Now, it can be argued in Committee [illegible] that the nomination should not be [illegible] of the Minister [illegible] about that at a [illegible] there has been some sort of agreement made by some honourable members as to the power to give [illegible] the Minister [illegible] for leaving the Service. But that does not apply to [illegible] Minister [illegible] subject to [illegible] existing [illegible]. As to the [illegible] to [illegible] like the [illegible] system of [illegible] whole of the officers under the Government on the election of a President, it will do no such thing. Good officers are not so easily obtained, and when they are obtained every Minister will take good care to keep them. I agree with the Hon. Dr. Pollen that we have some of the very best men in the colony in the Service; but, at the same time, there are some who are useless, who are not suitable, and who have possibly got their appointments through influence, and once they are in the Service there is little or no possibility of getting rid of them. I do not say that this is a perfect Bill. It is not entirely in harmony with my private views. In fact, I should like to see it go much further than it does. At the same time, I hold this: that it is an earnest of what we must do with regard to the Civil Service in the future. We can make the Bill better in Committee, and in time it might be brought into a more perfect state. Why should the Civil servants be placed in a different position from persons employed in banks and other institutions? Can it be said for a single moment that a board of a banking institution, having a good man, would be likely to get rid of him because they happened to know they could do so on a notice of three, six, or twelve months? No; they will do all they can to retain his services. And so it would be with the Government.

The Hon. Captain KENNY.—I would like to say I had in view, at the time I made that allusion, periods of retrenchment, when officers were dispensed with not in consequence of any fault found with them, but owing to the exigencies of the public service. I think in these cases more influence should be shown.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—But if these cadets enter the Government service with a knowledge of the terms of their engagement, the Government should not be asked to recoup them for loss of office. Of course that question can be settled in Committee—as to whether the notice is sufficient or not. There is no use in thinking the matter. The affairs of the colony are not in a position to stand the present strain. There is depression throughout the colony; and, if honourable members would just look at the falling revenue for the past few months, they would see that it is absolutely necessary that, not only in regard to the Civil Service, but everything else, the Government should study the utmost economy. A great deal has been said about security of tenure in the Civil Service. If Civil servants do their duty their tenure is secure. The Hon. Mr. Bonar said the Civil Service Act of 1866 gives the Government power to regulate and manage the Civil service. I deny that a Minister has any power except to suspend an officer, and then that officer can demand a Board of Inquiry, and that Board must consist of Civil servants. Cases have happened where Ministers have suspended, and where those suspended have demanded an inquiry. At that inquiry the Minister is bound to prove some fault on the part of the officer, and it is a very difficult thing to prove a fault. The Minister may show

that the officer is useless; but that is not a sufficient fault. If the Minister says the officer is useless or does not do his work satisfactorily, that is held to be no reason at all for getting rid of him, and in nine cases out of ten the decision is given against the Minister and in favour of the Civil servant. I trust the Bill will be read a second time, and I give this assurance: that I am quite prepared to accept any reasonable amendments when the Bill goes into Committee, and then, if it is not considered satisfactory, it can be rejected on the third reading. The Government have promised to another branch of the Legislature that a reduction of between £30,000 and £40,000 shall take place this year in the cost of the Civil Service; but that is subject to this Bill passing, or some provision by which the Government can effect that saving. It will be a very great responsibility for this Council to take if, through its action, the Government are put in such a position that they can draw back and say, "We are not able to make the promised reduction, because you have not given us the power to make a saving." It is of no use calling out for retrenchment unless both branches of the Legislature are prepared to encourage the Government and to help them to make reductions.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—How will this Bill assist the Government to effect retrenchment?

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—The Government are satisfied that it will enable them to retrench, and they have bound themselves to retrench.

The Hon. Mr. BRANDON.—I have looked carefully through this Bill and I cannot find one single clause or hint as to how the promised reduction in expenditure can take place.

The Council divided on the question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the question."

AYES, 21.

Acland	Kenny	Shephard
Baillie	Lahmann	Shrimski
Barnicoat	Menzies	Swanson
Bathgate	Peacock	Taiaroa
Brett	Peter	Walker
Buckley	Reeves	Wigley
Dignan	Reynolds	Wilson.

NOES, 13.

Bonar	Johnson, G. R.	Stevens
Brandon	Johnston, J.	Whitaker
Chamberlin	Mantell	Williams
Grace	Pollen	Williamson.
Hart		

Majority for, 8.

Bill read a second time.

FIRST OFFENDERS PROBATION BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY, in moving the second reading of the First Offenders Probation Bill, said,—It is seldom I have had the privilege of introducing in this Council a Bill with which I have more sympathy than I have in respect of this measure. The object of the Bill is to give persons who are known as first offenders a *locus pœnitentiæ*, without their going through the pain and punishment of being subjected to prison discipline, where they possibly and probably are subjected to indignities, and where they probably have to mix with people who are old offenders. The Bill is somewhat similar to one which was introduced in the House of Commons a little while ago by one of the most experienced men in connection with matters of this character. I refer to Mr. Howard Vincent, now a member of the House of Commons, and who formerly was chief of the Criminal Investigation Department. That gentleman, seeing the advantage of a measure of this kind, introduced a Bill similar to this one in the House of Commons; but, owing to the dissolution of Parliament, he was not able to take the Bill further than the first reading. The object of this measure is to give to the Court, and to the Court only, the power of saying, after trial, upon certain recommendations and certain conditions, that a first offender may be released upon obtaining sureties, or upon paying the costs of the criminal prosecution. One condition is that he shall report himself from time to time to an officer who is to be called a Probation Officer. The Bill provides for the appointment of Probation Officers, and no doubt these officers will be Chief Inspectors of Police. I need scarcely, I am sure, refer in detail to a measure of this kind. The Minister of Justice, during the recess, communicated with several countries, and received communications of a very satisfactory character as to the nature of the Bill which he introduced last session. Amongst others, he received the following:—

"In commencing a review of these records (for the past five years) we are met with the discouraging fact that 223 persons have thrown away the opportunity offered them to reform without punishment, and have been surrendered and sent to prison; and that 44 others of the same character have run away to escape punishment. If we add, to these, 107 who had done well on probation, and were discharged by Court, but who have since been convicted of some offence, we have a total of 374 persons that we may count as lost. But when we examine further, and find that this loss amounts to less than 15 per cent., and that 2,187 persons, or more than 85 per cent., so conducted themselves while on probation as to merit the approval of the Court before whom they were convicted, and have since led respectable lives, there would seem to be substantial reasons for encouragement."

This is in the State of Massachusetts, where an Act of a similar character to this is in force. I will read one or two other extracts to show how this Bill is approved of:—

"Would 'whipping at the post,' 'drawing out of town at the cart's tail,' 'exposure of a female on the elevated platform,' 'public executions on the common,' 'the exhibition of a stake driven through the body of a duellist,' or the spectacle of 'a human skeleton hung in chains on the gibbet,' have had a better influence in preventing crime, or secured a more desirable

result with those who have had the benefit of this humane law?

"The work of probation in this division during the last five years has saved to the Government in prison expenses more than $82,000 in money. But who shall estimate the value of a change from a course of vice and crime to one of rectitude and usefulness in hundreds of lives, or the value of cheerless homes made bright and happy?"

My sympathies are very much with this Bill, and, as one who has had probably as much experience as any member of this Council in the defence of criminals, I say I know nothing which commends itself more to my mind than the passing of a Bill of this kind. I remember a case where a person, owing to drink, committed an offence, and was convicted of it. I remember conversing with him subsequently, and he assured me that it was not till three weeks after he was convicted that he knew what he was imprisoned for. If he had not been a strong-minded man probably he would have been led into crime by association with criminals. We have not in this colony at the present time any classification of criminals in order to remove first offenders from old offenders. I am sure that in passing this measure we shall be tempering with mercy our criminal law. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—I entirely approve of the object of this Bill; but, at the same time, although the intention is good, I think the Bill is drafted in an unsatisfactory manner. The Bill as it stands I do not think will effect the object desired. The Bill requires amendment. I think that the provision with regard to police supervision during probation will totally defeat any benefit which can be obtained under the Bill. I should like to see the Bill amended in this way: that it should be in the power of the presiding Judge, if the offence is a comparatively venial one, to order recognizances to be entered into, or make such conditions as he may think proper. I may mention one case which has come under my notice. A young woman, of full age I believe, went to a draper's shop and induced some bystander to go in and obtain goods valued, I think, at under £1. She was ultimately convicted of the offence of obtaining goods under false pretences. Her parents were exceedingly respectable, and when the prisoner was called on for sentence his Honour said, "I cannot discharge this young girl, who has committed a very serious offence, for that would give great encouragement to crime; there must be some substantial punishment for it." The learned Judge ordered her parents to enter into recognizances for her to appear in twelve months' time; in the interval she was to take a situation in some respectable family, and if her conduct there was good she was to be restored to her parents. That, I think, in all probability was the best course to take. Under this Bill that could not have been done. Under it there is to be police supervision, which I think will totally defeat the objects of the measure, because no person under police supervision can, practically, take any respectable employment. This Bill is drawn, I believe, on the lines of the measure introduced in the House of Commons by Mr. Howard Vincent. That gentleman was for a long time in charge of the Detective Department at Home. Honourable members of this Council are well aware what the police are. They look on the human race as being under their control, and on a certain number who have been convicted as under their immediate control. The rest have not yet been found out, but they hope to find them out some day. The fault I find with this measure is that it is equivalent to the old system of ticket-of-leave; but there is this difference: that those who had tickets-of-leave were generally persons who had been previously convicted more than once. I am not sure that it would not be almost better that first offenders should be in custody for a short time than be released and be under police supervision. If the Bill passes the second reading, I will, to-morrow, bring down a clause such as I have indicated.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I am very glad indeed to give this Bill my cordial support. I have had considerable experience, as a Visiting Justice to one of our gaols, as to the difficulty of keeping first offenders from old criminals. This measure will, I think, save a great many first offenders from continuing in a course of crime. I do not agree with the Hon. Mr. Wilson's suggestion as to the probability of it being better that first offenders should be imprisoned for a short time than be subjected to police supervision. This is a tentative measure, and I think we ought to have first offenders under very close supervision. There would be the difficulty also of separating first offenders from old crimnals; because in this colony we have no system of classification. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

The Hon. Captain FRASER.—One of my objections to this Bill would be that it proposes to create a new department.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—No.

The Hon. Captain FRASER.—If that is not the case I have no objection to the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

The Council adjourned at five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Monday, 26th July, 1886.

First Reading — Third Reading — Otago Harbour Bridge Bill—New Plymouth Harbour Loan Bill —New Zealand Loan Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Companies' Branch Registers Bill.

THIRD READING.

Port Chalmers Fire Brigade Site Bill.

OTAGO HARBOUR BRIDGE BILL.

Mr. BARRON said he desired to make a personal explanation. When the Otago Harbour Bridge Bill was being considered in Committee he endeavoured to have a clause inserted under which it would have been necessary that the plans of the proposed bridge should receive the consent of the Borough Council of Caversham. That clause was opposed by the Premier on the ground that the Borough of Caversham had none of the foreshore within its boundaries. On the third reading of the Bill he explained that he had sent to the Survey Office in order to get information for the purpose of showing whether the Premier's statement or his own was the more accurate; but no reply was received before the Bill had passed its third reading. He was, however, now in the possession of an authorized map and information which showed that, upon petition, the boundaries of the borough had been extended, and a *Gazette* notice had been published on the 13th of December, 1877, including twenty acres of the foreshore within it. He desired to put this on record, because he intended to endeavour to have the desired amendment made in the Bill in another place. The Premier must have fallen into an error, and evidently had not noticed the second *Gazette* notice proclaiming the extension of the boundaries of the borough. As the borough was orginally constituted it did not include any of the foreshore of the bay.

Sir R. STOUT was understood to say that the extension of the borough had escaped his notice, for he was certain that the position was as he had stated in the original constitution of the borough. The honourable member, however, was in error in saying that he had opposed the introduction of the clause because the borough had none of the foreshore. His objection was that none of these boroughs had any interest in the matter, and that therefore they should not claim the right to be consulted.

NEW PLYMOUTH HARBOUR LOAN BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. SAMUEL said he wished, before the honourable gentleman who was speaking when the debate was adjourned resumed his speech, to ask the indulgence of the House to make a personal explanation. That honourable gentleman had asked what were his intentions with regard to this Bill. He might say, with regard to the amendment which had been tabled by the Chairman of the Local Bills Committee, embodying the recommendations of that Committee, he proposed to adopt the whole of them, and also to accept the proposed amendment of the honourable member for Taranaki, and take the votes of the whole of the districts on the same day. He scarcely ventured to hope that this might possibly conciliate the honourable member and those who were acting with him, and prevent them from obstructing further.

Colonel TRIMBLE wished to know whether the honourable gentleman would adopt the whole of the amendments as proposed upon the Order Paper—that was, including the amendment of the honourable member for Oamaru, enlarging the rating-area, and the amendment of the Premier with regard to Crown and Native lands. These were the things he wanted to know.

Mr. SAMUEL said he was prepared to accept the amendment of the Premier; but to accept the amendment of the honourable member for Oamaru would be to oppose the amendments of the Local Bills Committee.

Colonel TRIMBLE said the honourable gentleman was speaking to his constituents and the honourable member for Egmont, and not to the House, in the explanation he had made. On a former occasion he had objected to the honourable gentleman describing two of his (Colonel Trimble's) constituents as land-sharks—as persons who had a large amount of land—and saying he hoped that the taxation for this harbour and other purposes would have such an application with regard to those gentlemen as that their estates would be cut up, and that he hoped they would lose by the transaction. Upon that occasion he informed the honourable gentleman that he thought it was a pity, when he was denouncing big estates, and denouncing the profits that would be made upon them, that he did not say anything when he had an opportunity with reference to the profits of lending money. He wished to correct a mistake he made on that occasion. He then said that the interest and other charges amounted to 17 per cent. He now found that it was only 14 per cent. He maintained that, if dealing in land, which at present yielded 3 or 5 per cent., was to be denounced, then the honourable gentleman ought to have taken the earliest opportunity of denouncing the making of money at 14 per cent. when his own constituents were concerned. On the last occasion he spoke he referred to an article which appeared in a Marlborough paper in reference to the mode of getting up news and support for certain cases, and he thought he was able to apply the article therein to one which had appeared in the *West Coast Times*, which was clearly written by an occupant of a certain bench in the House. He had just seen another article in that trashy little paper—the *West Coast Times*—of the 16th July. He believed the article was clearly traceable to a member or members of the House. It said,—

"Colonel Trimble, the member for Taranaki, who is noted for opposing every progressive measure, then addressed the House, and it quickly became evident, from his deliberate style and wearisome reiteration, that he desired to impede business. He moved that the Bill be read a second time that day six months. His arguments were of the usual stock class to those short-sighted politicians who oppose progress in every form, and, being conscious of their own incapacity, hug the fond belief that others are as incapable as themselves."

He appealed to honourable members whether every statement in that extract was not absolutely the reverse of truth. Ever since 1879, when he first entered the House, he had vot

every measure of progress, and against every reactionary measure. He challenged any one to produce an instance to the contrary. He would go even further, and say that for the past forty or more years he had been in favour of, and had advocated, every measure of reform proposed either at Home or here; and, even beyond that, he could say what perhaps few could, that his father and grandfather had been animated by the same desires, and had acted accordingly. As to the statement that his manner of speaking was deliberate and marked by reiteration, he would say that there were not two sentences from beginning to end of what he had said that did not bear on the subject. He always had been, and always would be, most careful never to reiterate; and that afternoon he intended to bring in new matter, and not to reiterate what he had formerly said on the subject. And, so far from his having any desire to impede business, he did not believe that there was any honourable member, except the honourable members for Clutha and Picton, who sat in the House so persistently to press on the business as he did himself. The statement as to his using the usual arguments of short-sighted politicians, and so forth, was a very grand one, and was like the writer as a speaker: very grand altogether. His (Colonel Trimble's) arguments were not of the stock class, because they were details of facts and figures adduced in proof of his contention that with the full rating allowed by law there must by-and-by be a deficiency in the Board's income to meet expenditure. That he had proved beyond all doubt. He was sorry the honourable member for Hokitika had run away out of the House when reference was being made to an article in which that honourable gentleman was probably greatly interested. He wished the writer of that article were in his (Colonel Trimble's) place, trying to accomplish the task which, unfortunately, he had to undertake, and in which he was doing his best, and in which he was fully conscious of his own incapacity. As to the charge of deliberateness, no doubt the honourable member for Hokitika would flow on for any length of time like a torrent—in fact, like a barrel of beer, which, when once the tap was turned, would run till it was turned off again; and, no doubt, if the honourable gentleman were in his place he would flow on till it was time to turn off the flow. The article he had referred to then attacked the honourable member for Motueka, and accused him of stonewalling. He was exceedingly sorry that in various quarters—in the district of the *West Coast Times*, in Taranaki, and even in the district of Lyttelton—the honourable member for Motueka had been accused of being a stonewaller. He (Colonel Trimble) had never but once given that honourable gentleman the credit of being a stonewaller, and that was in 1881, when the Representation Bill was before the House, and when the honourable gentleman delivered a lecture on the timbers of the colony that did not seem to have anything to do with the subject of the representation of the people. But in speaking on this Bill he had not used one sentence that was not perfectly *à propos*; and, to show that he had not stonewalled, he had left off an hour or so before the debate was adjourned, when he might have gone on with the utmost ease the whole time. The honourable member had spoken nothing but strong sterling common-sense on really one of the largest subjects ever brought before the House, and it was most ungenerous that a wretched little paper should accuse him of having stonewalled. He was sorry the honourable member in charge of the Bill had run away, because he was now going to refer to a part of the article which dealt with the "unwearied exertions" of that honourable gentleman in "disclosing the merits" of the Bill. Where had been his unwearied exertions, and what had been the merits he had disclosed in those unwearied exertions? The unwearied exertions had not been made nor the merits of the Bill disclosed either in the House or before the Local Bills Committee, and therefore they must have been in the lobby, and that was how the writer of the article—probably a member of the House—must have known of the "unwearied exertions." But shortly afterwards the writer found fault with lobbying, and therefore he had given the honourable member in charge of the Bill the greatest "slap in the face" possible from his own point of view. The writer went on to say that the honourable member would have carried the second reading of the Bill by an overwhelming majority but for the exertions of persons from Waitara. The writer therefore argued that attempts at lobbying were not injudicious in themselves, but were only so when they were unsuccessful. That was the high standard of morality which the House was to accept from that wretchedly obscure journal the *West Coast Times*. It was very curious that this journal used almost exactly the same language as the local journal; and the question arose whether it was not a case of "You scratch me, and I will scratch you," in regard to the arrangement which had been come to with respect to this Bill. He would now turn to another paper which had been sent to him by he knew not whom—the *Poverty Bay Herald* of the 12th July—which contained an article headed "Harbour Warning." It remarked that the experience of the Taranaki people with regard to their harbour works ought to be a warning to the people of Gisborne. The Taranaki people had first borrowed £200,000 for harbour works, and, besides that, they got 25 per cent. of the Land Fund from the district. That revenue, which had been very large, had now dwindled down to nothing. That was a mistake on the part of the writer, because the land revenue had not dwindled down to nothing, although it was now so small that it was not sufficient to pay one-third of the interest on the first loan. It was estimated at £4,050 for the present year, and in a year or two it would be considerably less, because the deferred-payment people had paid up their dues, and therefore the revenue from that source would decrease. In three or

Colonel Trimble

four years it would not be over £3,000, and that was not more than one-fifth of what was necessary to pay the interest on the old loan. After saying that a great part of the money had been fooled away in useless plant and other bungles, the writer went on to say that part of a breakwater had been built at which coasting steamers could call in certain states of the weather, but that practically all the stock was shipped at Waitara for Auckland; that ships of six hundred tons could enter that river, and that soon the whole district would be in ready communication by railway with Wellington; that the people of New Plymouth still wished to spend money on the breakwater, but, notwithstanding all the urgency of the case and the *furore* of those people, no good case had been made out for an increase of expenditure. Then the paper said that, as the rating district was now proposed, the decision for further borrowing would rest with the people of New Plymouth, and, of course, they were aghast at the stoppage of the expenditure to which they were accustomed, and were trying to persuade Parliament that they only wanted so many thousands more to make the whole thing perfect. As he had already pointed out, this was simply the spendthrift's argument—"I have spent £1; I will spend another pound to make the first productive." Then the writer said that Colonel Trimble, who represented some of those who were so strongly opposed to this expenditure, had made out a crushing and overwhelming case, to which there was no reply. After that came a warning which he would give to the Premier: "The House, imbued with a general feeling to borrow and let borrow as much as possible, shutting its eyes to everything else, does not take much notice of adverse arguments, even when unanswerable." He would illustrate this by what had occurred in the House. The day after he delivered his speech against the Bill he met a gentleman who was opposed to him in politics, and also in regard to this Bill. This honourable gentleman said, "You made a crushing speech — there is not a leg left for your opponents to stand upon; but I am sorry to say you have not altered the voting on the Bill." That honourable gentleman, like others, had promised to vote for the Bill before he had heard the arguments with regard to it. The paper from which he was quoting also said that he made "a crushing speech," to which no reply was attempted; and it went on to point out that in all probability there would be a deficiency in the amount required for the payment of interest at no distant time. Had the evidence given before the Local Bills Committee been recorded, and had the writer seen a copy of it, he would have seen that when before the Local Bills Committee the Chairman of the Board had stated distinctly that there would be a deficiency, both in regard to the £200,000 loan and the £60,000 loan, and that within about three years it would be necessary to impose a tax on the settlers. Then the writer went on to point out that if this deficiency occurred the colony must become responsible; and on the second reading of the Bill he (Colonel Trimble) had pointed out the same thing — that sooner or later all these unsound harbour schemes would come upon the Government of the country, and that therefore any Government which allowed these Bills to pass was responsible for what might affect the credit of the colony. Then, there was a reference to the state of affairs in Oamaru; and with regard to Oamaru he should like to point out that the House ought to consider the peculiar position of that town. All went on swimmingly there while the town continued to borrow money for harbour- and water-works, and all other sorts of improvements; but what was the position now? That the people were so overtaxed that they were going into the country to live, and were carrying on their business outside the town; and now an effort was being made to see whether the boundaries of the borough could not be extended so as to include those who had actually fled from the borough owing to the taxation which had been heaped upon them. That should be a serious warning to the House; for, if that had occurred in the rich district of Oamaru, what might be expected to happen in a poor district like Taranaki? Then, in Timaru they were beginning to feel the burden, though they had only borrowed £200,000, and there was a rateable value of nearly £7,000,000, whereas here in the case of Taranaki it was only £1,100,000 within the proposed rating-area. Then he came to another somewhat personal matter; and he was justified in referring to it because it had been alluded to in the speech of the honourable member for New Plymouth. The honourable gentleman, it would be remembered, spoke very disparagingly of two constituents in his (Colonel Trimble's) district—Messrs. J. Elliot and T. Bayly. The honourable gentleman spoke very hardly of them; and the House would recognize that he was placed in a rather peculiar position, owing to his relationships with them, when he had to defend them. The position was this: When he went Home after the short session of 1884 he visited New Plymouth the day after arrival at his home, and in response to a request he agreed to attend a meeting about election matters the same afternoon. He went to the County Council office, and, on arriving there, he, to his great surprise, found there the honourable member for New Plymouth and the two gentlemen now referred to so disparagingly by the honourable gentleman. The three, with another gentleman, were there, as he found, as a deputation from a meeting which had been held the night before, and they placed before him what was afterwards known in Taranaki as the "political catechism." They went over a number of opinions he had spoken to in the House, and wanted to be informed whether he intended to stick to them, saying that if he intended to adhere to them he certainly would not be re-elected, and that a one would be brought forward to oppose. The honourable member for New Ply asked him not to be in a hurry, but

time to consider before he replied. His answer was that he did not care to take time: he had held certain opinions for forty years, and some of them for fifty years, and was not going to turn his back upon them for the sake of the Taranaki seat. If his opinions suited Taranaki he would represent that constituency, and, if they did not, the constituency might elect some other representative. Now, would the House believe that the honourable gentleman who instituted all this—the god outside the machine, and who afterwards came inside it to work it properly—was the honourable member for New Plymouth, who had determined that one of the two gentlemen whom he had since denounced should be the opposing candidate! One of the gentlemen referred to did become his opponent, and an honourable opponent. Those gentlemen had been denounced in strong terms by the honourable member for New Plymouth, who had also got the proprietor, or editor, or correspondent of the *West Coast Times* to denounce them. The House would therefore see that that honourable gentleman, to serve the purpose of a moment, was not very particular, not so particular as one occupying his very honourable position ought to be. Then came the question of the rating-area. In the *Taranaki Herald* of the 15th June there appeared a telegram from Major Atkinson, "*Re* harbour: Finally decided not to include Hawera or Waimate. No need of petition or deputation." The rating-area of this Bill, and the Bill itself, were not adopted until he (Colonel Trimble) had left the district; and for postponing the consideration of these matters there was, he believed, no reason but this one: that they knew that if he had been in the district he would have raised a row about it. He heard that after he had left town a meeting of the Harbour Board was held, at which the honourable member for Egmont was present, and the Board and the honourable member for Egmont differed very considerably with regard to the rating-area. The Board wanted not only to have the whole of the old rating-area, but also to include the Borough of Hawera and the Riding of Hawera. The honourable member for Egmont, on the other hand, wanted not only that the borough and riding of Hawera should not be included, but that the Waimate Riding also, and a portion of the country round Opunake, should be excluded. They differed about this, and it appeared from after-events that they did not agree at that meeting which was the most prudent thing to do. The people belonging to the Board naturally wished to find as broad a back for the burden as possible, and the honourable member for Egmont, on the other hand, wished, as far as possible, to throw the burden off the shoulders of his own constituents upon the shoulders of his (Colonel Trimble's) constituents—that was the beauty of it. That took place in the middle of May, and it was not settled until the middle of June, when the honourable member for Egmont sent the telegram he had read. The people of New Plymouth wanted the spending of the money, but did not want to pay the interest upon it, but to leave the constituents of the honourable member for Egmont and his constituents to pay the money. And then there was the comment of the sapient journal the *Herald*, of the 15th of June—namely, "We do not know what is the meaning of the last telegram, but we scarcely think the House will permit a district which derives so much benefit from the harbour to escape from the liability." The House would now see how it was that the honourable member for New Plymouth could not get out of the compact with the honourable member for Egmont, and did not want to get out of it; for, if the larger area were included, he knew perfectly well that the larger area would vote down the new loan, and that, in addition to that, he would have the hostility of the honourable member for Egmont to encounter. He wished to show the natural modesty of these gentlemen in making the arrangements. In his evidence the honourable member for New Plymouth anticipated the question which must naturally have occurred to every one, as to why he (Colonel Trimble) was not included in the conference, and said that the reason he was not asked was that they did not consider it expedient for them to introduce a discordant element; but the thing had been carefully gone into, and so on. That was admirable modesty, and a most convenient principle. If they had a dispute with a man about what he owed them it would be well not to introduce "a discordant element," but to settle it themselves. He would show the interest this "discordant element" had in the matter. He would not use a word he felt inclined to use regarding it, for that would be deemed unparliamentary, but he would show the honourable members present what were the facts, and leave them to characterize such conduct in their own way. He would read two or three figures in reference to it. The rating-area, so far as private lands were concerned, as to valuation, was, in round figures, £1,200,000. Taking the valuation of the district at that amount, and excluding the Crown and Native lands from the area—which was rather against him—the whole interest of the constituents of the honourable member for Egmont would be £305,000; of the the honourable member for New Plymouth, £317,000; and of his own constituents, £547,000; so that his interest in the matter just about equalled the interests of the other two put together; and yet, because he was a discordant element, he was not asked to the conference to say what should or should not be rated. He need hardly say that the result of the discordant element being away was that these gentlemen made a comfortable arrangement amongst themselves that a large portion of the rating-area in the constituency of the honourable member for Egmont should be cut out in order to secure the support of that honourable gentleman. That was clearly stated by the Chairman of the New Plymouth Harbour Board in his evidence. He would read to the House some of the evidence taken by the Committee. He would first take

the evidence of the honourable member for New Plymouth. He said, "I do not know that it is necessary to deal with the objections to the clauses of the Bill raised by Colonel Trimble." He might explain that the honourable member for New Plymouth was the last of the witnesses, and had a decided advantage in knowing what had been said by all those opposing and supporting the Bill. He (Colonel Trimble) was called first. He did not blame the Committee, because he supposed that was the practice; but it occurred to him that the onus of proof lay on those who were the promoters of the Bill, and not on the opponents. He had raised objections to the clauses of the Bill, and particularly the 4th clause, which said,—

"The Board may repay out of any such loan any overdraft or liabilities existing at the time of the raising thereof, and, during the construction of the works for which the loan is raised, may pay out of such loan the interest thereon."

That would explain an article which had appeared in the Taranaki *Herald*. It was a very impudent statement. After having stated falsehoods on the subject for a long time past, they now told their readers that a tax must be imposed almost immediately, and they said that he (Colonel Trimble) was the cause of it. How could he be the cause of it? They put it in this way: If they got a loan of £60,000 they would not have to pay any interest out of rates; but if they did not get a loan they would have to raise a rate to pay interest on the money borrowed. That meant that under this 4th clause, by some juggling, some hocus-pocus, known to the very ingenious gentlemen on the Harbour Board, they would pay out of loan not only the interest on that loan, but also on the old loan. That was to say, as long as there was money in the purse, no matter what it was got for, they would be able to pay interest on the old loan as well as on the new one. It was quite evident that the Board would pay interest out of the new loan, out of the balance in hand, or out of the Land Fund, as long as it was possible to put off rating. He (Colonel Trimble) had objected before the Committee to that part of the Bill which said that meetings to be held to sanction the new loan might be held on different days. If he had understood the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill aright, he had expressed himself as willing to alter that. The honourable gentleman should have carried out that by framing an amendment and putting it on the Supplementary Order Paper. Had he some other arrangement by which it was thought to secure votes in favour of the loan? He (Colonel Trimble) objected, of course, very strongly to the schedule, and also to the absence of any provision for preventing duplication of votes: that was to say, each voter should vote only in the place in which he resided. The honourable member for New Plymouth had urged that this Bill as it stood should be passed, because its rating provisions were the same as those in previous Bills of the same class; but he (Colonel Trimble) had objected to all the previous Bills on that account—to those of Gisborne, Napier, Timaru, Oamaru, and Wanganui. He had protested against the phraseology of every one of those Bills on that account. He had voted against the phraseology and had objected to the principle throughout. But the question for the honourable member for New Plymouth was not whether he (Colonel Trimble) objected to the phraseology, but whether he was right or not. The honourable gentleman had never addressed himself to that at all. He was a mighty man, and had the weight of the whole of New Plymouth on his shoulders, and he seemed to have no regard for the little men. Had not the honourable gentleman ever heard, "The more you're strong, be marciful, O woman o' three cows!" Because she had three she looked down on those who had only one. The honourable gentleman was a big man who represented four thousand people, while he (Colonel Trimble) was a little fellow who represented only five thousand four hundred. The honourable gentleman was so big that it was a mercy he let a smaller man live at all. He (Colonel Trimble) had opposed the rating clause in the Timaru Bill the previous year, but without effect, and therefore the honourable gentleman's saying the present Bill was the same as that was no answer to his objection. He hoped, however, on this occasion to be more successful, and that, if the Bill got into Committee, it would be much modified, and made a Bill they could all be proud of. The honourable gentleman condemned before the Committee the giving of power to absentees in regard to voting for the loan; but this Bill as it stood gave very large power indeed to absentees. It was in this way: Every man in New Plymouth who owned a quarter-acre section in either of the small bush townships—many of them on paper only—would be able to exercise a vote on account of that section. There were several large towns without people in Taranaki, and all the owners of those towns would have votes, and the owners lived mostly in New Plymouth. Therefore the Bill did the very thing which the honourable gentleman said was an evil; and still he did not propose to alter it. No doubt, if the Bill went into Committee, the House would alter it so as to make it more just to all parties, and not give undue powers to absentees. Would the honourable gentleman consent to an amendment in this direction, providing that only residents within any part of the district should vote in that part?

Mr. SAMUEL.—Will you sit down if I do?

Colonel TRIMBLE wanted to know. It was most demoralizing to make bargains in the House, and he would never make a bargain with the honourable gentleman about the Bill. The honourable gentleman had made an arrangement with the honourable member for Egmont which would be very detrimental to the interests of Taranaki, and he was not goin to follow a bad example. Let the honourc member put on the Supplementary Order P

the amendments he proposed to make in Committee, and let him say among other things who were to be the voters—whether they were to be residents within the districts voting within those districts, or bogus voters voting in half a dozen districts. As a rule the farms in Taranaki were very small, but, still, they were all that the farmers possessed; but the townspeople with these bogus votes had no interest in the country except that they lived on the commission on the trade which passed through their hands from the country people whose property they now wanted to vote away. In his so-called evidence the honourable member said that the Timaru Act was very carefully gone into, and on its lines this Bill was founded: but that was all the worse for this Bill, because the Timaru Act was the worst that was ever passed except this one. The Timaru Act was moderate as compared with this, because in Timaru they borrowed £200,000 on a rateable value of nearly seven million pounds, whereas here it was proposed to borrow £260,000 on a a rateable value of a million and a quarter pounds. With regard to the boundaries of the rating-area he would point out that the honourable member said that these were arranged at a conference between himself, the Minister of Lands, and the honourable member for Egmont, and that the portion beyond the watershed of the river was rightly excluded. But why had it ever been included? Simply from greed. The eastward boundary of the provincial district was originally the boundary of the rating-district; but when those who were interested in the harbour found that the small portion beyond it had become valuable they stretched out their hands over that also, so that actually a portion of land outside the Taranaki District was absolutely included in the schedule of the Bill—land that could never in any way be connected with the harbour of New Plymouth. It was pure greed and land-grabbing that got this included in the Bill. He presumed that, at this privileged conference, the Minister of Lands saw at once that this would not do, and that he could not consent to the honourable gentleman going beyond the Province of Taranaki, and taking land which the Government was trying to buy, and which would be sold afterwards, and therefore taxable. And now the honourable gentleman came to the House and said that, as a matter of grace, he would exclude that portion of the land and accept the area as laid down by the Committee. Why did the honourable gentleman do that? Simply because he knew that he could not get what he wanted. So that the House might say, "Thank you for nothing." Did the honourable gentleman, as law adviser to the Board, draft the Bill?

Mr. SAMUEL.—I did not do so in the capacity of law adviser to the Board.

Colonel TRIMBLE presumed the Board would consult its law adviser. Did the honourable gentleman draft the Bill?

Mr. SAMUEL.—I drafted it.

Colonel TRIMBLE presumed the honourable gentleman, then, drafted the schedule.

Mr. SAMUEL said the honourable gentleman was ignorant of the duty of a lawyer in this respect. It was not the duty of a lawyer to draft such a schedule to a Bill.

Colonel TRIMBLE could only suppose, then, that the most important part of the Bill had been left to a clerk to draft. At all events, the honourable gentleman was quite conscious that the Board wanted to grab the land between the Provincial District of Taranaki and the railway. The fact was, that the honourable gentleman had taken a great interest in the Bill, and in the harbour, and in everything connected with it, or he would not have been a member of the House for New Plymouth. Therefore there was not a thing connected with the Bill that the honourable gentleman had not advised or agreed to; and yet, when he went before the Committee, having been found out, he had to acknowledge that the Committee was right, and that the Board must be put right as to the boundaries; but he would never have said a word about it if the Committee had not found it out. He did not blame the honourable gentleman, who had worked hard in the interest of his constituents, or, rather, what he supposed to be the interest of his constituents—because what he proposed to do would impoverish his (Colonel Trimble's) constituents, and would eventually impoverish the townspeople of New Plymouth. The honourable gentleman had not taken that into consideration; he was too anxious for the game of the moment, and forgot the ulterior object of the game; and he would never be a good politician until he found that out. With regard to including the land north of Waitara and excluding that about Hawera, the honourable gentleman said,—

"With regard to including the land about Waitara and excluding that about Hawera, in my view Waitara town and port is the port for cattle and sheep for Hawera; but I agree entirely with Major Atkinson that it is not the port for the land round it."

He asked the House to pay special attention to that point: Waitara was the port for Hawera, which was forty-five miles away; but it was not the port for the cattle coming from north of Waitara, which was close to it. The people who resided to the north of Waitara were to drive their cattle past Waitara to New Plymouth, twelve miles from Waitara; while the people who lived at Hawera, forty-five miles away, were to send their cattle to Waitara, and not to New Plymouth. The thing was absurd. The fact was, Waitara was the natural port for the country of Clifton, which mainly lay to the north of Waitara. The honourable gentleman knew nothing of business. He had confined himself to musty old tomes, and knew nothing of business. If he had served as long an apprenticeship to business as he (Colonel Trimble) had, he would know a little more about business, and be aware that people would not drive their cattle twelve miles more than was necessary before shipping them; but the honourable gentleman knew nothing of business.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I hope the honourable gentleman has been as successful in business as I have been.

Colonel TRIMBLE said he had been successful and unsuccessful, and perhaps when the honourable gentleman was within fifteen days of sixty-two years of age he might not have been any more successful. Then, the honourable gentleman said, with regard to the butter trade, "The butter and other produce does not go through Waitara, and is not likely to in the future." He (Colonel Trimble) had pointed out the other day that at least one-third of the whole of the butter trade went by way of Waitara, and he would call the attention of the House to the fact that butter, being an article of small bulk, could never form a very large item of freight. The whole of the butter export of the colony last year did not exceed a thousand tons, and would not produce a revenue, so far as harbour dues were concerned, of more than £100. As to taxation, the honourable member said, "With regard to the increase of taxation I agree with Major Atkinson." It was a pity that the honourable gentleman would not give his own evidence instead of resting on Major Atkinson. He always had to rely on some one else. When he wanted taxes he imposed them on the country districts, and when he wanted arguments he had recourse to Major Atkinson.

Mr. KERR.—Major Atkinson is the man who is doing all the injury.

Colonel TRIMBLE said he objected to those constant references to Major Atkinson as a shelter for the honourable gentleman. Then, he said, "In order to relieve us of our taxation it is necessary to increase the value of property." That was a good saying. They must relieve the taxation by increasing the value of the property! And how was it done? By robbing the country settlers—by putting them in such a position that they could not increase the value of their property. They were taxed so effectually under this Bill that the value of their property could not be increased. The honourable gentleman had said that he had come to that House to learn; and it certainly was time now that he did learn something. He should read the classics of political economy. If he did not learn now, he would not learn during his life. It was also said by the honourable gentleman, in his evidence, "The proposed expenditure will greatly relieve the taxpayers." That was an extraordinary thing. How would it relieve them? It would relieve their pockets. That was a sort of relief that the taxpayers of Taranaki did not want. "Having got rid of the Native troubles, the value of property must increase." Having got rid of the Native troubles, which had prevented them selling their land, and having begun to feel that they were getting up in the world a little, the honourable gentleman came with his Bill and gave them a push down. It reminded him very much of Buddha's hell. The description of this was that there was a sea of molten metals, terribly hot, and into this the soul was popped and went down to the bottom, shrieking "Gug, gug, gug;" then it rose to the top, still shrieking "Gug, gug, gug," and as soon as it did so Providence, in a paternal kind of way, hit it on the head and sent it down again; and so it went on, taking a thousand years to go down and a thousand years to come up. That was the way with Taranaki. They had first their Native difficulty to send them down, and no sooner did they get rid of that than they found the tax-gatherer, in the shape of a Harbour Board, in a paternal way, about to hit them, so that down they must go again. It was said that he (Colonel Trimble) would have been a discordant element in the conference——

Mr. SAMUEL.—You would have stonewalled the conference.

Colonel TRIMBLE said the Harbour Board could not say he had stonewalled them since 1877. The land in the whole of the district, excluding Crown and Native land, was valued at about a million and a quarter. Of that valuation, taking the area as it appeared in the Bill, the honourable member for Egmont represented about £305,000; the honourable member for New Plymouth, £317,000; he himself, £547,000: that was to say, in round figures, his constituents had as much interest as the other two together. But they did not want the discordant element represented at the conference, because the fewer interests were represented the more free they could be to tax other people. Had he been there he would naturally have said that his word ought to be taken as worth something, because he represented as much as the other two together; and yet he was left out in that manner. If the Crown lands and Native lands were added in each case, the comparison would be even more in his favour, and therefore there was no excuse for this, except the determination to put the thing there at all costs, without the slightest reference to objectors; and they had been encouraged to do this because he had been patient for nine years. In 1877 a Bill was introduced which had been frequently referred to in the debate, and he and Mr. Thomas Bayly then came up at the request of the great bulk of the farmers of the district to represent them, and they did so come up at their own charges. The three members for the district never told them that the Bill would go before a Committee, but they were kept in the dark concerning the proceedings of the House. They got promises from the members that the thing would be fairly discussed: but it was not discussed at all. In the House not a word was said about it, excepting a question put by Mr. Swanson, asking whether the Ministers had not something to say about it. From the time that Bill was passed he had not, by one word, spoken or written, or by any act of his, interfered in any way whatever with the working of the Act to the best advantage. He might have got upon the Board—they would only have been too glad to have got him upon it—or he might have got his friends upon it; but he had said that those who were opposed to the Board getting the harbour ought not to be on the Board; he had objected to the discordant element being introduced into

Board, and he had said to his friends, "Do not put anybody upon the Board for this district, or any other who is not in favour of the harbour, now they have got the Bill." For nine years they had traded upon his patience; and now, when the time came to consider the whole question, because he had been patient they considered that he had no courage. The honourable gentlemen knew that perfectly well, but if they thought to ride rough-shod over him they would find themselves mistaken upon this occasion. They would perhaps find out that it would have been wiser to have consulted the opponents of the Bill—wiser to have introduced the discordant element into the conference and fairly to have met it, particularly as that discordant element was the most powerful of the lot; and, though its voice was not heard now as it ought to be, it did not follow that the time would not come when it would be heard. The honourable member's evidence then proceeded thus:—

"The Minister of Lands has, in company with the Surveyor-General, gone through it and indicated the lands, and drafted the schedule with, I believe, his own hands; but I am not prepared to offer any objection to the details being altered in this direction."

Of course the honourable gentleman could not offer any objection or he would have done so. The whole object of himself and his clients was to prevent objections, and therefore it was that he cut off a particular district that was likely to prove obstreperous; and they would have cut off his (Colonel Trimble's) district also, only to have done so would have been to have cut off the body of the animal and to have simply left the tail. They could not afford to do that, and so they let the Minister of Lands and the honourable member for Egmont take what they wanted, and they had still the *corpus* of the animal left. It was said that "to exclude lands round Waitara, within ten or twelve miles from New Plymouth, Waitara being only fit to be used for the export of cattle and sheep, was unreasonable." Upon this point he had the evidence of Mr. Watt, a sailor and an expert, and it would completely demolish the evidence given with regard to Waitara being a port fit for nothing but the export of cattle and sheep. He ventured to think that the House would believe Mr. Watt, who was a gentleman well known and respected as a man of great intelligence in his own profession.

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

NEW ZEALAND LOAN BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Sir, the question before us is one of such great importance to the country that I desire to express my opinions on the subject before the matter is decided upon. The debate that has taken place on this Bill to borrow a million and a half for public works has, in my opinion, taken the shape of a no-confidence debate, without a motion to give effect to it. It is not my intention to quarrel with that, but to say something with regard to the statements that have been made by various honourable members while speaking on this debate. I have come to the conclusion, after listening to all the speeches made by members on the other side of the House, that their opposition to the measure is simply due to the fact that they are not on the Government benches. I believe if they were on those benches they would propose exactly the same policy. It appears to me their only grievance against the Government is that the Government did not come down to the House with a proposal to borrow ten millions of money. They thought, no doubt, when they saw it reported in the Press of the colony that it was the intention of the Government to come down with a ten-million scheme of public works, that their time had come; and I can almost fancy the honourable member for Egmont declaring that his opportunity had again arrived, and that he was now certain of another term of office. The honourable member was perfectly well aware, like other honourable members, that if any such policy were to be proposed to this House and to the country it would not be supported by either; and that once more he would have an opportunity of coming across to this side of the House and, with his friends, declaring themselves once more "the saviours of the country." But during this debate I have heard from that side of the House that the Government has stolen the policy of the Opposition. I should like to know what claim they have to the policy of the Government, or what right they have to say it is their policy. Do they imagine there are no members on this side of the House with sufficient intelligence to know the requirements of the country just as well as they know them? If the Government come down with a policy that gives satisfaction to honourable members and to the country, and which will be for the benefit of the colony, I should like to know what right the Opposition have to say it is their policy. Surely they recognize the fact that there are on the Treasury benches and on other benches on this side of the House honourable members who have just as much interest in the colony, and who have its welfare and prosperity just as much at heart, as the honourable members opposite have. If honourable members on this side of the House came to the conclusion that it would be a wrong thing to bring down a mad scheme to borrow ten millions, and if they came down with a moderate scheme for borrowing a million and a half, have they not the right, as well as the Opposition, to do it? The speeches that have been made by honourable members on the other side of the House have, to a very large extent, been to the effect that borrowing is a very bad thing. But, notwithstanding the fact that many honourable members have spoken in that direction, and have pointed out the future

injury to the colony that borrowing money for public works must have, still they have concluded by saying that they are going to support the second reading of this Bill. The honourable member for Clutha, for instance, made a speech in which he declared that he was afraid borrowing so much money would be a great evil to the future of the colony, and he pointed out the evils that were likely to occur from such a policy; but, still, he concluded by saying that he intended to support the second reading of this Bill. Then, the honourable member for Rangitikei also made a very able speech—as he always does—and he too pointed out the evils of a borrowing policy, but ended by saying he should support the second reading of this measure. Now, to be consistent, they should have stated their intention to oppose the Bill: but it is quite plain that a large number of members of the Opposition will vote for this Bill, believing it to be the best measure in the interests of the country that could be at present proposed. Then, we had a speech from the honourable member for Mount Ida which showed clearly to myself and other honourable members that the honourable gentleman has been reading the public press very extensively during the recess, and has discovered that the members of the Government have not been consistent during the recess—that one member of the Government said one thing and another member of the Government said something different. But, if the Government meet this House when it assembles here, with a policy on which they are united, what of that? It would be a very bad thing if, when we meet here, the members of the Government were at variance as to what should be submitted to the House, as their proposals for the benefit of the colony. But how has the honourable member for Mount Ida acted towards his own district, as to always being of the same opinion? Two years ago this month he was wooing the electors of Mount Ida; and whom did he say he was coming here to support? Was it the present Premier, the honourable member for Egmont, the honourable member for Auckland East, or the honourable member for Akaroa? No; he said he would come up to support the Colonial Treasurer.—(No.)—Yes; he said he would come up and support the Colonial Treasurer unconditionally—that he was perfectly satisfied that that honourable gentleman was the proper person at that time to bring the colony's affairs into good order, and that he would come here and support him. But we find that in one short year the Colonial Treasurer becomes his political bugbear. Now, wise men change their views sometimes, and I do not find any fault with the honourable gentleman for changing his views; but I say that if he does so he should allow the same privilege to others. Supposing the Premier did take into consideration the desirability of borrowing ten millions, which I do not admit, I think it should be a subject for congratulation to the honourable member for Mount Ida and others that, on more mature consideration, the honourable gentleman decided to come down with a policy more acceptable to the House and the country and more for the benefit of the colony. Now let us see what are the opinions of the honourable member for Mount Ida on the question of borrowing. If you boil down his utterances till you get the true essence of them it amounts to this: that it would be a very proper thing for the colony to borrow half a million for the Otago Central, and nothing at all for any other railway in the colony. The honourable member went on to tell the House about a discussion that took place between Fox and Burke in the last century on the question of borrowing. It is quite evident the honourable gentleman must have been searching the musty records of the debates in the House of Commons for questions to be dished up for this House. I wondered, when I heard the honourable gentleman, what any discussion on a question of borrowing in the last century in the Old World could have to do with a proposal for borrowing a million and a half for public works here now. The discussion the honourable gentleman referred to was as to the propriety of England borrowing money to keep up large armies on the Continent to fight the battles of Europe—quite a different thing from borrowing a million and a half for opening up the country by railways in this young colony. I do not see how it applied in any way to the question now before the House. The honourable gentleman went on to show to the House, and no doubt to the country, that the cause of all our depression was too much borrowing, and he wanted to know what we were to expect if we were to borrow ten millions more. The honourable gentleman is very fond of raising up an argument in order to knock it down again; because we are not talking of borrowing ten millions at all, but of borrowing a million and a half; and surely the honourable gentleman will not contend that the depression we are suffering under is caused by borrowing money to carry on public works. Why, every one knows that the cause of the depression has been the fall in the prices of produce, and the fact that prices had fallen so low that in many cases it cost more to produce an article than it was afterwards sold for. Then, I ask, if we have so much depression after borrowing so much money to open up the country with railways, to construct bridges and roads and harbours throughout the country, so as to give facilities to the settlers to get their produce to the markets of the world, what would have been the result during the last two or three years if there had been no railways at all? Does the honourable gentleman mean to argue that it would have been possible for the large number of settlers who are now settled down in the country to have done so, and to have got their produce to the London markets at a reasonable cost, if they had not had these railways? The honourable member for Mount Ida has the reputation of being a very brilliant speaker, and he receives attention from the House when he does

but I think that, if he were to pay a little more attention to the practical wants of the country and a little less to the debates that took place in the House of Commons in the last century, he would arrive at something more satisfactory to the House and the country. The honourable gentleman concluded by saying that the country and this House would demand that the *personnel* of the present Government should be altered. Does he want the honourable member for Egmont to come back on these benches? The honourable gentleman is silent. He will not commit himself. If he does, let us have a look into the records of the honourable member for Egmont and see what he has done in the shape of borrowing. During the last ten years he has been four years and ten months in office—he took office on the 10th October, 1879, and he resigned on the 8th August, 1884—and during that time he put loans on the colony to the extent of £9,250,000.

Major ATKINSON.—No; part of that was proposed by the Grey Government.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—In 1879 the honourable member proposed a loan of five millions.

Major ATKINSON.—No; that was the Grey Government.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Well, the honourable gentleman raised the money, and that is all the same. In 1882 he put a Loan Bill for £3,000,000 on the Statute Book, and the same year he passed a small Loan Bill for £250,000, and also the North Island Trunk Railway Loan Bill for £1,000,000, making £9,250,000 which he had to spend, if he did not raise it.

Major ATKINSON. — The North Island Trunk Railway Loan could not be spent.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Well, at all events the honourable member had the spending of £8,250,000; and what was the position when he left office? After having all that money so allocated that the House had no control over it, he had deficiency bills to the extent of £150,000, and he took £350,000 out of the loan of 1882 to spend on works outside the intention of the House. If the honourable member for Mount Ida is prepared, after that, to put the honourable member for Egmont back on these benches,—he cannot be consistent as to his new opinions on borrowing. Then, we had a very able speech from the honourable member for Wakatipu, and it struck me very forcibly that if the effects of that speech were equal to its sound and fury this Government would not last long. The honourable gentleman has proved beyond a doubt—if not to the House, at any rate to himself—that if ever he succeeds in getting the honourable member for Egmont back on these benches the only person in the colony capable of conducting our public works and railways is the honourable member for Wakatipu. The honourable member wishes to have a Commission of Inquiry into the public works of the colony. I think he was rather unfortunate in that proposition, because the Government he supported during the last Parliament, and the party he is now associated with, were great on Commissions when in office. I think there were no less than three Royal Commissions on the public works of the colony; and one of them, which went all about the colony, was known as "the flying Commission." Did the honourable member for Egmont on that occasion take the advice of the Commission or act on their report? I think that Commission reported against the Otago Central line, and certainly the honourable member for Egmont did not take their advice on that subject. The same Commission reported against the Wellington and Manawatu Railway, and yet the honourable gentleman did not take their advice so far as that railway was concerned, and it certainly has turned out a very expensive thing to the colony that he did not do so. Then, there was another Commission appointed to inquire into the necessity for a railway to Cook Strait from Canterbury. On that Commission sat the honourable member for the Taieri, and the report which was brought up was just such a one as we might expect from the honourable gentleman, for it was a milk-and-watery report. He did not give offence to any person, and he did not bind the Government to anything, nor did it serve any good purpose. Then, we had another Commission to inquire into the necessity of a railway between Christchurch and the West Coast. I think that Commission was called "the naked Commission," for the reason that the colony had to find its members in blankets, coats, stockings, and all sorts of things before they could start to do their work. They also reported, and they said that they did not think it wise to construct a railway between the East and West Coasts at that time. While I am speaking about Commissions I might refer also to another one which the honourable member for Egmont appointed — the Civil Service Commission. What has become of the report of that Commission? Has it ever seen daylight? Did the honourable gentleman act upon it in any shape or form, and what benefit has it been to the colony, after all the expense it cost, so far as retrenchment is concerned? I think, therefore, that the reference of the honourable member for Wakatipu to Commissions was a very bad one, or unfortunate to himself and his party. We had next a speech from the honourable member for Waikouaiti, in which he laboured very hard to show to the House that the result of the measure now before us would be the borrowing of two millions of money. I could not possibly see how a proposal to borrow a million and a half of money could mean the borrowing of two millions. When I was at school I was considered pretty sharp at figures, and got several prizes as an arithmetician, and I think I knew a little about it; but after listening to the honourable gentleman the other night I came to the conclusion that my education in that respect must have been very much neglected, for I could not make out how the honourable member for Waikouaiti could make two millions out of a million and a half. Then, the honourable gentleman found fault with the Govern-

ment for not retrenching in the Civil Service. I should like to know what he has done to assist the Government in that direction. If it were in order to refer to a previous debate I could point out that when the Government wished to obtain permission to reduce the salaries in the Civil Service the honourable gentleman did not support them in their action. He voted on the Civil Service Reform Bill so as to prevent them reducing salaries. Then, we had a speech from the honourable member for Akaroa, and if it meant anything it meant that the schedule of this Bill required altering. So far as I could understand the honourable gentleman he did not oppose the borrowing for public works, but he thought that the schedule to the Bill should be altered. I think he should have given us some idea of how he wished it altered, as it might have been instructive to honourable members to know what the honourable gentleman would put in place of the railways he wished struck out of the Bill. Did he mean that he would insert the Little River-Akaroa Railway instead of some of those in the schedule?—because, as I understand it, that railway will cost something like £350,000, and it would require a large number of the railways in the schedule to be struck out to make way for it. It seems to me that the honourable gentleman did not do himself justice in the remarks he made, because we know that the honourable gentleman has great weight in the House, and that he could have shown how his proposition could be carried out, and that probably, if he had done so, he would have had a large number supporting him: at any rate, he would have had the support of the honourable member for Caversham. I now come to the question of borrowing more money for reproductive works in the colony; and I wish to ask if there is a single member in this House who is bold enough to say that we should stop all borrowing. It is impossible for this colony at the present moment to do without further borrowing. I hear the honourable member for Caversham say, "Yes." I ask, what would be the result to the colony if we were to stop borrowing now? It would mean that the colony would lose about two and a half millions, which have been spent on works that are now progressing towards completion, and from which there would be no return. It would mean calamity and stagnation throughout the country, and a retrograde step in the colonization of the colony. Such a policy would not receive a moment's support from this House or from the country, nor would it be of the slightest advantage to the country. Then, I say that, if the members who oppose this Bill have any better scheme to put before the House it is their duty to the House and the country to state what that scheme is. If they think that a million and a half is too much, they should say so. If they think that we can do with less, it is their plain duty to lay their views before the House, and to enable the country to come to a conclusion as to what ought to be done. Let us take this schedule for a moment—the schedule to this Bill we are now considering—and consider what support would be received in the way of striking out any of the lines that are in the schedule of the Bill. There is £219,000 set down for four railways in Auckland; and I ask, will any member from the Auckland District vote for striking out any of those lines? I venture to say No—not a single one of them would vote for such a proposal. Then, there is £193,000 allocated for railways in the Wellington District; and again I ask, would any of the Wellington members vote for striking out either of the lines for which that money is set down? I think not. Then there is £104,000 for lines in the Marlborough District, £28,000 for the Catlin's River branch, and £140,000 for the Otago Central. Will the members from any one of those districts vote for striking out the respective lines in those districts? I do not think it is at all likely. I hear an honourable member behind me say, "Log-rolling." Well, I do not believe in "log-rolling." Honourable members may laugh; but certainly I have no log to roll, for this schedule shows that there is not a penny allocated for any work in my district. At any rate, I can take an impartial view of the whole question. The only way in which I am interested in this schedule is as to how it will affect the colony as a whole; and I know that what will cause the whole colony to progress will cause my district to progress. Efforts have been made to show that the administration of the Government during the last two years has been very bad. Well, I ask the House to look at the subject in this way: During the last two years, and, in fact, since the present Government took office, the colony has been suffering from a depression such as it had never previously experienced in its history. The price of wheat was lower than it had been for a hundred years, and wool also was lower than it had been for many years, and the low prices of these our principal products have caused the industries of the colony to languish, and the general progress of the colony has been stopped, and this has created a depression in New Zealand such as has never been known before. Yet, in spite of these adverse circumstances, the Government, on the two occasions when they have had to come down to the House with Financial Statements, have shown us that the revenue is equal to the expenditure, and have not sought to issue deficiency bills in aid of revenue, such as had been done by the Atkinson Government in more prosperous times. I do not wish to say the Government is perfect: I do not know of any Government having been perfect during my experience in politics; but I certainly do say that they have fairly administered the affairs of the colony during the two years that they have been in office, and that we ought to take this into consideration when we are debating a subject of this kind, and finding fault with their administration. I regard this proposal to borrow a million and a half as an effort at progress coupled with moderation. I recognize that this is a pe

which the colony cannot at present do without, and for these reasons I support the Bill now before the House.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—I wish to make a few remarks on the Bill now before the House, and, in doing so, to refer to the Financial Statement, in which the proposed allocation of this loan was first brought under our notice. The proposals made in the Financial Statement are scarcely given effect to in the schedule of this Bill. The Colonial Treasurer then said,—

"The Marlborough-Tophouse line will open to Wellington the road to the West Coast in a few hours. The railway between Greymouth and Hokitika will be proceeded with vigorously. That also must prove a paying line. The Otago Central will be continued rapidly and pushed on with energy. The railway from Blenheim to Awatere will be completed."

These proposals are not carried out in this schedule; and, while speaking on the Financial Statement, I should like to say this: that I think we must accept the statements therein contained as conveying the deliberate intentions of the Government as regards the duration of this loan. It is there said, "We look forward to it [this loan] yielding at least two years' provision." That is precisely in accordance with the expressions of opinion given by the Premier when he visited Invercargill. There is one very peculiar expression in the Financial Statement. On page 7, speaking on the question of railways, the Treasurer says, "The increase in expenditure is compensated by the larger revenue expected." When we look at the Public Works Statement we see where the expected increased revenue is to come from. The Minister for Public Works says, on this point, "We have always calculated upon considerable additions to our receipts from the extensions of the railways which we hope to have under construction in a few weeks." Now, my experience of railway-construction in that part of the colony from which I come does not give me any hope that there will be this increase. There are railways upon which expenditure commenced in 1876, but on which at present there is no traffic. They remain in exactly the same position now as they were in in 1884, and, as a fact, the Public Works Statement this year contains exactly the same reference to them as the Statement of 1884. Seeing the manner in which railways have been allowed to remain unfinished, it is, I think, a sanguine view to take to suppose that this year "there are likely to be considerable additions to our receipts from the extensions of railway which we hope to have under construction in the course of a few weeks." There was some allusion made to classifying the railways, and I understood the Minister for Public Works to say that no classification had ever been made. But I wish to say that there was a classification proposed, for I was one of a deputation of Southland members who in 1884 waited on the Minister for Public Works to ask in what class the Seaward Bush Railway was to be placed, for if it was to be classed as one on which the district would have to pay 2 per cent. I should have had to oppose its being proceeded with until I had had an opportunity of conferring with the people in the district: and we were told it was classed as a forest railway. Some remarks have also been made during this debate with regard to the amendment of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay; and here I would like to state that I think that the use made by the Government of that resolution was very ungenerous. As a member of a local body I have received letters from Government departments constantly, saying, "In consequence of Captain Russell's amendment" this or that could not be done. Now, I ask, who was responsible for Captain Russell's amendment? Why, the Government. It was an expression of the will of the House accepted by the Government. The Government accepted it, and gave effect to it; and yet during the recess they reiterated that they were prevented from doing this or that in consequence of Captain Russell's amendment. I say it was not right of them to accept the motion and then to refer to it as they have done. Now to turn to the Public Works Statement. The North Island Trunk line is not included in the schedule to this Bill; but I want to say, with regard to that, that I am still of the opinion that I have expressed formerly, that every effort should be made to rapidly acquire land adjacent to that line—that greater urgency should be put into the matter of acquiring land than of prosecuting the work itself, but that, as the land is acquired, the line should be prosecuted with increased vigour. The Helensville North and Woodville-Palmerston lines appear to be the lines deserving more particular attention at the present time. In regard to the former the Minister says, in his Statement,—

"As was also shown last year, there are timbered lands and valleys containing considerable areas of rich agricultural land, well fitted for settlement, throughout the proposed route of this railway, and the cost per mile would not be more than the average of our railways already constructed."

To my mind, the most important line of all the lines now under consideration in the North Island is the Woodville-Palmerston line, and for that line I do not think anything like a sufficient amount has been placed upon the schedule. The Woodville-Palmerston line connects the East and West Coast railway systems in this Island, completing the connection between Taranaki and Napier. The honourable member who last sat down said that if any member of this House disapproved of the scheme of the Government it was his duty to give expression to his views, and I may say at present that the schedule as it appears here might be very materially improved in the interests of the colony. Coming to the South Island, we have first a work which we have already sanctioned this session—the East and West Coast Railway, about which I have already on previous occasions said sufficient. But I wish to refer to a matter which has occurred since the passage of that Bill. I notice that

the Hon. the Colonial Secretary is reported to have said, in reply to a question as to whether the Government would insist on grades of not less than 1 in 50, and curves of not less than 7½ chains radius, that they would insist on it. How they can do so in face of the terms and conditions that have been agreed to I cannot conceive; but I am very happy to observe that the Government see their way to give effect to this in the case of the East and West Coast Railway, the more so as during the last month there have been two fatal accidents in another colony happening from laxity in this respect. In the course of an inquest held at Launceston, on the 3rd of this month, on the body of John Bradshaw, the driver of a special train, the Engineer-in-Chief deposed that he recognized the place marked upon the plan as the scene of the late accident. That spot, as marked, was, approximately, the centre of a curve of 5 chains radius. On the 13th of this month also another accident occurred on the Tasmanian railway, in this case also at a sharp curve. So that it is with considerable gratification that I receive the assurance of the Government that they see their way to remedy the provision I have alluded to in regard to the East and West Coast Railway. Following the same subject, it is well understood by members of the House that we are giving to this company blocks of land at its value as at the signing of the contract, and consequently any public money expended within the land to be given to them will be enhancing the value of the land for their benefit, and at a loss to the colony. I am mentioning this because the Loan Bill, among other railways on which expenditure is proposed to take place, includes the Greymouth-Hokitika, which is to a considerable extent within the limits of the land that may be acquired by the company I have alluded to; and also the two new railways in the schedule of the Loan Bill are more or less —one wholly and the other partly—under the same conditions. My own opinion is that we should spend no money there for railways, roads, mines, or any public purposes at all in the way of works until the company has made a selection of the lands to be granted them. The Otago Central takes the place in the Middle Island that the Palmerston-Woodville takes in the North Island in regard to its importance. The provision which the Government have made in this direction enables the railway to be carried through the difficult and broken country and enter on the lands fit for settlement; and I think it is a great pity that, when the difficult and expensive part of the work will have been completed, they had not seen their way to put down a further sum of money, when the further extension would have been at a very small cost per mile, and would open land fit for settlement on both sides. I am pleased to see that the railway which specially affects me—the Toitois branch —has set apart for it a sufficient amount to carry it to the first working point. When that money is expended I believe the wants of this portion of the district will be met for some years. The Seaward Bush Railway, however, has not been quite so well treated. Five and a half miles have been opened. It has been carried from the Town of Invercargill to the limit of the alienated land. It is now entering the Crown lands which extend for some distance on both sides. Farther on it emerges from the bush, and would be of considerable service to the deferred-payment and other settlers in that district. That, I take it, would require about another six miles from the present terminus. The amount put down in the public works estimates and on the schedule of the Loan Bill for this is only sufficient to complete the formation of another five miles, which is not of the slightest use, unless there is sufficient money to complete the platelaying and open the line. The most objectionable feature, however, to my mind, in the schedule of the Loan Bill is the proposal to commence new railways, for which there seems no warrant. It is not proposed to construct them through agricultural lands suitable for settlement: it is not proposed to construct them from anywhere to anywhere in particular. The position of these two new lines—I allude to the Blenheim-Tophouse and the Westport-Inangahua, for which a sum of £175,000 is set down—is that they are absolutely useless, pending the completion of a portion of the East and West Coast Railway, which, if this scheme is ever carried out, will form one line itself. Now, there is not a word in the Public Works Statement to show the probable traffic returns, the probable development of settlement, or any good or sufficient reason for the expenditure of this money; and it must be remembered that the expenditure of this £175,000 is but the immediate vote which we are asked to give for these works. The actual cost of these works is estimated by the Engineer-in-Chief at £710,000. It appears to me that not only are these works quite uncalled for, but that it is beyond argument that their position is absurd. Until the East and West Coast Railway is completed up to this point there cannot be a shadow of ground for commencing or voting any money at all.

Mr. KERR.—It goes through the plain.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—It may go through a plain, but a very narrow one.

Mr. KERR.—Five or six miles.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—The Blenheim-Tophouse Railway of course starts from Blenheim up the Wairau Valley—a very rich valley, but of limited extent; and, so far as my memory serves me, the best agricultural land in that plain is within easy distance of the present railway facilities at Blenheim. I have alluded also to the fact that these two lines are within the limits—the one wholly and the Blenheim-Tophouse partly—of the lands granted for the East and West Coast Railway. Now, I hold that it is extremely bad policy, in the present condition of the country, without some further warrant than we have in this case, to think about starting new railways. We have not the mea borrow sufficiently to complete those w

on hand: we have a very large amount of public money lying idle in unfinished works, from one end of the colony to the other; and I can see no reason for making this new departure, and letting the colony into further liabilities of a similar nature to those we have on hand, with the difference that in this case it will not develop settlement to any great extent; and, whatever there may be said in favour of such lines in the future, it is quite time to consider that question when that time arrives. Even the people of Blenheim, so far as I can judge by what I have heard in this House, have petitioned for another railway, and not for this one at all. A petition has been presented to this House not for the Blenheim-Tophouse Railway, but for the railway by the Rai Valley. It appears that the people of Blenheim have not made up their minds which they will prefer, but there is no reason for assuming that they want the Blenheim-Tophouse line to be made. It is to be made with the object of joining the East and West Coast line at Tophouse, after we have given the company the right of diverging and making their route one which will not go near Tophouse at all. We have given the Midland Railway Company the right of diverging down the Motueka Valley, an alternative route up the Fadmor and Hope Rivers.

Sir R. STOUT.—Where it will never go.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—It may never go by either that route or this one; but still, when there are some stages of the work progressing to [illegible], or until the colony is in a very [illegible] position from which it is [illegible] at the present moment, we have to [illegible] to start such new railways. [illegible] if completed will [illegible] [illegible]

their interests better, if we put a limited additional amount down for this work to carry it south of the Awatere River, and let this large scheme of railway—the Blenheim-Tophouse Railway—alone, at any rate in the meantime. In view of the remarks I am making, and in the hope of giving effect to them, trusting the Government will be open to accept reasonable suggestions, and to consider how these matters affect the interests of the colony, I am going to propose an amendment, if I am in order in doing so, regarding the points on which I have spoken. The amendment which I wish to propose is this: To omit all the words of the question after "That," and to insert the following words in lieu thereof: "this House will agree to read this Bill a second time so soon as the schedule has been amended so as to provide for completing or carrying to a working point unfinished railways before new lines are commenced. That, therefore, the items 'Blenheim-Tophouse, £63,000,' and 'Westport-Inangahua, £63,000,' be struck out, and the item 'Permanent-way, sleepers, and rolling-stock, £370,000,' be reduced by the sum of £44,000, being the proportionate amount proposed to be expended out of this item upon the aforesaid lines; and that the £175,000 so saved be allocated in the following proportions: (1) To the main trunk line, Helensville northwards, £35,000 additional; (2) to the Napier-Palmerston North, £45,000 additional; (3) to the Blenheim-Awatere, £25,000 additional; (4) to the Otago Central, £60,000 additional; (5) to the Seaward Bush, £10,000 additional."

Mr. SPEAKER.—A general resolution of this kind disapproving of certain expenditure proposed in the Bill, and suggesting expenditure on other public works, appears to me to be [illegible]. It would not be in order if it con[illegible] recommending the striking-out [illegible] of the schedule, because [illegible] strike out items of expenditure [illegible] from the House; [illegible] could not allocate the [illegible] struck out, nor, indeed, could [illegible] the recommendation [illegible] of the Ministry. [illegible] to express an [illegible] be advisable to [illegible] in a certain other [illegible] the Government.

[illegible]—[illegible] means negativing the [illegible]

[illegible]—[illegible] does not negative [illegible] except for to-day. [illegible] amendment, would [illegible] the Bill a second [illegible] could proceed [illegible] subsequent day [illegible] this resolution.

[illegible]—[illegible] understand that, sup[illegible] the Bill [illegible] reading to-[illegible]

[illegible]—[illegible] with the sanction of [illegible]

Sir R. STOUT.—Then it would mean nothing.

Mr. DARGAVILLE.—Although I rise for the purpose of formally seconding this amendment, I do not wish to disguise for a moment my opinion that the object of it is simply to disintegrate parties, to extend this debate for a few days longer, and to give certain gentlemen an opportunity of again airing their eloquence before the House and before the country. With reference to the debate proper, if I may so call it, I beg to be permitted to say a few words before it comes to a conclusion. The honourable member for Waitotara, who replied in the first instance on behalf of the Opposition to the motion that this Bill should be read a second time, was so fully and so ably answered by the Native Minister that I do not feel called upon to add much in that direction. I should like, however, to remark very briefly upon two points which form the gravamen of the charge which that honourable gentleman made against the Government. In the first instance he charged the Government with having broken down absolutely in their administration. "Hear, hear," the honourable member for Geraldine says. I ask that honourable member, and I ask the honourable member for Waitotara, whom I believe to be an honest and straightforward man—I ask him whether he means to say that the administration of Native affairs by his successor has broken down or has been a failure. I ask him that question. He is too honest to answer me in the negative. That honourable gentleman, the member for Waitotara, found it necessary to keep five or six hundred armed men on the west coast of this Island, to employ coercion and terrorism, and to invoke special legislation from this Parliament in order to maintain the peace there. In fact, so resolute was he upon asserting his own opinions upon this question, and dominating his colleagues, that he actually resigned office at one time because he could not at first get a majority of the Cabinet to agree with him. That was the policy which he claims to have been a success—coercion and special legislation. Then, my honourable friend the Native Minister appears upon the scene; and what is his policy? Having exactly the same difficulties as his predecessor had to deal with, his policy was forbearance, justice, reliance upon the ordinary laws of the colony. I ask you, Sir—I ask every member of this House—to say honestly and truly which administration has been the more successful. There is no question about it. Notwithstanding the dire forebodings with which the honourable members for Waitotara and Egmont tried at the time to fill the public mind, the Native Minister withdrew the armed forces; and it cannot be denied that the results of my honourable friend's policy fully and triumphantly vindicate him against the aspersions of the honourable member for Waitotara. Then, the other point upon which the honourable member for Waitotara appeared to lay great stress was that this Government departed from the previous practice, and purchased Native lands under a system of acreage commission, instead, I presume, of paying agents salaries. When that honourable gentleman read to this House the amounts of commissions paid to the agents formerly employed in that way, why did he not follow it up and state also the areas of the various blocks that were purchased, the prices paid for them, and then, on the other hand, state the present actual values of those blocks? Had he done so, I venture to assert that it would be found that the colony had been a very large gainer by those operations. What has been the result of the operations of the honourable member for Waitotara under his system of purchasing Native lands? As far as my knowledge goes, they proceeded at a snail's pace; and, if the construction of the North Island Trunk Railway had depended upon that honourable gentleman's exertions in the way of acquiring land, the youngest men in this House would have been octogenarians before the line would have been completed. If salaried officers are employed for work of this kind, their interest lies in what direction? Dilatoriness. These gentlemen are only human, and so far as they are human and not divine it is only reasonable to suppose that their interests will lie in the direction of spinning out these negotiations for an indefinite time, because the duration of their appointments depends upon the time taken to complete certain transactions. I say, therefore, that the honourable member for Waitotara, so far as my honourable friend the Native Minister is concerned, has not made out his case. The honourable member for Waitotara has of late attained to very great popularity—and deservedly so—in this colony; but it has been attained by means altogether apart from his political career: and I regret that his party have seen fit, I was going to say, to utilize him, and make a stalking-horse of him, to enable them to recover to some extent the popular favour which they have lost through their maladministration in the past. The attempt, however, has not been a success. So much for the honourable member for Waitotara. I had intended to do myself the honour to criticise the very brilliant and able speech of the honourable member for Mount Ida; but that has been so very well done by the honourable member for Moeraki that I hesitate to enter upon such a course. He declares that there shall be no more borrowing. He says that if the colony is to recover there must be no more borrowing. He, the disciple and adherent of the Colonial Treasurer—he, the honourable gentleman who was elected by his constituents for the express purpose of supporting the Colonial Treasurer in the policy which he enunciated to the colony—now declares that there must be no more borrowing; and, further than that, that by next session, at all events, there must be new blood and new ideas infused into the Ministry. New ideas! Of course those new ideas are the ideas of the honourable member himself?

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—New ideas of borrowing.

Mr. DARGAVILLE.—Well, that is an explanation. I leave it to honourable members to accept or reject that as the explanation of what was in the honourable member's mind when he said the Ministry must have new ideas next session. The inference is that unless the Ministry have these new ideas he is not going to support them. He has performed that extraordinary acrobatic feat which very few people are able to do—that is, in one session he has absolutely turned his back upon himself. Notwithstanding the extremely modest and suggestive manner in which he alleged that these new ideas must be infused into the Ministry, he led me to the conclusion that he is willing to rise, quoting his own poetry,—

> —— on stepping-stone
> Of his dead self to higher things.

The higher things, in this case, obviously mean the things appertaining to a portfolio on the Ministerial benches. I am sorry the honourable member for Hawke's Bay is not in his place, because I had intended to notice briefly his speech. He condemns borrowing. He is so far consistent—he has always condemned borrowing so far as I remember: but on this occasion he condemns borrowing except so far as the Napier-Woodville line is concerned; and the Gorge line is also an exceptional case. The honourable gentleman, in fact, is ready to sacrifice every other part of the colony except his own neighbourhood. I will, however, do him the justice to say that it is seldom indeed that he is so entirely illogical and inconsistent as he has been in his speech on this occasion. And now with trepidation I come to consider the powerful speech, as it has been called, of the honourable member the leader of the Opposition (Major Atkinson). I am sorry the honourable gentleman is not in his place. I do not think it is fair that the leader of the Opposition should be absent on the occasion of debates like the present. He should be here to watch over the interests of his party, and, if he thinks it worth while, of the country. I do not want for a moment to say that the honourable gentleman has shown the white feather; because there is one characteristic of that honourable gentleman I have always admired, and that is his fighting quality. His absence will to a very large extent qualify what I have to say about him and his speech, because I do not like, even in this Assembly, to reflect upon any honourable gentleman when he is not face to face with me. It has never been my fortune to meet an honourable gentleman who possesses in a greater degree than he the gift of making "the worse appear the better reason." No wizard, no magician, can so ably or readily confuse and bewilder his audience as the honourable gentleman can when he chooses to plunge into a labyrinth of figures. Whenever I listen to the honourable gentleman on such occasions as that on which he made his recent speech I am reminded of a story that I heard in my early days of a boy who went into a shop in London to buy a tart. The confectioner moved over the tart to the boy, who took it. After a moment's hesitation he returned it, saying, "I do not want that tart. Give me a cake." The confectioner gave him a cake, which he ate, and presently began to retire. The confectioner said, "Hallo, my boy! you have not paid me for that cake." "Pay you for the cake!" said the boy, "Why, I gave you a tart for it." "Well, you young ruffian," said the confectioner, "pay me for the tart." "Pay you for the tart!" said the boy; "That's a good 'un! Didn't I give it back to you!" And, while the confectioner was left bewildered as to the rights and wrongs of the case, the boy walked off without paying. That boy is said subsequently to have emigrated to the colonies, and I believe he became a member of Parliament and a financier. I listened to the honourable member for Egmont attentively, and I was at a loss to gather what his own views and opinions were as to what ought or what ought not to be done in the present juncture of affairs. At one time it appeared to me that he proved incontestably that the Government were not proposing to borrow enough money, and a little later it appeared to me that his allegation was that they were about to rush into reckless extravagance. There was a sort of refrain, however, which was heard occasionally in the burden of his song, and it was this: "We must taper off borrowing." The honourable gentleman is now out of office, and we must taper off. Perhaps when the honourable gentleman comes back to the Treasury benches it will be time to "taper on" again, if such an expression may be used. What did the honourable gentleman do in the way of tapering off during the four or five years he was in office? His predecessors—the Grey Ministry—during the year 1878–79 expended a million and a half on public works. Then the honourable member for Egmont came into office, and in the year 1879–80 spent a million and three-quarters; and in the following year—1880–81—he spent on public works no less than £1,960,000. I have his own Financial Statement and the Appendices to the Journals of those years here at my hand in order to confirm my statements, if they are doubted or contradicted. The average expenditure of his Government during the five years it was in office amounted to no less than a million and a half a year. And this was in prosperous times, when such expenditure was not absolutely necessary, when it was not demanded, as I say it is now by the exceptional circumstances in which the colony is placed. It was expended in prosperous times, and for the most part on unproductive works. I say "unproductive," except in so far as it was productive of very large support being accorded in this House to the honourable gentleman and his Government, and of the very long tenure of office which they enjoyed. That was the product—and the most substantial product, I venture to say, so far as the honourable gentleman's feelings are concerned—of his large expenditure during five years.

But the honourable gentleman objects to this Ministry, not merely because they do not taper off as he requires that they should, but he objects to their changes of front. The changes of front of which he accused the present Government were made a strong point, which he almost gloated upon. But what were the changes of front of himself and his colleagues? Why, they were so numerous, so sudden, and so extraordinary that they resembled phantasmagoria before the eyes of honourable members and the country. What, I ask, has become of the honourable gentleman's national compulsory provident insurance scheme, by which he was going to reform the whole social fabric — that great scheme by which the poor were to be forced to contribute ten times as much as the rich towards the charitable aid of the colony? What has become of that? Where has it gone? Echo answers, "Where?" It has vanished. Where is the Bill which he told us he was determined to bring in in 1883 to tax the lands benefited by the making of railways? Where is that Bill? Echo answers, "Where?" The honourable gentleman found that the large landholders who were to be taxed by this proposal were averse to it. They were his chief supporters, and he found it expedient to drop that measure. He dropped it. It is gone. Do the members of this House forget the Local Inscribed Stock Act of 1882, which the honourable member for Egmont inveigled—if that is a parliamentary term—this House into passing, upon his representation that a quarter of a million of 5-per-cent. debentures were to be sold only amongst the economical and industrial classes of this country, to encourage thrift and to encourage them to save their money? I wonder what explanation the honourable gentleman has ever been able to give of his change of front in respect of that Act. What was that change? As soon as it was placed on the Statute Book of the colony his friends the financiers and bankers intimated to him that it would never do, that it would interfere with their deposits and their operations, and that he must get out of it the best way he could; and the honourable gentleman not only abstained from giving effect to the Act, but he went further than that. He did not come to this House and say, "I find that this Act is impracticable, that it will interfere with the commercial transactions of the country, and I ask the House to repeal it." No: he quietly, secretly, and without any proclamation in the *Gazette*, as was required by the Act, without any intimation to the House or to the country as to what he was about to do—privately and secretly, I say, sold the whole quarter-million of these debentures, and applied the proceeds to public works in the districts of his supporters — a trick of financial legerdemain such as cannot be surpassed. Where are his proposals with reference to pensions, which at one time he said were absolutely necessary in order to have efficiency in the Civil Service? Where is the Civil Service Reform Bill itself, which, as the honourable member for Moeraki has just said, he intended to introduce in this House? Where are his schemes of retrenchment? Where is his plan for denominational education, which occasionally, and at convenient intervals, he tells his constituents is a matter that is very near and dear to his heart? Where are all these? Changed. Abandoned. Vanished. And I say that honourable gentleman and his former colleagues should be the last in this House to twit any Government with a change of front. I have in my mind's eye the front Opposition benches full, and I see on them the honourable member for Selwyn, and next to him, leaning over him in friendly communion, the honourable member for Egmont. Well, when I look back a short year or two, when I remember what the relations of those two honourable gentlemen were towards one another in politics, when I remember a certain newspaper published in Timaru, which I used to read with amusement in the far North, and wondered at the ability which could invent such scathing invective as that with which the honourable member for Selwyn in those days lashed the honourable member for Egmont — when I think of these things, and now see the affection, the friendship, and the confidential intercourse between these two honourable gentlemen, I say that as professing Christians it is extremely creditable to them, but as politicians it would be interesting if they would give some explanation. Then, the honourable member for Egmont, who is the apostle of abolition of the provinces, sits next to the honourable member for Geraldine, who was the champion of Provincialism; and next to the honourable member for Geraldine is the honourable member for Waitotara, who retired from the Ministry of those honourable gentlemen in 1880, because his colleagues would not allow him to march five or six hundred armed men into Parihaka to preserve the peace of the country. Then Te Whiti said he would plough the land, "the potato is cooked," the fences should be pulled down; and the honourable member for Geraldine, who had taken the portfolio of the honourable member for Waitotara, lost heart and gave it back to him again, the Ministry agreeing that he might have, not five hundred men, but a thousand, if necessary, to relieve them of the responsibility. I refer to these things to point out the absurdity and the inconsistency of the honourable gentlemen on the Opposition benches now accusing my honourable friends on the Government benches of changes of front, and saying that, because they may not happen to be perfectly agreed on any given point of policy, therefore they are not fit to occupy their present position. If those honourable gentlemen in their criticisms of the present Government were to appeal more to our reason, if they were more fair, more just, and even more generous, and if they showed less vindictiveness and selfishness, they would not by such means render any further distant the time when this House may again see fit to intrust them with the governmental authority. Now I have a word to say to the Government,

if I may be permitted; and it is this: I am not entirely satisfied with their proposals. I am at variance with the proposal to take £100,000 out of the North Island Trunk Line Million Loan to purchase Native land; and I do not believe that those lands, even when purchased, could be utilized in time to allow of their proceeds being available for the purpose of the construction of the line. When the Bill is in Committee I shall oppose that part of the schedule, and, if necessary, divide the Committee against the Government upon it. Then, as to school-buildings, too, there is something as yet unexplained; and probably when the Premier or the Treasurer replies to the speeches that have been made on this subject he may point out how they are to be provided for. I entirely object to these buildings being provided by the local bodies. These buildings are there for a generation, or two generations, and it is not fair that the burden of the cost of erecting them should be placed on the persons who happen to be using them now, and whose children may only benefit from them for the next two or three years. I say it is a purpose to which borrowed money may properly be applied, and I hope the Premier will show us that by some amended proposals provision will be made for school-buildings throughout the colony. I have also to say that I am not satisfied with the inadequate provision which is made for the extension of the North Auckland Railway. While I say this, I wish, in the first instance, to give every credit to the present Government for their action in the matter. They are the first to recognize the rights and the claims of the people in the far North, who have been neglected for so many years past. During the five years the honourable member for Egmont represented the Government in this House, notwithstanding the fact that the proceeds of the Five-million Loan came under his disposal, and not only the Five-million Loan, but two millions out of the Three-million Loan that we borrowed under the Three-million Loan Act of 1882—notwithstanding that fact, during the whole of those five years not one single shilling was allocated towards the construction of that line. It is true that certain general surveys were made in order to ascertain what kind of country the line would run through; but, notwithstanding the fact that the honourable member for the Bay of Islands and the honourable member for Marsden, who represented the two districts that would be most benefited by this expenditure, were staunch and unwavering supporters of the Atkinson Ministry during all those years, not one single shilling was ever voted by them for that purpose. The present Government, when they came into office two years ago, proposed that a sum of money should be expended in commencing this line. But what happened? A member of the last Atkinson Government, the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, proposed a resolution, by which even that small and tardy recognition of the just claims of these ill-used people north of Auckland was rendered useless and was swept away. I say therefore I thank the present Government for their recognition of the claims of these people, and I rely upon them to go into this matter in an earnest manner and to prosecute the work. In addition to that, the extension of the Otago Central line should be gone on with. I say those are the two lines which have the chief claims upon this or any Government; and I say, further, if it becomes necessary to provide money for the purchase of Native lands in the North Island, if it becomes necessary in order to provide funds for the erection of school-buildings throughout the colony, and if it becomes necessary to provide funds for the extension of the Otago Central line to a paying point at the Taieri Lake, and for the extension of the Helensville line northwards—if, for these purposes, it will be necessary to borrow a further sum next year, why should it not be borrowed? What objection has been pointed out? I regret that the Premier has been at one stage of this debate entrapped, as it were, by the leader of the Opposition into a statement that under no circumstances whatever would he borrow any further amount next year. I was sorry to hear that, because I believe his duty to the colony will demand of him that he shall propose a further loan of, say, a million next year. I ask the honourable gentleman how he is going to purchase Native lands if, as I hope and believe, the £100,000 which he proposes to take from the North Island Trunk Loan is not made available for the purpose. Is he going to suspend operations in the purchase of Native lands? If not, he must provide funds for the purpose. I ask him also how he is going to provide for school-buildings. That has not been made to appear anywhere to this House yet. I say, also, with regard to the Otago Central extension and the North Auckland extension, that the Government must provide funds for those purposes. I say, as I have said before in this House, that it is not in times of depression that we should diminish our expenditure on public works. It is in times of prosperity that the colony can afford that: when private enterprise is on foot, when money is abundant, when the Customs revenue is elastic, and when there is prosperity among the community—then is the time when we can taper off our expenditure on public works without inflicting any injury on the community. But a time of depression and stagnation, when hundreds, I might almost say thousands, of persons are unable to find employment—that is not the time when the Government should diminish expenditure on public works. I hope that, when the Premier rises to reply to the speeches which have been made against his Administration, he will qualify the reply he gave to the leader of the Opposition; because I can see very clearly that, unless serious injury is to be inflicted on the community, and unless their interests are to be sacrificed to a pledge hastily given—as I understood it to be—it will be absolutely necessary for the honourable gentleman during next session to ask for a further moderate loan.

Dr. NEWMAN.—Mr. Speaker, I am sure

that those of us who have been in Parliament during the last few years must have been amused by the lecture which the honourable gentleman who has just sat down gave to the honourable member for Egmont. He talked about the phantasmagorial changes of the honourable member for Egmont. I have had the honour of a seat in this House for two years, and if I were asked which member of the House was most distinguished above all others for phantasmagorial changes I should at once point to the honourable gentleman who has thought it right to lecture the leader of the Opposition. Last year the Government whips never knew for a moment on which side the honourable gentleman was going to vote; but towards the close of the session there was passed a certain Act, and ever since that favouring gale blew from the Government benches towards the honourable gentleman his political vane has kept steadily towards them, and will keep steadily to the end of this session. To hear the honourable gentleman lecture on the subject of inconsistency was to make one think of the arch-fiend lecturing against the iniquity of sin. Can any one tell, though the honourable gentleman is supporting the Government this session, and will, no doubt, continue to support them till its close, what he will do next session or the session after? At all events, the honourable member for Egmont has been honourably in opposition for the last two years—he has been consistent in his opposition; but the honourable member for Auckland West has been everywhere. In my opinion it is well that we should not hear such speeches. I remember hearing, from under gallery, a speech of the honourable gentleman's characterized as something akin to loathsome slime. The term was allowed to pass then, and I suppose it is parliamentary. The speech to-night, I am happy to say, was far milder and better. I believe that some of the speeches which have been delivered have not been creditable; and in what I have to say on the Public Works Statement and this Loan Bill I shall steer clear of any such attacks on the Ministry. I could not help thinking, as this debate rolled along from day to day, that, after all, some lines written long ago describe very much that has been said here,—

> It is the gyse nowadays
> Of some jangling jayes
> To try to discommend
> What they cannot amend.

Therefore I was glad when the honourable member for Mataura got up with such a useful amendment. The Premier is a man for whose wisdom I have so much respect that I am sure, when he reads this amendment, he will see the value of it. If he had known it as long as I have, he would have seen hour by hour fresh merits in it. The more it is studied the more merit can be discovered in it, and I venture to hope that it will be carried. We have heard a great deal during this debate about what the Colonial Treasurer said at one place, and what the Premier said at another; but, after all, one can only look on such things as what the French call *ballons d'essai*. They are political balloons, and they are very useful in their way. One member of the Ministry says, "It is necessary to borrow to a large extent;" and then, when he finds that will not go down, the balloon bursts, and it is easy for another Minister to say, at Invercargill or some other place, that they will only propose borrowing to a moderate extent: and so the feelings of the people of the colony are ascertained. After all, I think the honourable member for Inangahua very aptly described the position of this or any other Government—that it is politic to see how the cat jumps. In old days, in the medical profession, they had what was called "expectant treatment." This was very simple. When they did not know what disease the patient was suffering from, the doctors used to say they would give some expectant medicine; and the patients did not know what that was. It really meant this on the part of the doctors: "We do not know what is the matter with the patient, and we will wait and see what it turns out." And not only this profession, but every other will do the same thing. The only question of interest is to see during the recess which balloon will burst, and which will float the Government through the session. There was one part of the Public Works Statement which I could not help thinking was put in for my special benefit. During this session I divided the House on the question of giving contracts to Natives alone; and I venture to say that the evidence afforded by the Public Works Statement shows clearly that my contention was a just one. The Maoris cannot take contracts at as low a rate as Europeans. And in this very Statement we are told that the Natives demanded excessive rates, and that when they did the contracts were advertised and let by public tender. I venture to say that to give Natives employment at 8s. and 8s. 6d. a day for work which Europeans are not allowed to do is altogether improper and unjust. While Europeans in Dunedin, Auckland, Christchurch, and other places are unable to get work, and, if they are employed, are only given 4s. or 4s. 6d. a day, it is not a pleasant thing to know that Maori landlords are being given an exclusive right to earn 8s. a day; and I venture to think that if the people of this colony knew that thousands of pounds of public money are being at this moment put into the hands of these Maori landlords, who hold large tracts of lands which they might, but will not, cultivate, while at the same time numbers of our own people are out of work, the colony would strongly object to the continuance of such a state of things. And while I am on this question I would like to say a few words on the question of immigration. No one believes more strongly than I do in the advantages of obtaining a stream of immigrants for this country; but I do not believe in the class of immigrants we had poured into this colony a few years ago—immigrants entirely of one class, that is to say, those who are wage-earners: and I say that for us to spend, as we did the year before last, and last year, and as is proposed this year, a large s

of money in bringing out people of this class is most unfair to the people who are out of work; and therefore just as I have voted in previous years so I shall vote this year, for cutting down the further the amount that it is proposed to appropriate for immigration purposes. It is cruel to the people here who cannot get work, and cruel to those who are brought out; and, besides, if the Kimberley rush which seems on the verge of setting in should actually occur, we might find that we had spent a very large sum of money to provide population for Western Australia; and that certainly would not be a reproductive work. I could not help thinking, as I have heard member after member get up and make complaints about the management of the working railways, that they were rather unfair; because it seems to me, after watching the matter pretty carefully, that, on the whole, the railways are fairly well managed. Of course we have not all the luxuries and conveniences which obtain at Home, nor is there any possibility of getting the enormous revenue which is obtained at Home; but I think that, looking at the limited means and opportunities at their disposal, the Government are managing the railways fairly well, considering the circumstances of the country. I think that, if these gentlemen who complain so bitterly would think about the matter a little, they would see that there is not so much reason for complaint. But I must also say this: that I think that the Minister for Public Works is largely to blame for the present complaints; for it will be remembered that when he was trying to get into office he went about inciting the Canterbury people to make complaints, and telling them that if he were only in office he could do so much in the way of giving them what they required. Promises, like curses and young chickens, come home to roost; and his promises are coming home to roost in this case with a vengeance. Now, I wish to refer again to the Financial Statement, because, after all, that dominates the policy of the Government. When the Colonial Treasurer was reading out in those wonderful tones of his how much money he had, and made the statement that he had £800,000 in hand, I was so surprised—in fact, so startled—that he should have so large a sum of money when I believed he had none that I put it down on my notes as one of the things to be looked up afterwards; and, of course, when I came to look it up, I was equally astonished to find that he had forgotten the whole of his liabilities, amounting to some £1,094,000. I was the more surprised when he made the statement, because during the recess we heard nothing but the one cry that there was no money in the chest. I remember that there was one honourable member who had got large sums put down on the estimates for roads and bridges in his district, and he told me in the recess, in tones of deepest despair, that when he went to the Minister to get the money expended he was told that there was no money, and that those large votes were useless, though he had been in the meantime feasted and fêted in his district for having got so much out of the Treasurer. This in itself was remarkable, seeing that in January last year the Treasurer had borrowed a million, and at the end of April another million and a half; and yet in four or five months the cry was that he had no money. Still, it was generally recognized that there was no money, and that this was so was shown by the fact that the Treasurer gave it out that he would have to lay violent hands on the North Island Main Trunk Loan to obtain funds for carrying on the ordinary works; and correspondence before the House actually shows clearly enough that such was the intention, for on the 24th February in this year an application was made to the Governnor to sign authority for the raising of the whole of the North Island Trunk Railway Loan. It was patent enough to any one who knew anything about the finances that the Colonial Treasurer had made some error about the £800,000 being free to be voted for general purposes; and surely enough it was found, when the accounts were looked into, that the liabilities had been forgotten. I venture to say that had the manager or director of any private company done such a thing the shareholders in the concern would at once have called upon him to resign. That mistake has disarranged the whole of their finance; for, trusting to the £800,000 which did not exist, they then made the proposal for borrowing a million and a half for railways alone; and, finding they were this £800,000 short, they had to resort to what I might almost call subterfuges—buying up old rails, *et cetera*, for £370,000 and charging them against the million and a half, while no less than a quarter of a million of the million and a half raised for railway purposes alone is to be devoted to general purposes. Then, we are told, in this Financial Statement, that the Government think that there should be legislation to prevent the North Island Trunk Railway Loan being applied to any other purpose than the construction of that line; and a Bill has actually been brought down bearing the title, "The North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Application Act;" but, unless the Bill is greatly altered, I shall move, when the title comes to be considered, that for the word "Application" there be inserted the word "Abstraction," because as the Bill stands it is neither more nor less than a Bill to rob the main trunk loan. I must not discuss the Bill and therefore I will not say more about it. Before I leave this part of the subject I must say that I believe that once before in the history of the colony some such blunder has been made about this £800,000 was made. I have heard that a million of a certain five million loan was lost sight of. If that is so it will be agreed that it is very curious how history does sometimes repeat itself. The I should like to say, after looking through this Financial Statement and the Public Works Statement, that they are really exceedingly intricate and involved. They would take men who know something about

finance of the colony a considerable time to master them, and even then it could not be done without some friendly hints and explanations; and, under these circumstances, it is not surprising, though it is much to be regretted, that so few members of the House really take the trouble to go into these matters. I am glad to see that the Minister for Public Works has this year introduced a new system which he calls "clearness of account." I must say that it is a very great improvement, and I hope that, whether he continues in office or whether another Ministry comes in, this will be continued; and I would like to ask the honourable gentleman not to leave out the tables, as he suggests doing in his Statement. He may not think it, but, though during the session we may not take the trouble to read these tables, for want of time, yet during the recess they do form very interesting reading, and we should very much regret losing them. I think he has made an improvement, and I hope that he will not vitiate it by leaving out these tables. When I read the Financial Statement and the Public Works Statement, and compared them with the public works estimates, I was utterly surprised at the extraordinary discrepancies between them. I was reminded of the science of imaginary mathematics and geometry, the object of which was to prove something equivalent to this: that two and two did not make four, but five, or some other number which it was not within the power of ordinary men to make. I saw that the Premier had set himself the same task, and that, after one month's hard work, he had entirely failed, and that the only result was the North Island Main Trunk Railway Abstraction Bill, and the Public Works Statement, which on the face of it shows that it could not have been carefully thought out. The Premier the other day told us that there was to be no more borrowing of money until the 31st March, 1888; but I venture to say that it is clear that the Government cannot do without more money, and that it would have been better for this House and the country if, instead of coming down with a statement of that kind, they had kept the North Island Railway Loan to its purpose, and had come down with a proposal to borrow a million this year and a million next year. I am not one of those who say that we must stop borrowing; and I venture to think that that would have been the better plan. By no possible means can we make ends meet on the present amount in hand, including the million and a half to be borrowed. We must raise a loan next year. The total amount that the Government have at their command is a million and a half, £500,000, and £768,000 which they have over from last year. If we look at the estimates and take into account each item we shall find that they have not nearly enough money to provide for those estimates. They had £1,119,000 available for general purposes, of which they say they are spending £722,000, though, as a matter of fact, they are spending £949,000. I am aware that when a statement of this kind was made the other night by the honourable member for Egmont it was denied; but I have carefully gone into the matter since then, and it seems to me that the position is as I state it. I can see where the Minister gets the £722,000 from; but he has not taken into account the abstract of liabilities from the third column, and there can be no doubt that the true amount is £949,000; and, if we take this from the £1,119,000, the amount available for next year will be £170,000. And against this there are a variety of liabilities that must be taken into account. There is the liability for Native lands, £203,000—whatever that may mean. There is also £100,000 for new Native-land purchases; and then there are the supplementary estimates for this year. Last year the amount brought down was £130,000, but it was afterwards reduced, and this year I suppose it will be less. Then, from the £170,000 there will be deductions for a variety of things—for instance, £72,000, subsidies; £40,000, defence: £13,000, Native rates: which makes a total of £125,000; so that the total amount available for free votes will be £45,000. It is absurd to say that that will be sufficient, as I can show incontestably. We shall require another £100,000 for Native land next year; this year's and next year's supplementary estimates, £25,000 each; £60,000 for school-buildings next year; £50,000 for public buildings next year; £15,000 for goldfields is not an extravagant estimate; £20,000 will be required for telegraphs extension; £10,000 for lighthouses; £20,000 for harbour defences; £40,000 for roads: and here we have a total of £560,000, against which we have a contingent sum of about £45,000. I think, however startling it may be to honourable gentlemen, they will find, on perusing the Public Works Statement, that this is incontestable; and therefore the Government will next year have to do one of two things. They cannot touch the North Island Trunk Railway Loan, because that is to be ear-marked; therefore the only alternatives are to provide for the letting of contracts so late that the money cannot be spent, or to have a fresh loan. Their proposal to borrow a million and a half this year and take a half-million out of the Main Trunk Railway Loan simply means borrowing two millions a year; and if they mean to stretch it over two years it will come to that "loudly cursed" loan policy of the Atkinson Government, which has been so liberally decried. I believe, for my own part, that one million a year is the amount which ought to be borrowed annually by this Parliament. I shall have something to say on the Main Trunk Railway Loan Bill when that comes down; but I should also like to say something about it now. And here I might refer to the proverb which says that "Broken promises, like chickens and curses, come home to roost." Two years ago we were told that in three years from that time we should have the railway running from Auckland to Wellington. These years have gone, and yet not one half-mile of that line has been completed. And here I would like to say that the Public Works Minis-

ter twitted the honourable member for Waikato very unfairly in his reference to the probable period of opening this railway. Yet in the Financial Statement we find it stated that it was proposed to hold a Jubilee Exhibition in 1890 to celebrate the opening of the trunk line; and the sixty thousand people in the northern capital were immensely delighted at the idea of having a grand Jubilee Exhibition. But it was all moonshine. This will never be till 1900. The other day the Minister for Public Works told us that the honourable member for Waikato was unfair to the Government, because last year the amendment of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay interfered with the spending of money. But I would ask the Minister for Public Works to turn to the Financial Statement this year, and he will find that a document which he did not write himself distinctly says that in four years it will be open. Therefore the honourable member was perfectly right in his contention, and I would like to point out that two years ago it was said that the railway was to be open from Wellington to Napier about the time the Manawatu Railway was opened. I believed then, and I [illegible] that was an idle statement [illegible]. No [illegible] in the whole schedule [illegible] and [illegible] in so large a [illegible] portion of the line [illegible] per cent. on the [illegible] and this [illegible] still further [illegible] on that line. I have heard the Premier say that this is a new [illegible] I wish to assure the honourable gentleman [illegible] Public Works [illegible] which [illegible] fixed [illegible] West Coast [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible]

[illegible]

"national expenditure should be a means of cooperation for the benefit not only of some, but of all the members of the community," this Statement is a direct contravention of that canon, and there are some railways here which will not benefit the country but only the district affected, and that only to the extent of having a little money spent there. Moreover, a million and a half is not the sum that ought to have been put down, unless they are going to borrow much more next year. In this colony, of all the colonies, so far as I have read—for they have nothing like the chances of such a prosperous career as this has—we have a grand opportunity for proceeding with productive public works. But in this colony there are two classes of persons. There are some who, like the Premier and myself, believe in New Zealand and in its future, who have spent all their lives here, and have no need to go Home —unless the Premier is seen going to Westminster; but the great majority of us hope to live and die here. But there is also another class, who are always on the point of deserting the colony, and are never satisfied. Those are not the true friends of the colony. I have heard it said by a gentleman that he was only going to remain a few months; and now he is governing our finances. Are we not here, and shall we not be here in ten years' time? I think so, and so will our sons and daughters; and I hope that in twenty years' time most of us will be here still. But that we should have the right to undertake works that will not be [illegible] because we may not be here to bear the burden, is a most pernicious doctrine. This colony is boundless in its resources, and if we only take care we shall do well. [illegible] times are bad we should not be [illegible] in our borrowing; but when times are good we should [illegible], and in that way we should get along very much better. But [illegible] and we are all miserable, and [illegible] any more borrowing, and [illegible] becomes worse and worse; and when [illegible] we have proposals to borrow [illegible] of money, still [illegible] debt of the colony; [illegible] I am sure that every man will realize that such a process is one that will unhinge [illegible] a great deal of harm. It is [illegible] said that a candid friend is one [illegible] truth. I am going to [illegible] the Premier and tell [illegible] things. One is that [illegible] understand that he is the [illegible] and that he would feel [illegible] look to him as the [illegible] that the people of [illegible] say that he is one [illegible] the colony ever saw. [illegible] is that he does not [illegible], and how high [illegible] of the people. I [illegible] which inter- [illegible] I think, if the Premier [illegible] more careful in the [illegible], and had acted [illegible] independent judgment, it

would have been far better than it is. I may say that I shall vote for the second reading of this Bill, and also for the amendment proposed by the honourable member for Mataura, because, while the Otago Central line is hung up, while the Seaward Bush line is dragging its slow length along, while the Palmerston line is still unfinished, and the Auckland line crawling along, I think it is necessary to borrow this money and proceed with these works. I should also like to see included in the schedule the short line from Christchurch to Sumner, costing only a few thousand pounds, because this would be infinitely more profitable and of far greater convenience to the people living there in giving them a sea-outing, and would, at any rate, be better than spending £70,000 on the Westport-Inangahua line. If the Government would only put that line on the schedule I feel sure that there is not a member of the House who would not gladly support it.

Sir R. STOUT.—Sir, I do not know that I should have risen, even at this late hour, to speak in this debate if it had not been for the amendment moved by the honourable member for Mataura. I wish to take the opportunity of stating the position we intend to take up in that matter. Before I deal with that, however, I wish to say one or two words about the manner in which this debate has been conducted. I have listened to many debates in this House, and I have read many debates in other Houses; but this is certainly the most peculiar debate I ever listened to or read of in any Parliament. How has it been conducted? First, instead of having, as one would have expected there should be, a speech from the leader of the Opposition, the honourable member for Waitotara addressed the House, and the object of his address was not to attack this Loan Bill nor to attack the schedule of the Bill, but his object was to prove some acts of maladministration against the Government; and the acts of maladministration consisted of the payment to the Natives of rents on account of the Himatangi Block, some purchase of lands belonging to Mr. Churton, and the employment of Mr. Stevens to purchase Native lands on the North Island Trunk Railway-line on commission. Then, what did we have after that speech? That speech was replied to by my honourable friend the Minister for Native Affairs, and, I think, was replied to in such a way that the remaining members of the Opposition thought it best to drop the criticism the honourable member for Waitotara had started; and then not till a long while afterwards had we the leader of the Opposition getting up and complaining that no more Ministers had spoken in the debate, and hinting that if they did not speak he would have an amendment prepared in order that he might make a second speech in the one debate. What is the meaning of all this? Does this House believe that this amendment was moved by accident, or that all this was in accordance with some arrangement that had taken place? We know what was happening. We know that in a room not far from this there were meetings after meetings to see if they could not devise something to bring down—a sort of counter-schedule to the schedule of this Bill; and the lot fell upon the honourable member for Mataura, and in order to please the honourable gentleman they put in this £10,000 for the Seaward Bush, and arrived at the schedule in that way. How the arrangement was made we can understand. It is not as if the honourable member for Mataura had himself drawn up this schedule. I have no doubt he said, "I am not going to move this if I am to get nothing for my district;" and hence the reference to the Seaward Bush line. That has been the whole arrangement of this debate, and instead of allowing the debate to close—as I understood it was to close—after certain members of the Opposition had spoken the honourable member for Mataura comes in with this amendment. I assure that honourable gentleman and the colony that so long as I have a seat in this position I shall not allow the members of the Opposition to dictate what the schedule of any Bill shall be, and that if this motion is carried other Ministers will have to take charge of this Loan Bill. The position the Ministry take is this: As a Ministry we submit a Bill, and we propose to submit the schedule to the Committee. The Committee have a right to discuss the schedule, and I think it would be wrong in the Government to attempt to fetter the free discussion of any item—they should not prevent that, any more than they should prevent the discussion of any item on the estimates; but, if the Opposition come down with a rival Loan Bill, I say that means that they wish for other Ministers, and I shall regard it as such. Now let me refer to the speeches made in the debate; and I may say here—what is well known perhaps—that I should have spoken earlier in the debate only that my colleague the Colonial Treasurer had to reply, and for the first two nights of the debate he was in such a state of health that it was thought proper I should wait to sum up the debate in case he was not able to reply on the Bill. I wish to say one or two words about the attitude of the honourable member for Waitotara. First, in consequence of the short notice of his attack, my colleague the Native Minister did not say what might have been said in reference to those various charges of what has been called "maladministration"—and I may say that, if all the charges of maladministration that can be made against a Government are the three or four items mentioned by the honourable member for Waitotara, then I think the Government is in a very enviable position. What about this Himatangi Block? I thought that matter had been fought out last year in Committee of Supply, and that, when the vote was taken, there the matter ended; but it was made a charge, and hinted at by other members, that, a certain Dr. Buller being interested on behalf of some Maoris in the Himatangi Block, the Government had put this vote on the estimates in consequence of that. How unfair it was—I would not like to use a harsher term—that the honourable member forgot to men-

tion that this same matter had been before the Legislative Council year after year, and that, in 1883, when it had on its Native Affairs Committee men like the Hon. Mr. Richmond, the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker, and the Hon. Dr. Pollen, and others well acquainted with the whole matter, this Committee brought up a report recommending the Government to pay the Natives the back-rents, and they said, in that report, signed by the Hon. Mr. Richmond,—

"That, though the justice of petitioners' claim to Himatangi was recognized by the preamble to the Act, the restoration to the land was not achieved without many efforts, some expenditure, and the incurring of considerable liabilities by petitioners. Your Committee therefore recommend that the claim for accrued rents and interest should be discharged in full by the Government, and that the propriety of reimbursing the expenditure and discharging the reasonable liabilities incurred by the petitioners in this matter should be considered in a liberal spirit."

That matter came up again in 1885 before the Legislative Council, and the Council affirmed the previous report of 1883. I ask, in view of those facts, was it honest in any member of this House to get up and hint that the Government was led to settle this claim simply because a certain lawyer advocated it, when the Legislative Council in 1883 and 1885 had recommended that this settlement should take place? I ask the House to read the names of the Committee, to see who they were, and to see if they would be influenced by anything Dr. Buller said. When it is remembered, too, that when the report of the Native Affairs Committee of this House which the Government carried out last session was agreed to none of the Ministers were present, and that they never influenced any members of the Committee to get it passed, how can it be said that that substantiates a charge of maladministration against the Government? Then, as to the Churton purchase: it has been explained that that was done on the express recommendation of a Judge of the Native Land Court, as the only means of settling a most complicated Native title. Then, as to the employment of Mr. Stevens to purchase Native lands on commission. The statement was that he might be a probable candidate. Well, what was the party to which he was allied in this House before? He was with the honourable member for Egmont, and voted with him on every division, I think, except about the last Native Land Bill; and he was appointed by the Government, not because of any knowledge of his being a probable candidate, but solely on the recommendation of Mr. Butler, who, as the honourable member opposite will admit, is a very competent officer, and one whose recommendation ought to be followed. I think that disposes of those charges of maladministration. Then, the next Opposition speech of any importance was the speech of the honourable member for Napier; and his speech was certainly a most peculiar one. He is in the habit of making peculiar speeches, but I think that in peculiarity this one excelled them all. First, he began by stating that there was no policy in the Statement—that it was a barren Statement, and contained nothing. I should like to know what he means by a policy in a Public Works Statement. Did he explain what "policy" meant? Did he mean change in the management of the railways? The only policy, I apprehend, that there can be in a Public Works Statement, if works are to be carried on, is simply one defining what works are to be carried on—what railways or roads are to be constructed. But the honourable gentleman complained of this: that it failed to grapple with the thing in a statesmanlike manner. Well, I waited for about half an hour to hear how he would grapple with anything of the sort either in a statesmanlike manner or in any other way, and could not hear a suggestion from the honourable gentleman. What was his criticism—the criticism which he and most honourable members who have spoken in the debate have indulged in? They make, first, a general attack upon the Government, and then wind up by saying, "Our district has not got enough public money." Is our colony to progress, are we to have anything at all like politics, if members of the House like the honourable member for Napier get up and say, "There is not enough for my district"? Why, it is that which has degraded the politics of the colony—it is that which is degrading them. Sir, until there has been practised in this colony something like self-denial by the districts, and self-denial by members, we cannot hope that there will be anything like sound finance or politics ruled by principle in the colony. I was surprised to hear the honourable member wind up his speech with a sort of whine that the Napier–Palmerston line had not got enough money voted for its construction. Now I will come back to what I think should be our policy on this question of borrowing; but I wish to refer now to one or two more things the honourable gentleman said. The first thing he said was that the Government had no policy, and then he said that our policy was that we should not be borrowing money for roads. I still think that this colony has spent too much loan-money on roads. I still think, and do not go back from that, that if this colony wants a sound finance it cannot afford to spend enormous sums on roads out of borrowed money; but it must cast on the local bodies the making of roads. I do not say that the Government should not assist the local bodies, and the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill shows how they may assist; and I do not say the Government should not assist outlying districts in colonizing works. It must be still necessary for the Government to aid in this work of colonization; but if you are to ask the districts to rely on the Government for every bridge and road they want, you will never have a sound finance in the colony: and I say they are no statesmen or lovers of their country who are continually preaching to the

districts to rely on the Government for roads and bridges. Is this borrowing policy never to stop? Is there to be no time in the history of New Zealand when we shall put no more loans on the London market? I say it should be the policy of statesmen to gradually cast upon the consolidated revenue the aid given to colonizing operations, and to taper off the borrowing. I charge honourable members that, if our present system of local government is not sufficient for colonizing operations, they are to blame. Those who consented to what was done in 1875-76 should not charge the blame upon us. We are but carrying out a scheme of government which they themselves created. I do not say the Colonial Treasurer was not also to blame. He was not in the colony when Abolition took place, but he accepted the responsibility of it afterwards.

Major ATKINSON.—He was here in 1874.

Sir R. STOUT.—In 1874 it was only proposed to do away with the provinces in the North Island. The next thing that came on was a hint that the Government should do something in the way of promoting free immigration. I have never, Sir, been a believer in State-aided immigration to any great extent. I have believed all along that we ought to make this colony so attractive to the people of other countries that they will come to us without our borrowing money to bring them here; and, if this colony is going to start a further scheme of borrowing—as the honourable member for Napier recommends—to bring people here, I ask, again, where is the borrowing to end? We are to have new loans for roads and new loans for immigration. I should like to know where the borrowing policy is to stop, if that is to be the scheme. Then, the honourable member began to charge the Government with not having been sincere with their local-government proposals, or in dealing with the question of land and property taxation. I am amazed at the honourable member. Does he imagine that his constituents—for he did not seem to be addressing the House, but his constituents—does he imagine that his constituents are so ignorant of what is taking place in this House as not to know how votes are recorded? We had tested a few nights ago the sincerity of those who advocated a land-tax as against a property-tax. That came up on a question raised on going into Committee of Supply—on a question with reference to where charitable aid was to come from; and how did the honourable member vote? Why, Sir, the object with him and several others in this House is to shift the burdens from land, and put them on to the Consolidated Fund—on the Customs revenue. He wishes to get the burdens of land reduced, and to increase the burdens on personal property and the Customs revenue. We have tried, by the Property Assessment Bill of last year, and in every way we can, to get the land to bear its proper share of burdens, and the honourable member does his best to block that. I warn him and other large landowners that their attempt to cast upon the consolidated revenue—which is to cast it practically on the poor people—all the charges of Government will end in a reversal of public feeling, and, instead of the public being content with moderate taxation of land, we shall see that taxation largely increased. I hope the honourable member for Parnell will pardon me for not referring to his speech, because really, though I sympathize with much of what he said, his speech was so unpractical that I could not make out what policy he meant to advise. From one part of his speech you would have thought he was against all borrowing; in another part of his speech he was in favour of borrowing; and in a third part of his speech the only salvation was "local government," which he did not define. Then we had the speech of the honourable member for Manawatu, and the sole things which seem to have affected him were some improvements made in the Wanganui River; and he repeated no less than four times £1,110,000 and £800,000, which put me in mind of what we read in Carroll's "Hunting of the Snark"—"I said it thrice;" and he thought that put an end to the whole discussion. The honourable member for Clutha said he was opposed to all loans, in general and in particular, and yet he was in favour of the Loan Bill and of our proposals; and therefore I claim his vote in favour of this Bill. The honourable member for Waikato made one of his humorous commentaries which he calls criticism. The speech of the honourable member for Mount Ida consisted, it seemed to me, of a sort of restatement of his speech which he delivered to his constituents during the recess. He told his constituents that three things were necessary for the colony—namely, economy, abolition of the gold duty, and the Otago Central Railway. That was the way in which he, in common with some other honourable members, spoke. After dealing with a few generalities it came down to some particulars affecting their own districts.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I never said a word about the gold duty.

Sir R. STOUT.—I did not say the honourable member said so in his speech, but he did so in his address to his constituents.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I never mentioned it to my constituents.

Sir R. STOUT.—I will read an extract from a paper which the honourable member knows—the *Mount Ida Chronicle*—which says, "He thought the real cure was retrenchment. Economy and the abolition of the gold duty must go hand in hand." When I speak my memory is pretty correct. The honourable member, I think, was unfair in suggesting that this loan schedule was proposed in order, as he said, to "consolidate support."

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Hear, hear.

Sir R. STOUT.—Would the honourable gentleman name a railway which he thinks was put in for that purpose? We will take the Tophouse-Blenheim line. That goes through the District of Marlborough, represented two of our opponents. That is one of the which the Opposition caucus thinks

be struck out. Take the Helensville North Railway. Does he mean that? That benefits two districts also represented by honourable members who do not support us. I wish the honourable member would really name the railway. I am surprised that the honourable member should make such suggestions, because he ought not to make suggestions of that character unless he is prepared to support them. I will not go through all the speeches: it would take too long to do so. I may, however, say this: that the honourable member for Hawke's Bay followed the lead of other honourable members. After preaching economy and no loans whatever, in winding up his speech he said what was required in his district was a road survey between Napier and Wairoa, and unless that was done the prosperity of the colony could not be attained. So he fell into the same line as those who had already addressed the House — namely, that the thing necessary for the colony was simply to give some money for their own districts.

Captain RUSSELL.—Incorrect.

Sir R. STOUT.—In what respect? Did the honourable member not say it was necessary there should be a road survey in his district?

Captain RUSSELL.—No.

Sir R. STOUT.—I think it must have come out by accident when he was speaking about borrowing.

Captain RUSSELL.—I deprecated all borrowing, but said, if the Premier would have borrowing, I ought to have my share.

Sir R. STOUT. — The honourable member deprecates all borrowing; but he has not the courage of his opinions to oppose all borrowing and to show self-sacrifice; but he says, "Well, let us have a scramble, and I must get so much for my roads." The next thing we had was a speech by the honourable member for Wakatipu. The honourable member for Moeraki, I think, has very well criticised it. It consisted of sound and fury, or, to put it in another way, there was the thunder without the lightning. I will give one test as to the accuracy of his facts. I understood him to say that private companies have been able to construct railways cheaper than the Government, and I think he instanced the Rakaia Forks and other branches. He did not mention, perhaps, these particular lines, but I understood that he was hinting at them. I would point out to him that the cheapest-constructed line in the colony has been constructed by the General Government. Forty-two miles of railway were constructed at a cost of £2,548 per mile — namely, the Malvern-Whitecliffs Railway; so that, as far as this is concerned, his facts were wrong. The next thing we heard about was railway management. I should like honourable members to state exactly what they mean by railway management. Do they wish the fares to be lowered? Do they want fewer trains to be run? Do they want fewer employés on the railways? Do they want worse carriages? Let us hear it stated wherein they consider the management defective. I know the honourable member referred to certain officers leaving and going off to other colonies. Why? Because they got better pay there.

Mr. FERGUS.—No, they did not.

Sir R. STOUT.—That is the reason given, and we could have retained Mr. Smith's services if we had been prepared to pay a larger salary.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about Back?

Sir R. STOUT.—I am not aware of the facts in that case, but I am informed that we could have retained his services if we had paid him a larger salary. I can say this, also: that the tendency of New Zealand has always been to keep the salaries of our officers small. If you take Victoria, the General Manager of Railways gets £3,000 a year. If you take Sydney you will find the same large salaries paid. You cannot expect officers of a high class to remain in New Zealand on salaries of £600, £800, or £1,000 a year if they can get £2,000 a year in other colonies. I want to know the specific blot in the railway management. What is it? Let me deal now with the question of fares. So far as fares are concerned, the Government have reduced fares to such an extent that we have given to the producers at least £50,000 or £60,000, if not more.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—What producers?

Sir R. STOUT. — I think the honourable member has always said that there is only one class of producers in New Zealand—namely, the agriculturists. They have been the persons who have mainly benefited. The goldfields have not benefited. The agriculturists and those who produce wool have got the benefit of these reduced fares. Could honourable members do with a less number of trains, with fewer officers, with fewer conveniences upon our railways? We are placed in this difficulty: We have what may be termed "cast-iron charges," which apply to almost all parts of the colony: there are only a few exceptions. We cannot do what a private person would do. Suppose a man wished to have so many tons of goods or thousands of sheep carried, he might go to a private person and say, "If you make a concession you will get my freight." The Government cannot make concessions. We can only say, "There are our rates, and we can only be guided by our rates." Are you to say that non-political Boards are to manage our railways, and that the country is to allow these Boards to say what the rates are to be, and what private arrangements are to be made? I say this Parliament will never yield to that. There is an enormous danger in handing over the management of any of our affairs to Boards which have no responsibility; and we have had an example of that already. When I was at Melbourne some three years ago there was then a great craze there about divesting Parliament of all its powers and giving those powers over to Boards. I thought over it, and I wrote a letter to the papers, pointing out what this would mean. It would mean that democracy had been a failure. If our Parliament is unable to manage our business, and if we must hand over all our affairs to non-political Boards, what does it mean? If

means that popular institutions have failed—representative institutions have failed. Then, we ask, where is the thing to end? What then is to be done? I say you have this other difficulty to meet: that you cannot trust any Government to make what arrangements it pleases with those who wish freight to be carried; and you must, whatever damage it may do the railways now and again, keep to certain fixed tariff rates to the letter. You will always have this difficulty, and it is a difficulty you cannot get over. Where, then, has the management been ineffective? I ask those honourable members who make general charges to name where the defect is, and let us see what it is. Now, I have referred to the question of railway management, and, before passing to the question of general borrowing, let me deal with the question of the schedule of the Bill. We have attempted, in dealing with this schedule, to carry out what we laid down in 1884—namely, to bring to paying points the uncompleted railways. I am not going over the whole of the railways. Some of them I know only partially, though, no doubt, I have seen them, and have information regarding them from reading. But the others I am acquainted with, and as to most of the lines we have been guided by our experts, and have allocated to each a sufficient sum to make the money already expended produce something. Let us take the railway referred to by the honourable member for Mataura as an example of the line followed in dealing with that schedule. The honourable gentleman frankly admitted that, as far as the Edendale-Fortrose Railway is concerned, if the money proposed for it is expended it will take the line to a paying point, and it will make of some value a railway that has been partially constructed for years. There are some miles of line there on which a train hardly ever runs—perfectly useless; and it will continue to be useless until a tunnel is made about a mile farther on, to enable the line to reach a main road. That is the line we have followed in dealing with this schedule. So far as the Seaward Bush Railway is concerned, the vote proposed will not take it to a very paying point, but to a point where it will pay something, because bush and village settlement is going on there. We have followed the same principle as to the Switzers line. If the money proposed is not expended there, many thousands of pounds already spent must continue to lie utterly wasted. As to the Otago Central, too, when the money asked for is used it will be found that that line will be used, that part of it will be opened for traffic, though it will not be carried to a point that will make it a very paying line, because it will not go sufficiently far into the interior of the country. Coming to the North Island lines, we have followed the same principle there. We propose to take on the Wellington–Woodville line from Mauriceville to what will be the large centre of Eketahuna, and that line will then pay more than it would if it were left at Mauriceville. As to the Gorge line, about which so much has been said, we have not asked for sufficient to construct the line to Palmerston from Woodville. But we know it must take more than two years to complete that line, looking at the nature of the work, and therefore we have asked for sufficient for two years, and when the two years have passed another vote will have to be asked for. It is absurd to talk about that line paying till the whole of the line is made. It cannot be carried to any special paying point until the whole line is made. There has been some hint thrown out that the construction of the Westport–Inangahua line will be a great advantage to the Midland Railway Company. There can be no doubt it will be: I do not disguise it for a moment. But I ask those honourable members who have complained as to the Gorge line, does not precisely the same argument apply in regard to it? Does not the completion of the Gorge line before the Masterton line is finished to Woodville mean the diverting of all the Hawke's Bay traffic to the line of the Manawatu Company?—and if you force on the construction of the Gorge line, you are simply forcing the Government to buy the Manawatu Company's line at their own price. I warn the House of that. I say there will be an attempt—I see it coming—by the Manawatu Railway people to force the Government to buy that line at an extravagant price; and the sudden completion of the Gorge line is simply giving them a premium for that purpose; and I ask the House to be careful of that in dealing with this question. It has been said of the Blenheim–Tophouse and Westport–Inangahua lines that their construction will benefit the Midland line. I admit at once that they will benefit the Midland line when it is completed; but how do we propose to deal with that matter? I ask the House to look at the counter-proposition of the Opposition. What is it? Has this House forgotten? Has it not read the schedule of the Three-Million Loan Act? Their proposition was to construct a line along what may be called the Kaikoura Cliffs to join the Canterbury line at Redpost. It was to be a line from the Awatere along the eastern coast. And what would the construction of that eastern line mean? Talk about constructing useless lines of railway! why, the construction of that line would very largely increase the value of the property of a gentleman who practically owns the County of Cheviot, and it would largely increase the value of Clifford and Wells's property northward; and, in my opinion, the Government ought not to start the construction of such a line as that until it has got from the present landowners sufficient land to make a number of small settlements. It has no right to make a railway which would largely increase the value of those properties, without getting any equivalent. And yet the honourable member for Mataura moves such an amendment that its whole object is to play into the hands of a few large landowners in the Provincial District of Marlborough. I know the land, and I know also the pressure put on the Government in reference to this, [illegible] honourable members opposite also.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The Land for Settlement Bill.

Sir R. STOUT.—A hint is enough to a person who understands. Now I come to this question of the Tophouse-Blenheim line. I say this House has to face this thing: We have to connect the East and West Coasts, as was promised, by one of two ways—either to run a line down the East Coast in front of the Kaikoura Mountains to Red-post, or to take a line from Tophouse to Blenheim—and the question that the House has to settle is, Which is the cheaper mode? And I appeal to any honourable member who takes the plans and the routes, and the information which is available, to say what conclusion can be come to. I say there is only one, and that if the colony can get rid of constructing a line down the East Coast to Red-post it will be cheaper and better to make the line to Tophouse. But what do we propose in reference to that line? We propose that only the surveys shall be made this year, because we recognize that if the Midland line is not constructed, or if it does not go that way, then the Tophouse line will not serve a sufficiently good purpose, and that it ought not to be constructed. We therefore ask for only sufficient to provide for the surveys this year; and next year, if we see that the Midland line is going by Tophouse, we propose to proceed with the work. And so it is in reference to the Westport-Inangahua line. I would like to know what the House is going to do, if that line is not to be made. Are we to maintain at a large expense the present Buller Road fit for heavy traffic? The county cannot maintain it. It is merely a question of cheapness—whether the colony shall maintain a good road for heavy traffic, or shall continue the railway to take up the traffic. I had forgotten the reference to the North Island Trunk Loan. Many honourable members have referred to that, and some have spoken of nothing else, though we have been discussing the general Loan Bill. I do not blame them, however, because it may shorten our debates, and that is something that requires attention, considering how many days we have spent over this Bill. But honourable members have been entirely inaccurate in saying that all the money has been taken from that loan for road and river works. We have incurred no less than £109,301 5s. 8d. expenditure for railway works proper on the trunk line—that is, for purely railway works—while the total amount taken for surveys, roads and river works, station-buildings, and all other purposes, including contracts let to Natives, salaries, wages, and everything, does not amount to so much money. The fact is, the money already expended on railway works alone on the trunk line amounts to £30,000, and we have liabilities to the amount of £79,170; so that, so far as the North Island Trunk Line Loan is concerned, we have attempted faithfully to carry out what we proposed years ago in reference to the expenditure on that line. Now, it is said we have no right to take expenditure for the purchase of Native land out of that loan. Where else is it to come from?

Major ATKINSON.—Out of the £800,000 free for the House to spend.

Sir R. STOUT.—Out of the £800,000? It simply means this: Is it to come out of the other loan-money? And those honourable members who continually say we should not borrow money are asking us to borrow more for the purchase of Native land. What was the resolution passed last year? It was that we should purchase at least five hundred thousand acres of Native land; and, as I understood it, many honourable members thought we should have a good many hundred thousand acres more. Is payment for all that to come out of loan-money? Is this borrowing never to cease? Those honourable members who stand up here and denounce any more borrowing are the very members who demand that there should be more borrowing to pay for Native land. I believe that under our Native Land Administration Bill there will not be the same need for purchasing Native land by the Government as there has been in the past. I hope the Natives themselves will be able to provide for the disposal of their land on settlement conditions, and that the State will not need to interfere in that as it has done in the past. But I tell honourable gentlemen that they have got to face this question about more loan-money; and I say that the taking of this £100,000 for the purchase of Native lands—considering that we propose that any profit which may arise from the sale of the land afterwards shall go in aid of the North Island Trunk Railway—is a reasonable and just proposition, and I hope the House will agree to it. I come now to the question of the general borrowing, which the colony has to face. I have already said that I do not believe this colony can afford to go on borrowing vast sums of money for all kinds of works. I believe it should attempt to construct its buildings out of its consolidated revenue; I believe it should attempt to construct its roads—except those which are required to open up Crown lands, and perhaps some into very remote districts—by giving aid to local bodies; and, so far as railways are concerned, it must finish some of its lines, and it may have to construct some new lines. I disagree entirely with those honourable gentlemen who say that roads are of more importance than railways. I say that a country which has got to export its produce, and has got to rely upon a large export of produce to maintain its present position, cannot do away with the machines which make production at a cheap rate possible—and these are railways. If you wish to see what has been done in the way of increasing production, go to India and see how many miles of railway have been made there. Something like fifteen thousand miles of railway;—and I believe it is proposed to make some twenty or thirty thousand miles more. And what is the result? They have cheapened production to such an extent that India is now able to compete with the colonies and other wheat-producing coun-

tries. It is impossible for us to compete with other countries if we have no railways to take our products to the seaboard. Take, for example, central Otago. We know that there are thousands of acres in the centre of Otago of the finest wheat land in the colony or perhaps in any country. Can the people there get their produce to the seaboard at a rate which will pay, unless they have a railway? It is impossible. Again, in the interior of this very province, can you make a bush settlement between Mauriceville and Woodville pay without a railway? And the settlements in the North of Auckland—can they be successful without a railway? I say you cannot make these settlements in the North of Auckland prosperous with roads and water-carriage, because you require a considerable amount of money to make your roads to the water — and indeed they would cost more than to extend the railway up to the north. Therefore the colony has to face the question that it cannot compete with other countries in its produce unless it has railways, so that it may have cheap carriage to the seaboard for its wheat and wool. I ask the House to think of that in connection with borrowing. Honourable members have said that my views on borrowing have changed. Sir, I deny that. I say that in every speech I have made—and I spoke twice at Dunedin and once at Invercargill — there has been no conflict in any statement I have made. I said to my constituents at Dunedin the same as I said at Invercargill. I said I was not going to be one to call for large borrowing for borrowing's sake; but I said to them as I have said to-night—and I gave them the same illustration—that if you wish to increase production in this colony you must have the means of cheap transit to the seaboard, and that can only be got by railways. Therefore we cannot stop borrowing. But I say now, as I said then, that those who wish to see this colony prosperous, and who, like myself, have made it our home, must be very careful as to how we treat that borrowing. I say that in two or three years we shall have to stop borrowing. I ask the House to face that. I have said that all through the session, and I have asked the House to rise to the occasion with a spirit of self-sacrifice; but I got no response. I said that with regard to school-buildings, as well as with regard to our own Government buildings, we should make no provision for them in future out of loan. Could I get a response to that? Could I get a majority for that proposition? No. Members would not face the difficulty. And I say that, as for any spirit of self-sacrifice having been displayed in this House by those who have most denounced the system of borrowing before their constituents, there has absolutely been none. Have they shown any of that spirit of self-sacrifice which would render borrowing unnecessary? No; not the least. I tell them now again that if the colony is not to be driven into ruin the time must come when we shall have to face direct and indirect taxation, and when this colony will borrow no more. But how is that to be done? Have I seen any desire on the part of the House this session to do it? No; none. Honourable gentlemen have been continually saying, "We will not have any burdens put on the people; there shall be nothing put on the land. No; not even charitable aid shall be charged to the land; school-buildings shall not be charged on the land: but, come from where it will, we must have the money, and you dare not touch the land." But will the Consolidated Fund bear it? It is not increasing, but decreasing; and we have to face that question also. And how is it to be met? By strict economy. And when I attempted to apply a general principle to dealing with the Civil Service in regard to economy, how, again, was I met by this House? Those very honourable members who, inside and outside the House, continually talked about economy and reducing the salaries of the Civil servants—how did they act? When I proposed a perfectly fair scheme of an independent Commission, so that at the same time the rights of the Civil servants and the rights of the colony should be preserved, and economy obtained —how did those honourable gentlemen act? They voted dead against the proposal. I say this House is not sincere in its expression of desire for economy and no more borrowing. I do not believe that one-half of those honourable members who spoke so much about economy when before their constituents have shown the least practical desire for it this session. And now, with reference to this Loan Bill, what is their proposal? Let me test their proposal. They propose that the Government shall amend the schedule by striking out £175,000, which they say is unnecessary; but they are going to devote it to other works. I tell them that, if they were true economists, they would boldly say at once, "Knock that off the loan. We will do with so much less." I say it is a perfect farce and sham to talk as they do. How did they hawk this amendment about? They have had caucuses, and there has been lobbying going on. There are two or three ways of caucusing. Sometimes a caucus is held by two, or three, or four; and this one will say, "How do you think this will do? What do you think of that? Will you agree to this?" I knew of this amendment before the honourable gentleman proposed it. I knew what the honourable member for Egmont meant when he said that there might be something moved. I knew why he did not speak on the first night. He was waiting for something to turn up. Sir, the very fact of the honourable member for Mataura moving such an amendment and not proposing to reduce the loan by £175,000 shows that he and those who vote with him are not sincere in their professed desire for no more borrowing. And how is this new allocation to be made? The honourable member for Mount Ida talked of consolidating votes; but I should like to ask, is there no consolidation of votes here? Why, the thing is too plain; it is too transparent. Let me read it. Tophouse-Blenheim Railway —that is to be struck out. But what will th-

honourable member for Wairau say? What will the honourable member for Picton say? It will never do to offend them. We must propose something else. What shall it be? We will give them half for the Awatere line: that will meet their views. Then, of course, there are honourable members north of Auckland who have to be looked after; so we will give a little more to them. And Hawke's Bay has to be appeased. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay has had the honesty to say that, although he is opposed to all borrowing, still, as loans are going about, he may as well have a little for his district; so we will appease him by giving a little more to the Gorge line. Then there are the Wellington members; and there is the Wellington and Manawatu Company, which has a pretty strong influence in this House: we must also please them. And then they wish to catch the honourable member for Mount Ida and to consolidate his vote; so they give another £60,000 to the Otago Central Railway. The thing is too transparent. But, at all events, I was pleased to see that the mover of the amendment was content with the little gift they gave him of £10,000 for his trouble in preparing the amendment. Consolidating votes, indeed! the thing is too transparent. These are the proposals of the non-borrowers! And what does this amendment mean? We have provided this year that only the amount for surveys in connection with the expenditure of this £175,000—about £2,000 or £3,000—shall be spent, and in the meantime this £175,000 will remain in the chest. "Ah! but," the honourable gentleman says, "do not let it remain there. Have no borrowing, no expenditure; but let us spend this." I ask the House to look at the matter from an economical point of view. How does it affect that? If it should turn out that the Midland Railway is not constructed as proposed, and we find it is not to go on, then we shall have this money to be dealt with by Parliament by some alteration of this Loan Bill at a future time; but if this amendment is carried the money is gone. But, if the Midland Railway is constructed, I ask the House to say whether the members from Canterbury, Marlborough, Nelson, and Westland demand that there shall be communication by way of Tophouse, and what will happen then. They will come down and ask for more money to construct this line: and the Marlborough people will say, "We will vote for this. We have got the Awatere line, but there is no reason why we should not have this also." And so they will vote for it. Do not let the House be led astray. They will vote for this amendment now, and then, if the Midland Railway is made, this Tophouse line must be made, and in a year or two, when all this money is gone, the House will be called upon to provide funds for constructing that line. Sir, that is what the House has to face. I say the only true way to put a stop to borrowing is first to begin and cast what you can on the localities and on the Consolidated Fund. That is how we shall have to begin to edge off. You must do that gradually. You cannot do it all at once. And, Sir, I have attempted ever since I have been on these benches to get the House to face it, because we have got to face it sooner or later—within two or three years, I think; and if this colony is to pass through its financial crisis satisfactorily it will be the duty of the House to arrange its finances so that we may be able to edge off by placing some of the charges upon the local bodies, and by putting others upon the consolidated revenue. I look forward to the time when, instead of borrowing a million a year, we shall spend half a million a year of borrowed money. But you can only do that by getting rid of the expenditure on roads and general purposes. We are attempting that to some extent this year, and we have to do more in that direction next year. I hope that next year we shall not have half the sum for these purposes on the estimates that we have on this year. I hope we shall get rid of at least £100,000 for defence. Then there is a large amount left to us as a legacy under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act: I hope we shall see nothing of that next year. I hope, too, that next year there will be nothing for roads and bridges north of Auckland. And so I might go on through each item if time permitted. I will only say that I hope that next year the public works estimates will show a reduction on these items of one-half, and that gradually we shall get rid of them altogether. I ask this House, I entreat this House, to think of this in the future. I say that none of us have really felt what we ought to feel; but since I have been in office I have striven, by various Bills introduced, to get the House and the colony to face the difficulty by throwing charges on to localities, and, as far as possible, on the consolidated revenue. This House was not inclined to face it in 1884, it was not inclined to face it last year, and I am afraid it is not inclined to face it this year. And let me say one word more. I admit the generous spirit which has been shown to the Government by many members of this House; but I say—and I do not say it merely for myself—that every one of the Ministers has endeavoured to the utmost degree to promote economy in the public service. And only those who have been on these benches know the difficulties of the position—know the wants and demands that are constantly made upon Ministers; and in grappling with those difficulties we may have offended many members, because we have had to say, "We cannot afford" this or that. And I say this, further, to the House: that, if our supporters and our opponents will only meet us in a generous spirit, if they will only aid us in preventing burdens of debt and other burdens being added to this colony, which it cannot bear, we may be able to promote true economy. Of course there are difficulties in the way, especially in a democratic colony like this, as the honourable member for Inangahua pointed out; for there is no doubt that this is the weakness of a democracy: that it does not look far enough ahead. And members of this House have to combat influences which ought not to

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be brought to bear against them. I admit the difficulties; but they must be met. I ask this House to think of that. I ask it not to agree to this amendment of the honourable member for Mataura, because it is not moved in a friendly spirit; but I say, let the House discuss the schedule if it will. If honourable members can honestly say that money can be saved on that schedule, let it be saved, and let us borrow so much the less. Let us commence at once to taper off the borrowing, and, whatever the consequences, show our regard for the future of the colony and for the happiness of its people.

Mr. BRYCE.—I had not the advantage of hearing the full purport of the remarks made by the Premier; but I did hear him, as I came into the Chamber, say that a Committee of the Legislative Council had twice passed a resolution in favour of the Himatangi claims to which he said I did not refer. I must say I think the Premier's excellent memory has failed him on this occasion, for I did mention the fact with the utmost distinctness.

Sir R. STOUT.—You mentioned that the Legislative Council once passed the resolution.

Mr. BRYCE.—I said a Committee of the Legislative Council had passed a resolution, As for the rest—the manner in which Dr. Buller worked about the lobbies, and the manner in which the estimates were rushed through—these are matters of notoriety; and if the Premier did not know of them, well, I can only say that every one else did.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I wish also to make a personal explanation. The House may remember that the Premier stated that I, in speaking to my constituents, referred to only three subjects—economy, the Otago Central, and the gold duty; and, when I interjected that I had never mentioned the gold duty at all, the Premier picked up a newspaper and quoted something which seemed to confute what I had said. I can only say that the paper from which he quoted is in my hand. It is a report of a speech which I delivered at Naseby.

Sir R. STOUT.—St. Bathan's.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I am coming to that. The only speech which is reported is the speech that I delivered at Naseby, and it is here in six columns; and, although I was speaking to a mining community, it so happened that I never mentioned the gold duty from beginning to end. But at the end of the speech there are twenty or thirty lines headed "Mr. Mackenzie at St. Bathan's." That is an outlying portion of the district; and, as far as I remember, the particular remark alluded to was in answer to a question about the gold duty, when I said that, as it was always objected that the revenue could not stand the loss of the duty, room would have to be made for it by a reduction in expenditure. I think so still; but it is characteristic of the Premier that he should pass over a *verbatim* report of my speech and fasten on one in which accuracy must necessarily be sacrificed to condensation.

Sir R. STOUT.—Will the honourable gentleman allow me to read an extract from the report?—

"Mr. MACKENZIE then addressed the meeting, and was listened to with the closest attention throughout. He went over a good deal of the same ground as at Naseby, but dealt more particularly with Protection as it affected the mining interest. He went into the question of the gold duty, and said that, while every one was willing to admit that it was wrong in principle, the invariable addition was that we could not do without the revenue. He thought the real cure was retrenchment. Economy and the abolition of the gold duty must go hand in hand."

Major ATKINSON.—I have listened to the very eloquent and powerful speech of the Premier with mingled feelings of pain and pleasure: pain, Sir, because the honourable gentleman seems to be utterly unconscious of the absolute contradiction of the speech delivered to-night with the whole of his action in this House, and with the whole of the proposals of the Government now under the consideration of the House; pleasure, from the fact that it seems at last that the Premier has risen to his duty, and has assumed the position that we have long desired that he should occupy. The honourable gentleman laughs. I regret that he does so.

Sir R. STOUT.—Is it your desire that I should remain Premier?

Major ATKINSON.—There are many other things which I would rather happen than that the Premier should be displaced. I can believe—in fact, I do believe strongly that at the present time the Premier is probably the best man we can get for the position he occupies; but that is on the one condition that the Premier will give effect to his own opinions, to his oft-expressed opinions, to his reiterated opinions. But, Sir, what do we find? Can any one put his finger upon one single stand he has taken in this House in the direction of the speech which he has made to us to-night? Not one. I do not know why—it is not my business to say why—but I am going to ask him to do it now, after his declaration. But let us look for a moment at the whole history of his proceedings since he assumed the Premiership. Let us see whether it would bear comparison with the speech he has delivered to-night—a speech which I, for one, wish him to give effect to. But consider, I say; look at the fact of his joining the Colonial Treasurer, in the first instance. What was the one ground upon which the Colonial Treasurer returned to politics? Was it economy? Was it tapering off borrowing? No; the colony must have "another chance." Large borrowing must be undertaken if the colony was to be saved. Enormous sums were to be borrowed, and there was no other chance for the colony but the borrowing of large sums. "Economy" was a word at which the Colonial Treasurer jeered. It was a mere sham. Has he ever pointed out an instance of where economy can be practised? Yet now the Premier tells us—and I, for believe it—that if we are not to get in'

difficulties we must economize. I ask the Premier, where is he going to economize? where has he shown the way to economy? where has he led the House in the direction of economy? in what respect?—unless it was that wretched Civil Service Bill, which was to fix the salary of Civil servants according to the price of potatoes. Why, Sir, the thing is ridiculous upon the face of it. To call that a step in the direction of economy is trifling with the House. I venture to say that if that measure had worked to the extent that the Premier expected it would—and I speak with some knowledge of the Civil Service—it could not have affected expenditure to the extent of more than £500 a year. How absurd, then, to talk of saving £30,000 a year by that wretched Bill!

Sir R. STOUT.—I never said so.

Major ATKINSON.—I know the honourable gentleman never said so; but he insinuated that it would do so, just as he has insinuated it to-night; because when he proposed the Bill he said, "If this Bill is passed this year we shall, I hope, reduce the Civil Service expenditure by £30,000 to £40,000 a year." It is quite true he did not say that reduction would result from the operation of the Bill; but every honourable member knows that when he introduced the Bill that was what he meant, and that was how he was going to effect the reduction. Then, following him up, let us see what he has done since. First of all, he came in with the object of and in the interests of economy—of introducing a better system of local government. Sir, the Provincialists, so-called, and, I regret to say, some of the old Abolitionists, who shrank from their first love—for what reasons I have never been able to fathom—combined: they were not going to restore the provinces, but they were going to introduce a better system of local government, led by the Premier and the Colonial Treasurer. What has become of that? Where is the better system of local government which the honourable gentleman has introduced? And he tells us to-night that he has not been able to do it because he has not been supported; but he never told the country nor any other member of the House so before. He was clear what he was going to do. He would have a large majority to do it; and he was supported by the honourable member for Napier—who felt very strongly in this matter—in this great work. But it was only ignorance—if I may use the word in a parliamentary sense—that made the honourable gentleman take that stand; and so soon as he had been through the country and had seen its institutions he had the manliness to say that revolution could not build up a Constitution, and that we must gradually develop the institutions that we have; and we have seen the result in amended Counties Act and other amending statutes that we have since had placed before us. He thought all we had to do was to cut the Road Boards adrift—no more assistance and no more roads; and they were to be left to develop on the legislation that had been standing for years, and which the honourable gentleman came in to undertake to change. Then, I ask, has th honourable gentleman introduced any econom in this matter? Yes, he has: the economy c gradually placing everything that was possibl on local rates instead of on the consolidate revenue. That, Sir, is all the economy. I ask where is it that the honourable gentleman ha led us to? In what has he reduced our ex penditure, and what has been the effect upo the Consolidated Fund of charging the loca bodies with all these matters with which th honourable gentleman has now charged them A great effect indeed. The Colonial Treasure is in the proud position of coming down an telling this House—although he told us a ver different tale during the recess and last sessio from that which the Premier told us to-nigh —that he can remit one-sixteenth of a penny on the property-tax. That is indeed a climax We may indeed rejoice that now we have an economical Government to administer ou affairs. Before I go any further I might here point out that he has been an absolute failure in regard to local-government legislation; and I congratulate the honourable gentleman upon having faced the question manfully, though he and his colleagues were wrong in the grounds they took up, and my honourable friend the member for Napier has had to leave them because they have become apostate in the cause of local government. But I do not think so; I think they are to be greatly commended for having become possessed of a knowledge which we on this side of the House have been possessed of many years, and not only possessed of, but have been acting upon. Then, we were to have great economies and advantages if we would only consent to have Railway Boards. The Premier seems greatly troubled, and he asks, in much astonishment, "Why do not honourable members tell me what it is they mean by 'railway reform'? What is it they want?" Shall I refer him to his own speech when he was in office, and those of the present Minister for Public Works? Yes, I will refer him. His memory is good; and I will venture to say he has already in his mind a definition of what is meant by "railway reform." The Minister for Public Works told us the other day that so important did the Government consider it to have satisfactory tariffs that hardly a week passed without a revision of the tariff. Just think of that. After two and a half years of being in office, the honourable gentleman—an expert, who knew everything about railways, and came for the purpose of reforming our whole system—after two and a half years' careful studying of the matter, with full and absolute power to do as he liked, not hampered with a Board, and having everything at his fingers' ends, and not objecting to sacrifice a large amount of revenue in order to make things pleasant and useful for the country—the honourable gentleman, I say, now tells us that, after all his labours, he is still obliged to make weekly alterations in the tariff.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—That is the same with every railway in the world.

Major ATKINSON. — That, indeed, is a clincher. I understand a little of this matter. I am not blaming those honourable gentlemen for this—I am only blaming them for having assumed a knowledge and power which they found themselves utterly incapable of applying. I say they obtained their seats under false pretences. They have made confession in many matters. The Colonial Treasurer laughs; but nobody confesses his sins more than he does—after he is found out, Sir. He confesses them in a very cheerful and perky way that is all parallel with it. But in his confessions he takes care to put a favourable light upon them with regard to himself. Any one reading his Financial Statements will see that he has had to confess that he was mistaken in every statement that he made originally; and so with the Premier, and so with the Minister for Public Works. And to-night the Premier has had to tell us that he has acted in contradiction to his opinions up to to-night. His actions have certainly given the lie to his statement as given to the country. Well, these Railway Boards were to be the salvation of the country. If that had not been so the Minister for Public Works would not have joined the Government under any circumstances. But I will go a little further back, and, if I remember aright, the Governor's Speech said the same thing. Was the Premier connected with the Governor's Speech, or was that Speech written by somebody else? We must assume the Premier's responsibility in this matter. He was undoubtedly responsible both for the Statement of the Minister for Public Works and for His Excellency's Speech. However, we have now got the Colonial Treasurer, on behalf of the Government, backing out of this. As a matter of course we see one Minister getting up and contradicting a most important statement made by another. I can remember the time when, after such a statement by the Premier contradicting a statement made by a Minister for Public Works, we should have expected to see the Minister for Public Works retire; he could have done nothing else. They no more think of retiring, however, when they do not agree, than they think of flying. I am thankful, at any rate, that the Railway Boards are done with. Even if my honourable friend the Minister for Public Works should succeed in surviving till another Parliament, we shall have no more of that; and so my honourable friend the Minister for Public Works will have, in his next Public Works Statement, whenever it may be, to recant, and strike out that paragraph, as he understands now that the Premier means to have none of it. Well, I do not propose, for I should take up too long a time, to follow the Premier's history right up to the present time. I have only touched upon these salient points to show that, so far, the honourable gentleman has not assisted the House in the direction which he has begged us to go in at the present time. I shall presently have more to say about the position at the present time, because, I take it, that is a matter of much greater importance than those points I have been touching upon; but they were necessary, as the Premier seems now at last to have stepped out in a direction in which, I venture to say, he will find two-thirds of the House follow him. I will deal with that presently; but, for the moment, I come to those parts of the honourable gentleman's speech in which he refers to the amendment of my honourable friend. I know a little about this amendment. I happen to have seen it before. It is possible that the honourable gentleman may be surprised to hear that; but, like the Colonial Treasurer, I propose to make a clean breast of it.

Sir R. STOUT.—It was amended in red ink.

Major ATKINSON.—Very likely. We always like to have things perfect. The Premier seemed to be surprised to find that we had it in order—he seemed to think that it was not in order. Now, what were the remarks of the Premier upon this? Very eloquent he was upon the Palmerston junction to Woodville. "Why," he said, "is this House going to play into the hands of a private company? Can it be true that the House proposes to finish this line before it connects Woodville with Masterton?" I venture to think that this is quite news to the House and to the country: that the Government had any intention—especially a Government that could not borrow after two years——

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Major ATKINSON.—In two or three years, the Premier said, the borrowing would have to stop; but if I have misunderstood the Premier I do not want to be arguing upon a false basis. Will the honourable gentleman kindly tell me what he did mean to say?

Sir R. STOUT.—I did not say two years. In a few years.

Major ATKINSON.—I understood the purport to be this: that in the immediate future we ought to stop, and that in the meantime our business was clear—to taper off borrowing at once, and not lose any time, because we could not stop all of a sudden without great difficulties arising; and that in two or three years—that is, in a few years; that is, very soon—we shall not be able to borrow at all, and we must immediately begin to taper off borrowing if we do not want to ruin the colony. The honourable gentleman lays that down. Now I go back to the point about the Palmerston and Woodville line. The honourable gentleman asks, Can it be true that we are actually going to push this line through before we complete to Woodville? Sir, how much would it take the honourable gentleman to complete to Woodville? It means several very large loans.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Major ATKINSON. — How much does it mean?

Sir R. STOUT.—The present loan would take it beyond Ekatahuna.

Major ATKINSON.—Then it must be conducted much more economically than hitherto; but, then, there is more than thirty miles to Woodville. But I say it has never been contemplated by the House to postpone the

struction of that line until the completion of the Woodville gap; and I say, further, knowing the country, that when that gap is completed through passengers will not come down the Government line, but down the Wellington and Manawatu Company's line, because it will be thirty miles cheaper, and a much easier route. All those who know the circumstances under which that line was agreed to be constructed by the company know that it was agreed to under the idea of not pushing on this Woodville line for some years. That was the fair understanding. It was possible we might take it on to Eketahnua, but it was not thought then advisable to take it as far as that; and it was considered that we ought to have the connection with New Plymouth, Napier, and Wellington completed by means of the Manawatu Company's line. There is no doubt that was the understanding when the company undertook the line, and the pledges to Napier and New Plymouth were quite clear that the line was to be pushed through and completed by the time the Palmerston-Wellington line was opened; and I venture to say that the present Minister for Public Works was a party to that arrangement—that he intended that that line should be completed, and that he has made capital out of the fact that the Opposition last year cut off so much money from that loan, and that was the reason it was not completed. And now we are asked by the Premier, with horror depicted on his countenance, will we do this, in the interests of a private company? Sir, I would dare to complete it; and I say that, in the interests of the country, it is right that we should complete it at the earliest possible date. That the Government have got to buy that Manawatu line I have not the slightest doubt, and have never had any, any more than I had with regard to the district railways. I know that I have been alone, or nearly alone, in my party in that opinion; but I have always held that the Government must own all the railways in this country, and it was only because of the terrible pressure put by the country upon the House and the Government that any of these lines have been permitted to be made by companies for land. Sir, that is my opinion, and I have no reason to hide it. I have always entertained it. We know that the Government were in treaty with this company for their line, and there is no question at all that, sooner or later, it must be bought; and the completion of the Napier-Palmerston Railway line will not in any way affect the price that the Wellington-Manawatu Railway will cost the colony, because the company would not permit the postponement of the completion of these links to affect the matter. Then we come to the question of the Tophouse line. "Why has that been struck off?" asks the Premier; and he says, "Look how very economical we were, look how particularly thoughtful we were for the public good: what is proposed is simply to take a sum of money to survey the line." But the Premier did not tell us this: that he was going to borrow £100,000 for the purpose of this loan, and that he was going to ear-mark it so that it could not be applied to any other purpose without a breach of public faith, because, if it is borrowed in the London market for that purpose and that purpose alone, the public creditor would understand, would see, through the schedule of the Bill and through the clauses of it, that we could not apply the money borrowed for these several lines to any other purpose whatever. And, I would ask, in what position should we be in if, after this, we presently applied it to some other purpose — to roads and bridges, or railways in other parts of the country?

Mr. MONTGOMERY. — The same position that you were in in 1881.

Major ATKINSON. — No; my honourable friend does not understand the position at all. There was no such indication on the London money-market — we borrowed for general purposes. If we were in the same position, why does the honourable gentleman want the provision saying the money shall not be applied to other purposes? Well, Sir, I can only supply arguments; I cannot go further with the honourable gentleman, if he cannot see the distinction; but I say it would be a breach of public faith, and would be looked upon as such by all the financial newspapers in London, if we were to alter the purposes of this money, which is solemnly set apart by Act. And I do not know how we could get it applied to other purposes except by a fresh Act, and a fresh Act would be applying money borrowed for one purpose directly for another; and I venture to think that a proceeding of that sort could not be justified against reasonable criticism, and we should suffer for it when we again went on the money-market. Of course, if the Premier's year or two more of borrowing means that this money may be wanted for something else, and that we shall not need to go into the money-market again, we might be indifferent to outside opinion; but, if we have to go to the London money-market afterwards, such dealings as I have referred to with money set apart by Act would throw great doubt upon our proceedings. If, therefore, the Opposition do not believe that this money is required for the Tophouse-Blenheim line they are right in moving that the item be struck out. Then, the Premier is very eloquent in the next matter. He says, "Dare you extend this railway to the Awatere, dare you cross the Awatere River and increase the value of the great men's land, and with that object carry the line along the East Coast along the face of certain cliffs?" Sir, that is all imagination —the honourable gentleman intends to do the same thing exactly. The honourable gentleman has a vote to extend it nearly to the river. Why does he extend it there, if it is not for the convenience of the district to which it is going? Is the putting it here a sham? It must be put here for some purpose; and, if it is not for the purpose of enabling persons to get their goods and produce down, for what purpose is it? The proposals of the Opposition are simply these—if these are the proposals of the Opposition, and I, for one, do not object to say

so at all: They are, to carry the railway to a point where it will be useful for the purpose for which the Premier is applying about half the money. That is the only difference. So that the indignation of the honourable gentleman must really fall upon his own Minister for Public Works, for daring to propose that this line should be constructed. So far as it fails to reach this land, so far is it a failure from a public-works point of view, and therefore we propose to carry it to a point where it will be really useful. I sympathize with the Premier when he asks, "Are we to make railroads to increase the value of the property of large landowners?" I venture to say that he will have the support of the Opposition almost to a man, if not to a man, on any fair proposal he makes to charge with a proportion of the cost of construction any properties that are increased in value by railways being made to them. At any rate, I can answer for myself, he will have my support, and my thorough support, in any such proposal. So that my proposal does not go in the direction he supposes, to benefit any particular class, but is simply based on the belief I have that these railways must be made to a paying point; and if the lands of large or small holders are greatly benefited, then I say, if he will make any proposal to obtain fair contributions from those lands, he will have my hearty support.

Sir R. STOUT.—The amendment says "working points," not "paying points."

Major ATKINSON.—We will alter the word to "paying points." We shall be very happy, as soon as we carry that resolution—which I have no doubt we shall—to have any amendments from the Premier that will improve it. The honourable gentleman never thought of defending this Tophouse route, as I understood him. He never thought of defending the Inangahua and Westport Railway.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh!

Major ATKINSON.—Well, I lost that part of his speech. I feel more sorry for him than ever, because these lines seem more indefensible than ever. I understand that the Premier is quite ready and willing to assist the House in reducing this loan by any amount that is now standing in it for new works. I think he will find that the Opposition will be very glad to help him in that direction; but, in looking over the schedule, it seemed to us that the proposal had been so badly considered that it did not do what the Premier wanted—namely, to carry those lines to reasonable working points; and that is why the proposal came from the honourable member for Mataura not to strike off the amount, but to add the amount to other railways which required that money to carry them to reasonable points for them to be something like reproductive. If the Minister for Public Works can show us that this amount of extra money is not required by these railways to carry them to reasonable points—to points at which they will pay—he will have our support, he will have the support of the honourable member for Mataura, to reduce the loan by that amount. We have some knowledge in this matter. I venture to think that, if this loan is to be nearly the last, we shall be very wise to spend our money in the direction indicated by this amendment. Now I come to the question of land-purchase. I do not know how it struck the House, but my breath was almost taken away when the Premier, triumphantly, asked, "If I cannot take the money for the purchase of this land out of the North Island Trunk Loan, where am I to get it from?" That was most extraordinary. The honourable gentleman showed us the other night that they had never given any consideration to this subject whatever. The honourable gentlemen are not prepared to look ahead. Of course, we know that when the Financial Statement came down the honourable gentleman told us so; and he has never denied, except in acts—not in words—that the £800,000 was to provide for the purchase of Native lands. But all that is gone: there is nothing about charging the £800,000 with the purchase of Native lands; and now the Premier asks, "Where am I to get the money, if I do not take it out of the North Island Trunk Loan?" It is quite true there is nowhere from which he can take it. If we make the allocation the honourable gentlemen have got in public works for general purposes, the £950,000, there is nowhere to get the money from. As I pointed out in the debate on the Financial Statement, there is no fund for this purpose; and now the Premier comes down and asks triumphantly, "Where are we to get the money? We shall have to raise another loan if we do not take it out of this." What can we think of the management of the finances of the colony when the Premier is reduced to such arguments as that for taking the money out of a loan which we have repeatedly said shall be used for no other purpose than that of making the North Island Trunk line? I am afraid the honourable gentleman will have to exercise his ingenuity; I am afraid this House will not allow him to take it out of the North Island Trunk Loan: I think the House will tell him he must find it somewhere else. Then, where is he to get it? The embarrassment is not mine, it is the honourable gentleman's. He says, "I am going to spend the money." I think we must ask him, before he spends it, where he is going to get it. Then we come to the question of school-buildings. "Did the House rise to the occasion," the Premier asked, "when I wanted to charge school-buildings locally?" Did the honourable gentleman ever tell us he proposed to charge school-buildings locally? No, Sir, never; but he slyly, in one Act after another, inserted clauses that would enable him next session to take us all by surprise and tell us, "You did not oppose these clauses; we are going to make no further provision. The local bodies themselves must now borrow to obtain the money." Why did this House reject those proposals? Not because members were not prepared to receive any reasonable proposals from the honourable gentleman, but simply because they said they would

not deal with this matter piecemeal. They said, "Let us have your policy with regard to school-buildings; let us understand what you are going to call on the districts to do, and then we will consider the matter." We have never been asked to consider the matter except by these side-ways; and now the Premier gets up and asks, "Did the House rise to the occasion? did it assist me in this matter?" No, Sir; and why not? Because we wanted a lead. We never had any proposal on the subject worthy of the Government in considering so great a matter.

Sir R. STOUT.—I deny it. Look at the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill. It is provided for.

Major ATKINSON.—That is exactly what I state; it was slyly done.

Sir R. STOUT.—Not slyly at all, but openly.

Major ATKINSON.—In the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill, the Counties Bill, and the Municipal Corporations Bill clauses were inserted under which local bodies might, if they liked, borrow for this purpose. Think of a great question like this being thus dealt with; think of dealing with the national education system suddenly, and thrusting these buildings on the local bodies, not in an open manner, not after proper consideration, but, by clauses which were apparently voluntary, offering the local bodies the power to do it if they liked, and then, next year, for it to be turned into compulsion—not "You may," but "You shall." Is that the right way to deal with a question of that sort? The House, rightly, rejected such proposals. If the honourable gentleman wishes to deal with this question of school-buildings, let him tell us definitely what his proposal is, and how to remedy the inequalities that exist; and let him tell the people distinctly what it is they are to bear. Then, the honourable gentleman asks, "Is the House sincere? Does the House really want economy? Does the House want to reduce the loans?" I venture to say the House does want economy, and I venture to say the House does want reduced loans, and I venture to think that the country wants what the Premier told us it required—a gradual tapering-off. Now I turn to the Premier, and I ask him, if he will permit me to do so without offence, is he sincere? If he is, let him come down to the House and say, "I mean to take so much off the estimates; I see my way to do that now—not during the recess, but now—if you will only strengthen my hands; I will take off £30,000, £40,000, £50,000, £70,000, or £100,000"—whatever amount he can see his way to save; let him tell us how much money he can see his way to save, and I think I can guarantee him hearty support in any reduction he proposes to make, and will strengthen his hands. I cannot doubt his sincerity; I do not doubt it; but, then, I ask the Premier to take the lead in the direction in which he has asked us to go, and I say we are prepared to follow him in that matter. And if he will only tell us what reduction is possible, and what he is prepared to make, we will vote for it at once, cheerfully and willingly, and trust it to his hands to give effect to it. Then, with regard to the loan, and those works which the honourable gentleman says may be struck off—he says, "If they are not wanted, why not strike them off?" I say they are not wanted, and that we are quite prepared to strike them off, if the honourable gentleman is sincere: and I do not doubt he is, after the stand he has taken. I say that we are quite prepared to reduce the loan, and taper off to any amount the honourable gentleman says is necessary; and I say that, if he wants to stand before the country as he ought to stand before it, after his speech to-night, this loan proposal will have to be reconsidered from top to bottom. Every one of these proposals in the schedule will have to be amended, and some of them struck out, and others very much reduced, if the honourable gentleman really means what he says—that we must taper off borrowing, and that we cannot borrow for more than a few years more—two or three years, the honourable gentleman said, meaning, I understand, a few years. And I say let him at once now rise in his position in this House, and the House is ready to rise and follow him. The honourable gentleman laughs; but I say, "Give us a trial," and the responsibility will be off his shoulders at any rate, and he will be able to say whether he feels it his duty to resign, or whether he is prepared to carry on. At any rate, he will be able to stand clear before the country and say, "Here are my proposals for reduction." As I have pointed out over and over again, the proposals of the Financial Statement involve large borrowing this year and large borrowing next year, and the honourable gentleman has to-night told us he hopes there will not—he does not say there will not—be one halfpenny more required to be raised next year. But I ask where the £200,000 for roads is to come from next year. There is not one halfpenny provided for that. The Minister for Public Works has proposed to vote every halfpenny available this year—except, possibly, £50,000 against the money in hand for miscellaneous works. He tells us we shall have more money to spend next year: but that has nothing to do with it. We are now voting this year all the money we have to vote, except the £50,000 I have referred to. Now, the Premier has told us that £200,000 will be wanted for roads alone next year, and no provision is made for that or for other works. I will show the Premier, privately, before one of his accountants if he chooses, or all of them, that everything I have said as to figures is absolutely correct. The honourable gentleman is responsible, and I say that if he will look into the thing he will see that what I have said as to the disposal of the loan is true. The honourable gentleman has told us that the consolidated revenue is falling, and he would not have told us so if it was not true. He says the revenue is falling, and that we have to prepare for a falling revenue, and that we must taper off borrowing. Yet we are borrowing more largely this year than we have done for some

time, and I tell the honourable gentleman that if he will only go into the figures—and there is no disputing them—he will see that we shall have to borrow largely next year and the year after for works we are now practically undertaking afresh under this Financial Statement. And I do beg of the Premier, as he has begged of the House, to rise to the occasion, and to come down to this House and lead this House in the direction of economy, and in the reduction of this loan by a very large amount.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, the House has to-night heard the great speech of the Premier and the little speech of the honourable member who last spoke, and honourable members have had an opportunity of judging between the intellect, the grasp, and the power of the one and, if I may say so without offence, the very little points taken hold of in and the pettishness of the other. And yet the honourable gentleman who spoke last presumes to treat the Premier as if he were something less than a child, without an ordinary amount of understanding; for the whole purport of the honourable gentleman's speech is a patronizing manner of taking the Premier under his wing, and telling him there is a great deal of sense about what he says, but that he does not understand what is the deduction to be drawn from it, and that he is speaking in favour of a policy diametrically opposite to that which the Government has proposed. Now, I ask the honourable gentleman, if he will answer me truly—does he, in his own mind, suppose the Premier, when speaking to-night, was not supporting the policy of the Government?

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; undoubtedly.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Does the honourable gentleman suppose that the Premier was actually insulting the House by speaking against the policy for which he has voted, and for which his followers have voted, and which has been submitted by the Government of which he is the Premier?

Major ATKINSON.—I do.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The honourable gentleman spoke on that assumption, and throughout his remarks he kept hinting and inviting the Premier to rise to the occasion, and saying, in effect, that the Premier did not understand the deduction from what he was saying, but that he would explain it to him, and would tell the Premier what to do in consequence. This device is very stale, and the honourable gentleman ought to be tired of it now, for it figures more or less in all his speeches. Now, I wish to remark on some of the points he referred to, although, in doing so, I feel that I ought almost to apologize to the House, because the reply of the honourable gentleman to the speech made before he rose is so utterly inadequate that I might well leave it unanswered. The honourable member said—I noted his remarks as they fell from him—"The Colonial Treasurer returned to politics with the view of introducing a new borrowing policy." The honourable gentleman must have a strangely bad memory; because what are the facts of the case? I returned to politics because I observed the lamentable condition to which the honourable member had brought the colony, the want of confidence which had arisen from his strangely vacillating policy, the depression which existed, not owing to any material causes, but owing to the want of confidence and the want of energy caused by the way in which the honourable member kept on preaching his "Lie down and wait" policy. That was the explanation of my return to politics; and the honourable member is perfectly aware that there are many honourable members who vote with me who were amongst those who welcomed the policy which I expressed. Then, the honourable member raised a question which he has raised before in this House—whether the Civil Service Bill which has been introduced by the Government would effect a saving of £30,000 a year to the country. The honourable gentleman has had the explanation before, and he knows well enough, because I stated so on the first night that the estimates were taken into Committee of Supply, that what my colleague the Premier had said when speaking of the Bill was that he saw his way to saving £30,000 or £40,000 upon the estimates as they were brought down. Then the honourable member asked, "Where is the better system of local government?" I will reply to the honourable member that we are gradually improving the system of local government, but we can get no support from him. We have amended the Counties Act. We have thrown upon the local bodies and localities the management of charitable aid and hospitals. It is quite true, as my colleague has said, that it has not met with an altogether encouraging reception; nevertheless, that has been done. Above all, we have repealed the Roads and Bridges Construction Act, and have introduced in its place a measure to which the honourable gentleman himself could not take exception, for he has admitted that it is much better than his measure, which it replaces. The honourable member speaks about our localizing charges. Surely he must be aware that, if duties are localized, charges also must be localized. No one can say that in localizing the charges for charitable aid and hospitals the Government have not taken upon the consolidated revenue an enormous responsibility, seeing that the management is put entirely out of the hands of the Government. The amount of subsidies given is very large, and it does not lie in the mouth of the honourable member to object to that Act, because he tried to introduce a similar one and failed. And when he talks about our measures being thrown out of the House, has he no recollection of the poor little bantlings of his that the House rejected session after session, with utter indifference on his part so long as he could weather the session? As regards Railway Boards, no one has said more about that than the honourable gentlemen's own Government. I have before me two successive Public Works Statements made by Mr. Walter Woods Johnston, in the first of which he says,—

"In 1880 the Railway Commissioners strongly

recommended that the administration of constructed railways should be transferred to a Board of Management, having the same powers and functions as a board of directors of an English railway company. So far as my short term of office enables me to form an opinion, I incline to the belief that it might be advantageous to have some such a Board, not only because of the knowledge and experience with which it could deal with the questions that engaged its attention, but also because it would be removed from political pressure. But the House will recognize that it is impossible to hurriedly arrive at any conclusion upon such a large subject, with which, therefore, the Government does not intend to deal during this session."

But then they came to deal with the question of appointing another Minister—and this is just *à propos* of what I am saying. Was the honourable member for Egmont very much ashamed when he failed to carry that feature of his policy — the appointment of another Minister? I think he was quite content to abide under that portion of his defeat. What I have read was said by Mr. Johnston in 1882. In the following year he said, in his Public Works Statement,—

"The Government purpose, during this session, to ask the Legislature to sanction the appointment of another Minister, and this will enable such an arrangement to be made as will permit a Minister of Railways to devote the whole of his attention to this branch of the administration."

The Board proposed one year was replaced by a Minister the next, and that Minister abandoned. I may say that this question still engages the attention of the Government. My colleague has shown to the House the difficulty of removing the responsibility of the management of these large affairs from the Government whilst Parliament has a right to take direct cognizance of the consequences of such management. There is no doubt about that difficulty; but, on the other hand, my colleague acknowledged the advantage that would arise if the Government could have the aid of local advice and assistance in the management of the railways. We hear complaints now as to the management of the railways, and we are told, from various parts of the country, that this, that, or the other arrangement is bad. The explanation is simply this: that, so long as you have one uniform tariff on the railways from one end of the colony to the other, the railways must be managed at a disadvantage. Under other systems the railways are worked according to circumstances. If the circumstances in one part of the country ask for a smaller tariff, or if particular opposition has sprung up in one part of the country, the local circumstances are dealt with. Here, however, we are confronted with this difficulty: that, if we wish to meet the competition in one part of the country and we lower our tariff to meet the circumstances, we have at once a demand from all other parts of the country that their tariff also shall be lowered, no matter how different the circumstances may be. Therefore we have to throw away business and refuse to go into competition because we know that, whilst we might save a couple of hundred pounds by doing so in one place, we should lose thousands of pounds in other parts of the country, owing to the necessity of having uniform charges no matter what the difference of circumstances may be. Whatever system is adopted, whether a board of management or a board of advice, or separate management in each Island, sooner or later we shall have to recognize that this demand for a uniform tariff is inconsistent with the railways being worked to advantage. I am free to admit that we have not remodelled the local-government system as readily and easily as we hoped when we came into office; but the explanation is very easy. The fact is that we found the state of affairs far worse than we had reason to expect, and we soon found that it would take much longer to bring them round to the condition we desired than we anticipated. But look at what has taken place during the last two years. The whole of the laws are being remodelled, so that there is, even now, very little of Atkinsonian legislation left on the Statute Book, and if we go on for a few years more there will be none. I do not know whether the honourable gentleman will be grateful for his effacement. On the one hand, it may be an annoyance to him to be separated from his connection with these measures; but, on the other hand, he may be grateful to us for removing from the Statute Book laws which his experience must have proved to him were more or less mischievous. The honourable gentleman has spoken of our having taken these seats on false pretences: but let me call honourable members' attention to the facts of the case. In 1884 he went to the country after being defeated in the House, and, whatever decision the constituencies came to as to who should take the reins of power, there was one thing quite certain—they would have no more of the honourable gentleman as a member of the Government. When he talks about our taking these seats on false pretences, let me recall this fact to his mind: that it was not many days after Parliament met when a striking verdict was given as to its confidence in him. After having resigned as a result of the elections, he again appeared before the House as the head of a Government, and three days afterwards he had once more his *congé*. Then, last year he came down and moved a vote of want of confidence in the Government; and what was the result? Why, that he was so far from being able to carry his resolution that a new and inexperienced member of the House, the honourable member for Oamaru, who had seconded the Address in reply to the Governor's Speech at the commencement of the session, had to take the matter out of the honourable gentleman's hands, and was very much nearer carrying the resolution than the honourable member for Egmont, and the honourable member for

Egmont accepted the deep humiliation, for which, as an old colleague and friend, I felt very sorry at the time. He, absolutely, tried to help the honourable member for Oamaru and the honourable member for Akaroa, an honourable member who had made one of the most personally-hostile attacks upon him that I have ever heard in this House, and who told him that he would not vote for the resolution because it was in his hands, although he would vote for it if proposed by any other honourable member. Still, the honourable member helped those gentlemen to carry the resolution, instead of at once saying, "Since I have no longer the position of leader of the Opposition I will resign it and take my own line." And what do we see to-night? The honourable gentleman dared not move this amendment himself, knowing as he does the feeling of the House and the country with regard to him, and so he asks the honourable member for Mataura to move it, and is ready to support that honourable gentleman. I think the honourable gentleman had better not talk any more about our occupying this position on false pretences, for it only leads to retorts, which I am very sorry to have to make. Then the honourable gentleman indulged in a long-drawn-out speech with regard to the Mauriceville-Woodville communication; and I ask him how it is that, if there were a solemn engagement to complete the railway, as he says, he thought it right to vote against the proposition we made last year. Surely, if he had deemed there was an engagement, he would have voted in favour of it, though it might have entailed some loss of political action. And now as regards the Native-land purchases, and other matters in that connection, to which the honourable gentleman referred. I made a candid explanation that the amount of £800,000, which we supposed to be sufficient, when the Financial Statement was brought down, for the expenditure for two years, was found to be insufficient; and therefore we did what was perfectly right in charging the various railways with plant and stock out of the general fund, crediting that fund with an equivalent in money. Then, as regards the charge on the North Island Trunk Railway Loan of £100,000 for purchase of Native lands, the honourable gentleman and other honourable gentlemen have often urged that the lands contiguous to the line should be purchased, and should be considered a necessary purchase if the railway was to be carried on. And here I may say that when the honourable member for Akaroa spoke so strongly against the proposition the other night I could not help recollecting a passage in the Speech from the Throne when he was a member of the Ministry, in which it was expressly stated that we intended to push on the North Island Trunk Railway, and that it was considered necessary to obtain land alongside it for settlement. If there was any force in the honourable gentleman's statement he must be very inconsistent; but if I gauge him by one part of his remarks I rather think that he would ask for a larger loan. We did not think it desirable to do so, and therefore we made the arrangement we did; and I think it is impossible to make a better arrangement. If the decision is that it is not necessary, then the money will remain there and will only be expended with the permission of the House. Then, as regards the diatribes of the honourable member for Egmont, and his bearing generally with respect to this question, it is sufficient to say that honourable members who have spoken before on that side of the House have taken very different views from his; and notably the honourable member for Napier commenced his speech by saying that the sum asked for was reasonable; and I have only to add that, notwithstanding all the high-flown sentences in which the honourable gentleman indulged, there is no member of the House who knows better than he does that if he or any other honourable member were in power he would have to ask for a loan to carry on the public works of the colony. As for the question of education buildings, the honourable gentleman is conveniently unmindful of explanations when he does not wish to receive them. When the education-building proposals were first discussed in the House the honourable gentleman endeavoured to set members of the Government against each other, and said these clauses were introduced by the Treasurer in opposition to the wishes of the Premier. The Premier explained subsequently that it was not so; that he was anxious to see education buildings permanently provided for, and that the plan proposed was a desirable one to adopt; that it would give an assurance to the Education Boards that buildings would be available, and, though we did not propose to use it this year, it would be a convenient plan for the Education Boards in future. That explanation was made; yet the honourable member for Egmont now says that no sufficient explanation was given to the House, and in a sort of way apologized for opposing the proposal. The honourable gentleman talks of economy; but, with my colleague the Premier, I have yet to learn that there is any general desire for economy in the House, for I must say that the applications made to the Government this year for expenditure in various parts of the country, not by members on the Government side only, but by members on the other side also, have been fully as large and as numerous as in previous years, if not more so. I am afraid to think of what would be the total amount if we totted up all the various applications made for expenditure, not only out of the Consolidated Fund, but also out of the Public Works Fund; and I am glad to say that the followers of the honourable gentleman have such confidence in the fairness of the Government that they are just as ready to ask for expenditure as any supporters of the Government, and I may say that we do consider all these applications in an impartial manner. As regards the amendment proposed by the honourable member for Mataura, of course it is a very taking amendment, but, as an honourable member said to me, it is too obvious, it

too coarse. It is apparent that it is designed to catch members from various parts of the country; but it is too obvious, and members with any self-respect are not likely to fall into such a trap. When the schedule is under consideration would be the proper time for considering each item; and, although you, Sir, have ruled, and, I have no doubt, rightly, that an abstract resolution of this kind may be considered, yet such a resolution is distinctly contrary to our parliamentary system, for we know that it is not competent for expenditure to be proposed in the House until after a motion has been made in Committee of the Whole; yet this resolution proposes additional expenditure to the extent of £175,000 in a certain direction, without any of the usual formalities. In fact, this resolution proposes to do what it is impossible for the House to do when in Committee on the Bill. It proposes an amendment which the Chairman of Committees would not allow to be suggested—to increase an item under consideration. However, I do not wish to raise the technical point. I only wished to point out how unusual it is; and, of course, it amounts to a no-confidence motion. As I shall not have a right of reply on the whole debate, it will not be considered unfair if I go into the previous debate and notice some of the speeches which have been made during the past few days. I will not make my remarks so full as I should otherwise have done; but it would not be right that I should allow the debate to close without noticing speeches which have been delivered. The first honourable member whose speech I wish to refer to is the honourable member for Waitotara. I cannot understand what that honourable gentleman desired. That he has a poor opinion of the Government is a matter of course: that was perfectly clear from his remarks. That he does not consider that the various members of the Government are in accord was also clear; that he disagrees with our policy is also clear: but it was not clear what the honourable member wished to substitute in place of those matters of which he complained. I think he was particularly unfortunate in casting blame upon the Native policy of my colleague. There is an old adage which says that "the proof of the pudding is in the eating of it;" and no more remarkable proof of the excellence of the policy of the Native Minister could have been shown than what has taken place during the last few days. When we contrast what has been done, without the slightest excitement, by my colleague in putting down the difficulty at Manaia, without the fuss and expense and agitation which accompanied the action of the honourable member for Waitotara in the Parihaka affair,—when we compare the manner in which my colleague has put that disturbance down, by telegraphing directions and sending up a few armed constables, with the expedition of the honourable member for Waitotara, on a white horse, at the head of a band of men, —we at once see the difference between the two policies. When we contrast the noisy action of the honourable member for Waitotara with the quiet and simple manner with which the Native Minister has dealt with the question, we at once see the difference between the two men. And why is it that my colleague is able to deal with the disturbance with such ease, and with an absence of that sensation which occurred when the honourable member for Waitotara took the matter in charge? The explanation is simple. The honourable member for Waitotara set himself to govern the Natives by harshness and severity, and the consequence was that the Natives distrusted him, and he would not have dared to take such action as has been taken in this case unless it were accompanied by a great force. On the other hand, my colleague has endeavoured to obtain the confidence of the Natives, and when it is necessary for him to take action he can do so freely, because he knows that the great bulk of the Natives agree with him, and support him in his assertion of the majesty of the law. Now, mere straws, they say, will show the way the wind blows or the water flows. There is one little passage in the speech made by the honourable member lately which gives a very good idea of the gloomy views he always takes of the affairs of the colony. When I made my Financial Statement I argued out plainly, as I thought, upon economical grounds, why, in my opinion, there was likely to be a rise in the price of wool. The honourable gentleman, when he came to remark upon the Financial Statement, was very angry with me for having done so; he objected to my giving the colonists any hope, and said that a reaction in the price of wool was quite out of the question, and was not to be expected. He is so gloomy that he cannot bear to think of there being any prospect of good fortune awaiting the colony—he always loves to dwell on the dark side of affairs; and how singularly he was mistaken is abundantly proved by what has taken place in the wool-market since I made my Financial Statement. Then I come to the honourable member for Napier. That honourable member appears to be in a most discontented frame of mind, and his speech was full of complaints of the policy of the Government, or of the want of policy of the Government. Well, I ask, why does he not challenge the policy of the Government in this House? Is it not because he feels the sense of the House is against him? But, while he complains of the action and policy of the Government, in the next breath he tells us that he is a member of the Opposition, and that we are wearing the clothes of the Opposition and supporting the policy of the Opposition. If, as the honourable member for Napier says, we are wearing the Opposition clothes and carrying out the policy which he, as a member of the Opposition, favours, why should there be so much cavilling and objection to our action on the part of the honourable gentleman, when we are but giving effect to his sentiments? Then, I think, he complained that the Government were misleading the House. He told us that the House

was utterly demoralized by the action of the Government. That is a much stronger reflection upon the House, which allows itself to be demoralized by the Government, than it is upon the Government. It seems to me that the honourable gentleman is insulting the House when he makes such a remark. I shall make a short reference to the speech of the honourable member for Clutha. In the course of his remarks he complains that, when I spoke at Tuapeka—he was not quite right in this, because I did not speak to the people of Tuapeka, but I wrote to them—I called attention to the auriferous wealth of the Clutha River. The honourable gentleman is one of the representatives of the district, and has been associated with it for a long term of years, and I should have thought that he would have been grateful to me for recalling the attention of the people of Tuapeka to this fact: that, some twenty-three years ago, owing to the exceedingly low condition of the river, miners were able to dig out gold with knives and picks from portions of the river-bed which were then exceptionally uncovered. Thousands of men camped alongside the river, and for weeks and months waited for the river to fall again. They remained until the rush to Hokitika took place. Nevertheless, this is the case, and a singular fact it is: that the river has never fallen since that time to the level at which it then stood. There must be great deposits of gold in the river-bed, covered somewhat by the tailings which have been washed into the river for many years, and, except by dredging, no adequate attempt has been made to get at these deposits. There is no doubt that there are large quantities of gold available, and that if means could only be devised for winning it from the river-bed it would be an admirable thing for the district and for the colony. I think that the honourable member, instead of sneering at me for calling attention to the subject, should have been glad that I noticed it. And I may say now that I have pursued the question further, and that I have information which leads me to think that there are many rivers in the colony containing enormous amounts of gold, which only wants engineering skill to be won. On the West Coast, and in Nelson, and on that piece of land which the late Minister of Lands allowed to be purchased by a syndicate at the Little Wanganui, I am told that gold exists in large quantities, and that it is to be obtained by adequate methods. I should have thought that the honourable gentleman would be grateful to me for having raised this point in connection with the deposits in the district with which he has been associated for so many years, and that, at any rate, my remarks would have received sympathy from him. I wish now to say a few words with regard to the honourable member for Mount Ida. If I understand rightly the speech which the honourable member made upon the Public Works Statement, it was one originally designed to be given upon the Financial Statement. But, as I do not see him in his seat, and I have something to say about his remarks, I had better defer my remarks on this head, in the hope that he may appear before I have concluded. Now I come to the honourable member for Akaroa. I shall say something much more unpleasant about him than I have hitherto been in the habit of doing. I have shown the honourable gentleman forbearance time after time; but I find that the consideration I have exhibited has led to an exaggeration of the offence, and I am not going to be so lenient for the future as I have been. There is one honourable member in this House whose speeches always delight me—the honourable member for Rangitikei—who, together with the honourable member for Akaroa, must have misunderstood what I said about the £800,000; and I was rather surprised that I was not successful in making myself understood: but I will endeavour to do so now. What I said was this: We have always been accustomed to deal with new works and liabilities as new expenditure in voting from the Public Works Fund. Two or three years since the liabilities left over at the end of one year nearly equalled the expenditure of the two succeeding years. I explained also that the amount of £800,000 was expected to be sufficient when the total was submitted to the Cabinet, but when it came to the test it was found that it was not, therefore £300,000 more had to be found. There was no mystery in the matter; the thing was very clear. Perhaps this was misunderstood not from want of understanding, but from my incapacity to explain. The honourable member for Akaroa, in his peroration, saw fit to draw a distinction between the Premier and myself, as to one being a colonist and the other not being a colonist. The distinction was nominally made between my colleague and myself, but its meaning was a comparison of me with the honourable member for Akaroa himself; and the design was to transparently hint that I am deficient in wealth.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I did not say a word about myself; I spoke about the colonists generally.

Sir J. VOGEL.—No; he ingeniously put forward the Premier. I have devoted myself to public life in New Zealand. Those who have not done so may have been more successful in regard to this world's goods. I married here, and lived the best years of my life here, and my children were born here, and whatever fame and distinction I have gained has been in connection with New Zealand; and it is possible my name will be remembered in the colony long after his is forgotten. If I am to be despised because I am not a rich colonist, how is it that the honourable member did me the honour to join the Government I formed? Is it grateful on his part that I should be assailed in this manner, after giving him the only chance he has had of joining a Government? If I am not worthy of holding a seat in the Government now because I am not a colonist, was I less entitled to do so then? I see that the honourable member for Mount Ida has come into the House. I have already said

that I believe he gave us a statement on the public works policy which was originally designed to be delivered on the Financial Statement. It was, of course, none the worse for that. I dare say some honourable members enjoy the possession of a musical-box, and are aware that some of the tunes played by these instruments are bad, while others are good. In order to reach the good ones, all the villainous ones have to be endured. And it may be that without going through the tune set to the Financial Statement the honourable gentleman could not get to the Public Works Statement. Some of his remarks are extremely felicitous, and I think he is led away by the facility he possesses for making epigrams. He is not, however, in the habit of framing his epigrams upon the facts, but of framing his facts upon the epigrams. So we see the love-sick youth who becomes a poet for the sake of the lady he adores, and, in making his rhymes, selects two words that rhyme, and then fills in the lines. He said last year that it was the policy of the House to keep the Government in and their measures out; whereas I judge from what he said the other night that he now thinks it is the policy of the House to keep their measures in and the Government out.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I never said one or the other.

Sir J. VOGEL.—There is no one, I believe, destined to take a higher place in the future in public life than the honourable member; but I regret his changes of opinion. These turns, however, are not unknown in the history of the House: but, still, I cannot help thinking they are somewhat significant. Now, I should like to make a few remarks about the speech delivered by the honourable member for Egmont. The honourable member says the Government are not in favour of roads. I demur to that. If he had said that we were not in favour of his system of obtaining roads and using them for political purposes, he would have been correct. We adopt the test of whether the ratepayers are willing to rate themselves for the works or not. That is the fundamental difference between our policy and his; and I say this policy of ours would give a greater development to works and roads which would open up the country than the system that the honourable member attaches his faith to. Now as to what the honourable member has said about my statement that £670,000 had been misspent out of the Three-million Loan. I do not think I used the word "misspent." I pointed out that, notwithstanding the expenditure of over four millions since the schedule had been brought out, the original expenditure of the Three-million Loan has not been completed by some £670,000. As a matter of fact, in 1878 all the schedules of all previous Loan Acts were repealed in a general repeal Act. Now I come to a matter of very great importance. I do not follow the honourable members for Waitotara or Akaroa or Egmont in their allegations that there can be no harm in making statements prejudicial to the colony because they are the truth. Half-truths blurted out are sometimes whole untruths; and when you come to make an attack upon anybody, and state only the bad features and pass by the good ones, you are not giving a correct view. The statement made by the honourable member for Akaroa about the condition of Canterbury and the Middle Island last year was one of the most deplorable things ever uttered in this House. Nothing is easier, under the guise of what is called "stating the truth," than to give a most false impression. Take the well-known two lines honourable gentlemen have often heard,—

The naked every day he clad.

There you have the description of a grand philanthropist, a man who may be assumed to have been always looking about to do offices of charity. But what says the other line?—

When he put on his clothes.

There you have, from the two lines together, merely a selfish individual who fulfilled an ordinary domestic duty. That is an illustration of what half-truths may be. There is no greater mischief effected in the world than that which is done under the guise of "You must speak the truth." Every old woman who runs from house to house carrying scandal and gossip says, "Oh, my dear, there is no harm in speaking the truth, you know"—and then things are uttered which cause ruin to families and untold misery. Is there any business in the world that could stand the publication of all its losses without an accompanying statement of its gains? In making such statements the honourable member for Akaroa may say that he should be excused to some extent because he does not speak under the same sense of responsibility as the honourable member for Egmont. That honourable gentleman could not have misunderstood what I said the other day, that it was inadvisable that we should come down with proposals for a larger loan. Probably the honourable member had the same information from London as I had, and he could not have been unaware of it; and yet his speech the other afternoon, and part of his speech to-day, was an attempt to draw from me a statement as to the future borrowing of the colony—knowing, as he must know, for he has quite sufficient acquaintance with public life to know it, the meaning of what I said, and knowing, as he does, that to discuss the question of future borrowing must have a prejudicial effect upon the loans now under consideration. I say the honourable gentleman should not allow political feeling on his part to make him unmindful of the larger duty he owes to the country of becoming reticence when such reticence is demanded of him.

Major ATKINSON.—I object to obtaining money under false pretences.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I am sorry that the honourable gentleman is inclined to go further and say such a questionable thing as "obtaining money under false pretences." I am hinting at nothing of the kind. The honourable gentleman has sufficient acquaintance with the money-market in London to be aware that full particulars are ascertained by those interested

as to the loans authorized. The honourable member is attempting to draw me out on the question of future loans, which we are not prepared to discuss, and which he knows it is not desirable to discuss. There is no question of borrowing under false pretences. If these tactics had been adopted in the other colonies, it is difficult to say what might have been the disasters which would have overtaken them. I suppose it is an open secret that the Australian Colonies have been threatened with very serious difficulties, and it is pretty well known that some of the colonies—New South Wales and South Australia—have borrowed in advance of their wants, so that there should be ample funds at command. These questions are not blurted out in the other colonies. Differences of opinion are strong there—party feeling runs high; but there are topics which it is considered not right to deal with in a spirit of merely party criticism—topics which affect the welfare, the well-being, of the colony; and on these, both sides are able to agree. The Colony of New South Wales borrowed during the four and a half years from 1881 to 1885 no less than twenty-one millions. She has now borrowed another five and a half millions; and besides these twenty-six millions she has had ten millions of land revenue at her disposal. Now, what has been the consequence? Notwithstanding a period of unprecedented difficulties and enormous losses to private individuals, those difficulties have been, to a large extent, staved off by the colony being in a position to give employment to the labour of the colony, and to maintain its population. I am quite aware that there are honourable members who do not think that a wise policy; but still the fact remains of its adoption, and of its effect. Now comes the question of the resolution carried last year by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, and I frankly say to that honourable gentleman that if there was anything I uttered last year, in referring to this matter, calculated to be personally offensive to him, I withdraw and heartily regret it; but I am none the more able to agree with him. My colleague the Premier stated this evening that the honourable gentleman had not the courage of his opinions, because of his supporting the amendment under consideration; but I cannot help thinking that the honourable gentleman has shown a great deal of courage, not only in moving the resolution last year, but in the action he took on various occasions since then. I, however, look upon his action from an entirely different point of view from that of the honourable gentleman, and, to my mind, he has done incalculable injury to the colony. I will put an illustration, which will show how different are our opinions. We will suppose that a field, we need not say of what dimensions, can be placed under cultivation for a thousand pounds. Now, if, before the reduced rate of wages, twelve months ago, it would have cost £1,200 to put that field into the same state of cultivation, the honourable gentleman will consider that it was a gain to have been able to effect this work for £1,000 instead of £1,200. From my point of view it was quite the contrary. I think that the £200 is saved to the individual, but lost to the whole community to a great extent, because if it had been paid away in the shape of wages for labour it would have been distributed throughout the community, and have had a far wider distribution than it was capable of in the hands of a single person. Of course I am supposing that in both cases—the £1,000 and the £1,200—the operation would have been sufficient to pay the expenses, and fair interest on capital. That being the case, I say the general distribution of the £200 would be far more beneficial to the community than that one individual should save that money. My opinion is, and I have often said it before, that nothing is more indicative of the prosperity of a country than that the labour within it is kept remuneratively employed. It has been calculated that every adult immigrant is worth £200, and, though people complain about the immigration which has taken place, I cannot but think that, having brought out, between 1870 and 1880, a hundred thousand immigrants who represent now probably a hundred and twenty-five thousand souls—I cannot but think that, if there were 3 or 4 per cent. of those unsuited for the colony, the balance are a bright example of the success of inducing immigrants to come to the colony. We have, I think, to look forward to the time when we can, with justice to those already in the colony, without the danger of bringing down the price of labour, resume assisted immigration. That time has not yet come. I ask honourable members what is the most valuable product of the colony. I dare say there are some who will say that it is wool; or, if they come from goldfields districts, they will probably say that it is gold. I think, without exception, that the product which is of the largest value is the labour employed within the colony. I have made a rough calculation, or, rather, I have had it made for me by the most competent authorities I could find, and they show that we are paying something like £11,600,000 a year for labour, of all kinds and descriptions, of men and women in the colony. It is my contention that a great part of that—I should say at least one-third of it—in running through the community fructifies and becomes converted into actual wealth. It is not merely the £200 that would be saved in the example I have given, but that the moneys the labourers receive are spent over and over again, time after time, fructifying to a large extent as they pass through the hands of shopkeepers, manufacturers, and others, and leaving a benefit to all. You may depend upon it that a large fall in the value of labour is a greater loss to the country than a large fall in the value of any particular staple. I do not say that I would artificially keep up the price of wages. I do not urge anything in that direction, except to encourage the consumption of locally-made articles. That, however, is a question I am not going into at present. But to a-

ficially lower wages is, in my opinion, an error; and that is what I charge the honourable member for Hawke's Bay with having done—I believe quite unintentionally, but still I believe he has done it. What was it the honourable gentleman did? At a time when, in the ordinary course of things, we should continue the policy of our public works, which had been the established policy of the country for years past, and must continue to be so more or less for years to come, the honourable gentleman, by the action he took, arrested their continuance; and, before Parliament could make any further arrangements for the carrying-on of the works, they were stopped and labour was thrown out of employment, so that the labour which ordinarily goes into the public works became a competitor with labour of other kinds; and we have, as a result, in my opinion, a fall of not less than from 10 to 12½ per cent. in wages of all descriptions. I believe that fall has taken place from one end of the colony to the other, and that it certainly was not less than 10 per cent.; and I believe that fall was an indirect consequence of the action of the honourable member. If I am right in gauging the wages paid for labour at £11,600,000, the honourable member will see that a loss of from 10 to 12 per cent. means a loss of over one million of money to the wage-earners of the colony, and to those who, directly and indirectly, depend upon the fructification of the money which arises from the spending of the labourers. There is no doubt that those persons who have had the work done have gained by it. The great mass of working-people have been sufferers, and, through them, the great mass of the industrious people of the colony who indirectly depend upon the expenditure of the money which circulates through the community as a consequence of the employment of labour. I am not defending—nor do I wish to defend—borrowing for the purpose of employing labour. If honourable members have charged me with doing so, all I can say is that I have not been successful in making myself understood. The colony suffers very greatly from a permanent fall in the value of labour. I know that is not an opinion that is generally accepted: still, it is an opinion that I hold very strongly. At present the labouring-classes are suffering intensely, especially because of the refuse-work of cheap labour in other countries being shovelled into the colony in prodigious quantities in the shape of imports, without paying a sufficient amount of duty. I shall not, however, pursue that question; but I should like to say a few more words on the labour question. There have been floating through my mind for years past reflections which it would take a long while to work out to a solution, and I am too old now to do so; but I cannot help feeling this: that, as all traces of slavery and feudalism die out, it will be recognized that, if there is to be a universal currency, its standard must depend upon the value of human labour. Not that all labour will have the same value. The labour which is merely one of force, the labour which comes from training, or that greater labour still which is the result of God-given genius—all these will have their separate value; but the unit on which all values will be reckoned will be represented by human labour for a given time. Everything that we have subservient to our use is made so by the labour of man. Nature, it is true, beneficently places at his command the material upon which to work. Look around you, look everywhere; all that you see—books, houses, electric light, great works or little works, even capital itself, everything we use, all represent so much human labour; and my thoughts flow always, and have for years flowed, in the direction of considering what is best calculated to give the most beneficial employment to man. The honourable member for Egmont taunts me with my schemes. I say that those "schemes," if they may be so called, do run in that direction; and I think they are more beneficial than that grand scheme of his of national insurance, which, instead of giving encouragement to labour, would give encouragement to those who are unable or unwilling to work, and who are likely to be a burden upon others. My schemes are in the direction of finding employment for human labour, and leading the community into paths in which human labour is most largely and profitably employed: and if honourable members will look at the broad features of the policy of the Government they will see that they all run in the groove which I have described. The Government are gradually and surely, I think, carrying out the policy of decentralization—a policy of throwing larger duties upon the local bodies throughout the colony, a policy of throwing upon a larger number of human beings a larger amount of work. We are cultivating friendly relations with the Natives—that is a cardinal feature of our policy: it is a policy of giving the Natives the best opportunity of working out to the largest advantage their destinies for the future. We are promoting settlement; we desire to encourage local industries of all kinds: there, again, is the same feature of affording occupation to human labour. We are pushing on the railways; we desire to see them pushed on, seeing how largely they assist in the progress of settlement; we desire to see them pushed on, not for the purposes of revenue, but with the view of giving advantages to those who are able to use them and who are distant from the seaboard. Those are the broad features of the policy of the Government, and they all run in the direction of depriving "the few" of monopolies, and giving to "the many" opportunities of advancement and distinction. If honourable members would deal with the broad features of the policy of Ministers, and not with carping questions of how much they were able to do last session and how much this session, greater justice would be done to the Government, and to the interests of the colony.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I wish to put myself right with the House on a point with which some honourable members were tolerably well

acquainted before. What I have to say is called forth by the words used by the Treasurer when he said, referring to me, "Why did the honourable gentleman join the Government I formed? He was ungrateful. I gave him the chance of getting on the Government benches." In 1884, when my honourable friend opposite resigned, I was asked to join the Government of the present Premier. I would not have joined any Government with the Treasurer at the head of it. I joined the Ministry with the Premier at the head, and I joined it along with Mr. Macandrew, because the Premier said it was necessary that we should join it; and had it not been for that I would not have joined the Government. When the Premier went south he left Mr. Macandrew and me to arrange matters with the Treasurer. I shall say no more upon that point, because no more is required to be said. If I am in opposition to the Treasurer at the present time, I supported to the best of my ability the policy which the Government brought down in 1884, which was agreed to during the few days I was in the Government. What were the measures that Government proposed they should carry in this House? The abolition of the property-tax, the substitution of the land-tax, local government, and Railway Boards. When we went out of office the present Treasurer said if he had been allowed to remain he would have established a sound finance; that there should be diminished expenditure; that confidence would be restored, and the colony progress "by leaps and bounds." That was the opinion of the Treasurer. He knew nothing about the condition of the country. It is evident he did not, and he has acknowledged to-night that he did not. Why did I differ from him afterwards? Instead of a proposal to diminish taxation and to establish local government, what had we? In 1885 I came up to this House with the hope and intention of supporting the Government. Instead of diminished taxation, I found a proposal to enormously increase taxation on the people. Did we not find, instead of economy and prudence, a proposal by which the local bodies were to receive £300,000, equal to seven and a half millions for twenty-five years? That was so contrary to the proposals of the Ministry I was a member of that of course I voted against it, as I was bound to do. When, last year, the honourable gentleman came down with the proposal to give £97,000 a year for twenty years to the Meigs company, could I support such a thing? Why, the present company will construct the railway without the £97,000. What would have been the position if the honourable gentleman had had his way? The colony would have been saddled with a payment to the contractor of £97,000 a year for twenty years; and now we have contractors who have taken the work without any guarantee beyond that in the Act of 1884.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—These are the facts. I had hopes of the honourable gentleman when he came to the colony. As to his great ability, there is no one who will more fully or frankly acknowledge that than I. I hoped that, with his ability, and the prudence which I trusted would characterize his ripened judgment and mature years, good to the country would result from the advent of the Ministry; and I joined the Ministry of Sir Robert—then Mr.—Stout with the hope of assisting, as far as in my power, to do some good. But when I find the Colonial Treasurer, after denouncing the property-tax as crushing the industries of the country, and speaking with the utmost vehemence and strength against the honourable member for Egmont for imposing such a tax—when I find that tax still existing, and the honourable gentleman sitting there notwithstanding that that tax is against his declared opinion; when I find he goes to Auckland and about the country and denounces those men whom, they being able to judge the condition of the colony, he accuses of putting forth reckless statements calculated to injure the credit of the colony; and when the honourable gentleman poses——

Sir J. VOGEL.—The honourable gentleman is entirely misrepresenting me. Perhaps he will read the extracts from my speeches to which he refers.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—When the honourable gentleman poses as the protector of the interests of the colony as against those men who would, he says, do an injury to the colony in checking what they consider recklessness, I have a right, as one of those men, as one who has been a public man for twenty-two years—I say, in these circumstances I have a right to, and naturally do, feel, with other members of the House, that the honourable gentleman is assuming a position he is not entitled to. That was the reason I spoke out. Have we any hope now, if the honourable gentleman had his own way, that we should have any economy, and that we should not have a great borrowing policy? Is it not the impression among honourable members and in the country that the honourable gentleman would borrow a great number of millions to prosecute public works?—in the belief, I take for granted, that it would advance the interests of the country, but in our firm belief that it would bring ruin upon us if we did not stop him. These are the reasons why I spoke the other night, and I do not regret a single word I then said. I merely now make this statement of facts, in order that what the honourable gentleman said to-night, that he gave me a chance to join his Government, might not go forth to the world uncontradicted. I join his Government! I would not join his Government. Those with whom I have been acting for years against the honourable member for Egmont would never have sanctioned my joining a Government of which the present Treasurer would be the head, nor could I have allowed myself to do so.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, I wish to explain that the honourable gentleman was invited to join the Government because, as he said, Mr. Macandrew would not join without him.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I did not say that.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I handed in the names of that Government. It is quite true that the honourable gentleman wished Sir Robert Stout to be Premier. No doubt he was very anxious that he should be, and I agreed to it. But the Government was formed by me, and the honourable gentleman knew it.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—The Government was formed by Sir Robert Stout, the Treasurer, and others, myself among them.

Mr. CONOLLY.—I move the adjournment of the debate.

The House divided.

AYES, 26.

Atkinson	Hatch	Peacock
Barron	Hirst, H.	Reese
Bruce	Hobbs	Richardson, G.
Buchanan	Lake	Rolleston
Buckland, W.F.	Moat	Ross
Dodson	Montgomery	Russell.
Fergus	Moss	*Tellers.*
Grey	Newman	Conolly
Hakuene	Ormond	Trimble.

NOES, 33.

Allwright	Joyce	Richardson, E.
Ballance	Kerr	Stout
Bevan	Lance	Taylor
R. Bradshaw	Larnach	Thompson, T.
Brown	McKenzie, J.	Tole
Cowan	McMillan	Turnbull
Darragville	Menteath	Vogel
Duncan	O'Callaghan	Walker.
Fraser	Parata	*Tellers.*
Grace	Pere	Guinness
Hurstbouse	Reid	Samuel.
Ivess		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Bryce	Garrick
Fisher	Levestam
Fulton	Te Ao
Hamlin	Gore
Hisop	Holmes
Hurst, W. J.	Coster
Johnston	Macandrew
Macartney	Harper
Mackenzie, M.	O'Connor
Macdonald	Cadman
Thomson, J. W.	Stewart, W. D.
Wakefield	Stewart, W. J.
Wylie	Smith
Wason	Seddon.

Majority against, 7.

Motion negatived.

Mr. [illegible] SON.—I still think it would be a [illegible] prudent act on the part of the [illegible] to consent to the adjournment of the debate, in the absence of any [illegible] on the part of a willingness to give way to what is so evidently the wish of the vast majority of members on the matter. I [illegible] what I have to say. [illegible] this [illegible] has [illegible] of a very serious character [illegible] to be [illegible] time we have plunged into the business of the country; to-night for the first time the House has realized that we have before us a subject of great magnitude; to-night the House has clear proof that the Ministry are divided, and that their measures are only the result of a poor compromise among themselves; to-night the House has seen that the Premier and the Treasurer are absolutely at variance at a time when they should be most united; to-night the House has the spectacle before it on those benches of a Treasurer who does not hesitate to browbeat honourable members in a manner which will never be forgotten by those who have sat in the House during the evening. When the Premier spoke at an earlier part of the evening there was a general feeling in the House that at the beginning of his speech he spoke in a manner which did not do justice to his subject. He evidently felt it himself; and towards the close of his speech he lost himself in a burst of honest conviction which took the House by storm; and I venture to think that when the honourable member for Egmont got up the feeling ran through the House: "Here we have two men who, forgetting party, have entered into the subject of this debate: prepared to unite and deal with it without party spirit, and only in the true interests of the country." I never heard in all my time two speeches from our public men which excited in me greater admiration than those of the Premier and the honourable member for Egmont. But when the Treasurer got up at a later period and treated the House to a petulant speech, accusing honourable members of all sorts of pettinesses and meanness, and dealing with every little detail of the speeches of honourable members in a most personal and improper manner, I think the House felt ashamed of the position into which it had got, and I hoped that we should adjourn the debate, and deal with this great question apart from the feelings which must be in the minds of all honourable members who had heard the Treasurer's speech. Let me recall to the mind of the House the speech which fell from the Treasurer. Let me ask him, in his cool moments, if he does not feel ashamed that he should have dealt with this subject in the way he did—from a narrow personal point of view. He began by telling us why he returned to the colony. I do not know that he was ever asked for his reasons; but that is how he began his speech. He told us that he returned to the colony because of the utter want of confidence of the country in my honourable friend the member for Egmont. Is there a member of this House who believes that the honourable member returned to take his position here again because of any want of confidence of the colony in the honourable member for Egmont? Let us for a moment look back to the published correspondence, and see how he used his position as Agent of this colony, at a time when the colony was in great difficulty, to make [illegible] claims for his services.

An Hon. Member.—There is personality for you!

Mr. ROLLESTON.—We have heard enough

of personalities to-night already, and I will speak what I think, unless you, Sir, call me to order. At that time, when the colony was in that position, the honourable gentleman took, or rather contemplated without shame taking, such action as would have brought discredit on all Agents of the colony for all time had he taken it. And because he did not do this he now requires a large commission at the hands of the colony. Then he comes out here, leaving behind him the trail of his transactions and his character recounted in the newspapers, and appears as one who came to save the country from the mismanagement of the honourable member for Egmont and his colleagues. Who believes such a statement as that? Then he takes upon himself to criticise the action of the Government which preceded him. He speaks of their Bills as "little bantlings;" he speaks of their action in a manner which, whatever may be the expressions of members of this House in heated moments of politics, I am sure does not meet the approval of the House now when, in cool moments, we come to consider the work done by that Government. In heated moments we often say things for which afterwards we feel regret; but I am satisfied that in this House and in the country there is a thorough feeling of respect for those members of the late Ministry, of which I was a member, whom the Treasurer has petulantly and wrongfully criticised. I do not speak of myself; I leave myself entirely out of the question; but I may say it is my belief that throughout the country there is a feeling that that Ministry did good service to the colony. The honourable gentleman referred to the statement of Mr. Walter Johnston with regard to Railway Boards, and also with regard to the appointment of a special Minister. Well, it is not denied that, in consequence of the view that had been taken generally in the country, the Government consented to take these questions under their consideration; but, after giving to the matter the most mature consideration, we came to the determination that the formation of Boards could not be attempted—the same conclusion which the Premier has so strongly announced to-night as being his opinion, an opinion in which he differed from both his colleagues. The Treasurer speaks of effacing the Atkinsonian legislation; but I venture to say that the legislation left behind them by the Atkinson Government after five years of office will last for all time in this colony. What did we do? We reformed the electoral laws—we carried all the liberal measures which have given to the people of the colony the political privileges that they now enjoy. We reformed the land-laws, which were only consolidated by those gentlemen afterwards; we removed the Native difficulty; we passed legislation with regard to the Natives which still remains, and will be most beneficial to them in years to come. We announced to this House during our last session other legislation affecting the the Native-lands administration which will still have to be adopted when the Bill just passed has proved a failure. It is only a question of time when our proposals will have to be adopted. And yet the honourable gentleman tells us that our legislation has been effaced. He says, triumphantly, "We have abolished the Roads and Bridges Construction Act." It is true that the honourable gentleman, in a moment of triumph, exercised his determination to force the repeal of that Act; but this very session he comes down with another Bill re-enacting the same Act under another name, and containing amendments which he knew were in our mind to propose to this House, and which experience had shown to be necessary. Then, he speaks of "humiliation." The honourable gentleman who made the turning-point of his policy the abolition of the property-tax—what has he done? He has increased it and intensified it; and he talks of "humiliation"! The honourable gentlemen, whose financial measures were rejected one after another last session, still sit on those benches, only kept there, as we have been told, by the personal request of a majority of the members of this House, in spite of constitutional precedent; they keep their seats on those benches though their policy was absolutely rejected by this House! Talk, Sir, of humiliation! Think of what was alluded to just now by the honourable member for Akaroa—the Meiggs proposal. The House would not entertain that proposal. They rejected it summarily, and declared absolutely that they would not consider any proposal of a Government which had brought down measures in such utter disregard of the public interests as that proposal was. Talk of humiliation, when these gentlemen brought down a protective policy which was absolutely rejected in this House, yet still they stuck to their seats! Then, the honourable gentleman dared to criticise the Native policy of our Government, and referred in terms and in a manner to my late colleague the honourable member for Waitotara which I had never heard employed in this House. The country takes the word of the honourable member for Waitotara, and implicitly believes it: it takes the observations of the Colonial Treasurer for what they are worth. Everything that the present Native Minister has been able to do in Native administration is owing to the previous action, the firmness and judiciousness, of the late Native Minister. I may say, in passing, that, so far as I am aware, the present Native Minister admits that; and that is probably a reason why the Colonial Treasurer does not admit it. Then, the House must have felt under a sense of shame when it heard the Treasurer speak as he did about the honourable member for Akaroa. It is not my place to defend that honourable gentleman. He is here, and capable of defending himself. But this I may say: It is against the feeling of members of this House that what passes on an occasion of that kind—with regard to the construction of a Ministry—should be brought up in the way the Treasurer brought it up. He spoke of having shown forbearance and con-

sideration to the honourable member for Akaroa. Did the honourable member for Akaroa ever ask him for forbearance and consideration? Does he require it? Is it proper for one gentleman who thinks he has shown forbearance and consideration to another to parade before this House his forbearance and consideration? That is not the sort of thing that is usually done among gentlemen. Then he said his name would be remembered when the name of the honourable member for Akaroa would be forgotten. That may be so, for of this I am sure: that the name of the Colonial Treasurer will never be forgotten in this colony.

> The evil that men do lives after them,
> The good is oft interred with their bones.

Then the honourable member came to another matter. I hardly like to speak of it without having the words he said before me, for I can hardly believe that any one in a responsible position would have spoken in the way that the Colonial Treasurer did speak. He told us, practically, that the colony was not in a position to have its finance debated. We have not got into that state yet. We do not want any one to come and say to us, "Hold your tongues and leave yourselves in my hands. Do not say anything that will prevent me getting as much money as I can for you." I utterly repudiate talk of that kind in connection with this colony. Then we had the usual reference to the resolution of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. I just want to say, as to that, that a course has been taken with regard to that resolution which is contrary to all the constitutional principles which govern us. We find in all the State documents—in the Financial Statement, in the Public Works Statement, in the speeches made on the floor of this House by members of the Government—we find, in all these, references made to that resolution which I can only characterize—I do not know whether I am using a parliamentary expression—as contemptible. Members of the Government are placed on those benches to guard the privileges of this House, to maintain constitutional usage, and to set an example which is constitutionally right throughout the country. But what did they do in regard to this resolution, which was brought forward in this House by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay last session — a resolution which, I believe, went in the direction of giving effect to the public mind of the colony? When that resolution was proposed the Hon. the Minister for Public Works got up and said that the resolution practically embodied in words what the Government intended to do in fact. They accepted the resolution because they saw that they were obliged to accept it; and, having accepted the resolution, according to all constitutional usage the Government on those benches were bound to adopt it and loyally give effect to it. But during the recess, on every occasion, every principle of constitutional usage was violated by that resolution being held up to the people as one which was doing a great public wrong and had worked evil against the working-class; and the Government, which held its office from Parliament, while disclaiming responsibility for that resolution, used it on every possible occasion for damaging with their constituents those men who had voted for it. The Treasurer has again devoted himself to the honourable member for Hawke's Bay in the same direction. He said that that honourable member had caused a fall of from 10 to 12½ per cent. in the wages paid for labour. There is not a single member in this House who believes that statement for a moment; there is not a single member in this House who does not recognize that it was a thinly-veiled attempt to throw discredit on the honourable member for Hawke's Bay with his constituents. Now I have said all that I care to say with regard to what has fallen from the Colonial Treasurer. I am going to drop that subject. But I must now, in consequence of the decision of the House in refusing the adjournment, make a few remarks on the question before the House. That question, as I understand it, is based, first of all, on the Public Works Statement, and, secondly, on the Loan Bill. I wish to say, with regard to these State documents, that for some time past it has forced itself on my mind that they are not at all what they ought to be, and that we should do very much better, in many cases, if we had no such Statements at all. They are, for the most part, what I might call evidence of a spiritual pride on the part of Ministers—a display of departmental vanity; and, for my own part, so far as I can see, we should be very much better off without any of them. It is possible that the Financial Statement, involving very serious considerations, and matters of detail which require particular accuracy, should be in the form of a written document, and constitute a State document for reference; and that Statement, it is well known, is used by Ministers for the purpose of influencing the money-market at Home. To this cause, in my belief, is to be attributed the great blot that has been unearthed in the present Financial Statement respecting the £800,000; for I believe that it was telegraphed to England that we had £800,000 free for appropriation, and only proposed to borrow this year a million and a half for reproductive purposes. So far, therefore, as that Statement is used as a kind of puffing advertisement at Home, I think it is mischievous and dangerous; and, read by the light of what the Treasurer has told us as to reticence about public affairs, I believe it is a most dangerous thing to allow such a Statement to be telegraphed Home. What about the other Statements? Take the Mines Statement, for instance. I think we should have done quite as well without that Statement. It has superseded the ordinary departmental report, and is only good so far as it is a *réchauffé* of departmental reports. With regard to the Public Works Statement, I propose to criticise it in detail. If these Statements were weighed—as I have heard an inferior set of examination-papers, which were simply what are called pass-papers, were taken and weighed in scales by the examiners—I be-

lieve the Public Works Statement would pass the first. It is heavily weighted with maps and most curious pictures and painted diagrams, and so on; but as a State document I maintain it has no value whatever. The Premier asked us to-night, "What is a policy? What policy do you expect?" He says the policy consists in roads and bridges you are going to make. That is not my idea of a policy, and I say these documents throughout ought to embody the policy of the country—that is, the bearing of the proposals contained in them on the general welfare of the country. A Public Works Statement like this ought to have told the country what the policy was as between roads and railways, in relation to the settlement of the country, free immigration, and generally as bearing on the whole action of the department during the year. This document, take it how you will, contains nothing of policy whatever. It is, I think, a putting into somewhat bad English of the departmental reports. If any honourable member will take the trouble to go through this Statement together with the departmental reports he will find that, for the most part, it consists mostly of those reports, with sentences transposed, and with the English altered not for the better. That is the real story of this Statement. Now, I am quite sure that the Minister himself, who had to read this to a thin House, was dissatisfied with it, that the House was dissatisfied with it, and that the country is simply puzzled and mystified by the whole thing. There are in the Statement twenty pages, and, of these, eleven are in relation to railways in course of construction, and to working railways; and I ask, what is there in these eleven pages which is not as well or better expressed in the reports of the Engineer-in-Chief and the General Manager of Railways? First, in regard to the district railways, I think in such a document as this we ought to have the policy of the Government expressed with reference to such railways, and a statement of how they will affect the revenue. But here there is no effort to explain that at all. From a paragraph in the report it appears that more attempts are to be made to force other private lines on the public. We are told that the Treasurer and the Minister of Mines and the Premier requested that they should not be consulted on that subject. I do not think a statement of that kind ought to appear: it ought to go without saying, and not be placed in the first two or three paragraphs of a Public Works Statement. I can only say that, badly as I think of the whole business, so far as I can see the Minister for Public Works has honestly tried to guard the public interests in the transactions in reference to these railways. Then he says, "We have made reductions in the rates of carriage of goods all in the direction of helping local productions. If it had not been for this, £50,000 more of revenue would have accrued." Now, I think, in a paragraph like that, we ought to have been told in what direction those reductions have taken place. Speaking as a farmer, I believe there have been some slight, but very slight, reductions; but to the farmers the Minister for Public Works has entirely failed to fulfil what he promised when he came into the House, on the strength of which he was elected to those benches. And, Sir, it is a very dangerous thing that reductions should be made on the principle he has enunciated. The only real principle on which you can found a fair basis of railway rates is the actual cost of the carriage *plus* a reasonable percentage for profits and interest. Then, the point as to how industries are to be served by railways will bring in questions that are apart from the business of railways as public carriers, and the Minister may be gratifying his own view at the expense of all other classes in favour of one or two special classes, and very great difficulty might arise in the future from any such policy. He goes on to say, "It has been my constant endeavour to resist, as far as possible, the continued demand for fresh stations on the several lines." I do not think I shall be doing wrong if I detain the House by speaking as to the producing interests of the colony. The action that was taken by the Government of which I was a member, and which brought that Government into very considerable disrepute in the agricultural districts, was this: We said we would try the effect of lowering the freights, trusting to create an increased traffic; but we held that the railways should be made to pay a rate which would be a fair return, and would represent, at any rate approximately, the interest that was paid upon the moneys; and, when we found that that was not being done under the lower freights, we did what I think honourable men were bound to do under the promise they had made to this House that they would try this as an experiment, and revert to the former rates if it failed. We again, in compliance with what we had stated, raised the freights. The consequence is well known: we had to leave those benches. At the same time, in regard to affording appliances, we thought, the Government having undertaken to work as public carriers, it was our business to give reasonable accommodation. And during the last two years of the time we were in office we found it was absolutely necessary for us to improve the rolling-stock, the station accommodation, and other appliances to the tune of between £700,000 and £800,000. In Canterbury alone farmers had appliances given to them amounting to £70,000. Then, the Minister for Public Works told us he had hesitated to reintroduce the Railway Boards Bill that he laid before us last year, because he felt certain it would not meet with general support. He tells us, at the same time, that his opinion is the same with regard to it—that he believes the railways ought to be administered by non-political Boards, and that his opinion has not changed, although he dare not bring his proposals down to the House. Well, one can believe that perfectly; but we have had it stated to the House to-night by the Premier that he disbelieves in the principle altogether, and that he will have no nominated Boards—

that he will have no Boards acting between the people as represented in this House and the Government, and that to the Government alone are the people to look for the proper administration of the railways. Then, curiously enough, we have, at a later period of the evening, the Colonial Treasurer telling us, as I understand him, that he himself still believes we should have some Boards of advice or local Boards. I have already alluded to the sentence which appears in this Statement with regard to the reduction on the votes of last year on the motion of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. I do not propose to allude further to that than to say that the action which was taken with regard to it, and on which I expressed my opinion, is exactly on all-fours with the action taken by the Government throughout the recess on one or two other questions: they have shown, during the recess, their absolute contempt for constitutional propriety. The other questions I refer to are, first, the threat of a dissolution — the bringing of the Governor's name upon the platforms of the country—asking the people to agitate in respect of a function which belongs particularly to the Crown. The other matter in which, I take it, they violated all constitutional propriety was the threat they made use of with regard to the misappropriation of the North Island Trunk Railway Loan. They attempted, by their threats on the platforms of the country, to intimidate members in consequence of their action in this House — an action which they themselves, as Ministers, had practically adopted, and for which they were responsible. Then there is a short paragraph brought in neck and shoulders, without any information in it that would be of any interest, with regard to the manufacture of Portland cement; and we have at the end of the Statement the usual departmental reports, and some wonderful sketches of the Wanganui River—the most marvellous productions, I think, that anybody ever saw attached to a State document, illustrating, if they illustrate anything, how the public money may be appropriated for purposes of a railway and may be used for roads, bridges, and snagging rivers to gratify a local district—the district represented by the honourable member for Wanganui. I have dealt with the first eleven pages of the Public Works Statement. We come now to pages 12 and 13, with regard to the expenditure on roads. There, again, the matter is dealt with simply as any subordinate officer of the department might deal with it. There is nothing but the most meagre information—it is just a transcript of what appears in the reports attached to the Statement. I have very little to say with regard to placing roads upon the estimates—the general roads through settled districts. I think we are doing well in attempting to get rid of that system of constructing roads and bridges by special vote; and the Government of which I was a member made the first honest attempt to get rid of that by passing the Roads and Bridges Construction Act. We have now got an amendment of that Act which I believe to be, I may say, almost the only good measure that the present Government has brought forward, and which I hope will really remove these roads and bridges from the estimates. But when the Premier tells us that we cannot afford to borrow for roads, and that we must cast the roads upon the localities, I should like him to be a little more explicit. I take it that what he means by casting the roads upon the localities is this: that the roads are to be constructed by certain knots of population in the different districts. Does he suppose for a moment that he can cast upon them the opening-up of Crown lands?

Sir R. STOUT.—I exempted that.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I do not dispute that he did; but I ask him, if he holds the view that it is impossible for the local bodies to construct these roads to open up Crown lands, and that it is necessary to construct them out of borrowed money, why does he not make provision for that in this schedule? There is practically almost nothing new to meet such an important branch of the public service. The fact is that we have nothing brought forward but the liabilities in respect of roads to open up Crown lands—the amount is £61,000; there are a few new roads, but generally speaking the roads set down are old roads previously authorized by this House. Here, again, I do think that to dismiss a great question of that kind in a paragraph of a purely departmental character is beneath the dignity of a document that professes to be a State document. We surely ought to have been told what the policy of the Government was with regard to this, and its bearings on the social and economic progress of the country; and I contend that such explanation was the more necessary, because, according to my view, the Minister of Lands has adopted a new policy with regard to opening up waste lands at the present time, in which he has gone very much astray. There was, in the country that lies between here and Woodville and in that neighbourhood, a large tract of land which afforded, as I believe, the best opportunities for colonization that remained in New Zealand; and I think we ought to have had some explanation as to exactly what was being done in regard to the opening-up of these lands. When we left office our intention was to apply a considerable sum—I think, £100,000—to the constructing of roads and developing that country in connection with the railway, as it progressed in both directions to Woodville. Now, we know from the *Gazette*, and from a statement made in this House in a previous session, that the Minister of Lands has adopted what is called the special-settlement system, and that he has sold these lands on that system at a price below that which would ordinarily be got for them—that he has sold them at a nominal price on the conditions that the people who take up the lands will settle them and make the roads. Now, before two years are over we shall find these people bringing pressure to bear on this Assembly to do that work, of which they practically adopt the responsibility by buying the land at a lower

rate, and in accordance with the terms laid down by the regulations. I think we are going to have a terrible complication in respect of that matter. I have spoken before in the House upon the subject, and I would ask the Minister of Lands to consider it. I hope if he takes part in this debate he will tell us exactly how it is working. So far as I can judge, and from what I hear, the survey-work is very badly done: it is escaping proper control, and will lead, in the future, to a great deal of trouble and very great expense. Then we come to the question of immigration. The Premier tells us that he does not believe in State immigration; and the Treasurer tells us that he does believe in State immigration—and we know what sort of immigrants he brought out. I ask honourable members to read the Parliamentary Appendices for, I think, the year 1873, when the Treasurer telegraphed to the Agent-General, the late Dr. Featherston, "I am Minister of Immigration. Send out twenty thousand immigrants in six months." Dr. Featherston carried out that instruction so far as he was able: and what was the natural result? Our shores at that time were crowded with people who have never yet taken their proper position in the country, whatever the Treasurer may say. Then, with regard to immigration, in the document before us there is only a short sentence, which, obviously, has been simply communicated to the Minister for Public Works from a department over which he does not preside. I think the whole question is now in a very unsatisfactory position. I have always been sorry to hear the declamations that are made as against immigration of any kind. I hold, myself, that at the present time we cannot go on with heavy borrowing without taking some steps to promote the settlement of the country, and to increase the settlement of population upon the lands of the country. We do not learn from this Statement that anything has been done in that direction that is of any considerable value. I am glad to see that the introduction of single women has not been stopped, that the system is working fairly well, although there is an increased rate asked per head, and there are a considerable number of nominations going Home month after month for single women. I do not suppose that the advocates of the working-classes, who have laid down very clearly just now their position in relation to the unemployed, can possibly object to that. We have a country large portions of which are being worked by gangs of single men, and there is very little provision made by employers of labour for the creation of social life in the colony; and there is no doubt that, if it were not for these village settlements, in some portions of the country there would be no provision made at all to insure social life, and the decent and orderly well-being of the community at large. Therefore, so far, I am glad to see what has been done by the Minister of Immigration. But I want to say a word of warning with regard to what is also being done in another way, and that is this: The Agent-General has been communicated with, and he has been told to offer passages to small farmers. So far as I can gather, men of small capital, say, £500 or £600, are induced to come out here by the promise of the payment of some amount to be given at the rate of £10 per head for each member of a family. I wish to give a word of warning with regard to that. I do not think there is an opening for putting men of capital, such as I have named, upon the country without very considerable loss; and I think we shall have, as we have had in the Katikati and other settlements, people coming out and becoming very disappointed colonists. A man comes out here with a family who has heard the story of men like Mr. Clayden and Mr. Courtney, and other gentlemen whose names are before us in the correspondence. He comes out with very high notions and with his heart full of hope as to his prospects as a settler; and I venture to think that the disappointment which comes upon these men in the first few days they are here is never overcome until they have lost the larger portion of their capital. With the best intentions, and even with the best administration, the Government would be running the risk of making itself responsible for a large amount of misery. The only course, I think, which might have been taken was this: I think that, when we consented to give some £18,000 a year, as we have, to subsidize a company like the New Zealand Shipping Company, we ought to have made it a condition that the second-class fares of certain ships would be at a lower rate, and practically made the passage to New Zealand the same as the passage to Manitoba and the colonies of America. I do not know that I have much more to say on this Statement as it stands; the rest is purely departmental with regard to public buildings and harbour defences, with the exception of that wonderful statement with regard to the Public Works Fund! That was the first attempt we had to explain away the extraordinary statement to which I alluded in my opening remarks on the Financial Statement, with regard to the existence of £800,000 capable of being apportioned for fresh works. As a monument of ingenuity I think that paragraph on pages 17 and 18 is beautiful; and I have seen very little that is equal to it. We have from the Colonial Treasurer a statement that the Public Works Minister's Statement was all his own; but that could not apply to this paragraph. There is not the same frankness about this part. There is an evidence of ingenuity which bespeaks another mind; and I venture to think, if you look at its composition, you will detect a Hibernian ring in it which does not recognize the difference between "shall" and "will." It comes to this: "We will make a mess of it, and nobody shall help us." I hope I am not offending the susceptibilities of any honourable members from the sister Isle; if I have done so I apologize. There is no general underlying principle giving the public works policy of the colony expressed in this St-

ment, no attempt at an exposition of policy. The Statement, as I said before the honourable member came in, is nothing more than a departmental document, which I think he might spare us in future. I see no objection to the Statement, which has cost him, no doubt, a great deal of trouble and anxiety; but I think in future we had better forego this Statement, at any rate, if it is not to be a better exponent of the public works policy of the country than this document is. I think we were entitled, with regard to future railway construction, to be told what really was the policy of the Government. And we were the more entitled because we have such a number of statements of what has been and what would be the policy of the Government. When the Colonial Treasurer first addressed his would-be constituents at Ashburton he told them that any Government that supported the construction of railways by land grants ought to be hanged—that is, that any Government deserved condemnation that determined to forego the advantages that arise from the opening-up of the country and the increased value given to it, and also the advantages of being able to settle people on the land in connection with its public works policy. In 1884 we had a Statement that the railways were to be divided into three classes—namely, the "forest," which I think we are not likely to hear more of; the "district," of which half the cost was to be guaranteed by the districts through which the lines ran; and the "main trunk" lines. I think that when we are dealing with these railways as they are supposed to be dealt with in this Statement we ought to have been told to which class they belonged. When I come to deal, as I shall at a later hour of the morning, with the Public Works Loan Bill, I shall say what I think of the railways that are there, and how I think they are to be characterized if not classified. But what I am asking the House to consider is this: that we have no indication, in a State document dealing with the railway policy of the country, as to what that policy is. We had the Meiggs contract, which we were told in this House was to form the basis of future arrangements with regard to the construction of railways throughout the colony. We had a statement from the Premier that he would have no more railways constructed in the way proposed in the Railways Construction and Land Act. I would like to ask, again, about another of these railways. Why are we not told what is the policy of the Government with regard to the East and West Coast line? I suppose this is a question about which it is necessary to maintain reticence. I say, if a question of this moment requires to be dealt with with reticence, we had better not deal with it at all. I do think that, as we have gone so far, we ought to have had some explanation with regard to the matter. I should have liked to hear from the Government—as the Colonial Treasurer has developed such principles with regard to the employment of labour—what guarantee they are asking from the contractors in this case that the labour-market of the colony would not be interfered with. I should like to have heard from the Government whether they have taken any guarantee with regard to the construction of engines and other machinery in connection with this railway, in order that the work might be done in the colony. There is no indication what is the intention of the Government with regard to the prosecution of this work so as to secure to the labourers of the country a fair share in it. And there is no indication whatever on the part of the Government that it will not be possible for the contractors for this large work to employ Chinese or any persons they choose. I think the policy of public works should be based on the principle that the people of the colony themselves are to execute them; that they are to grow under their hands—that colonization is to proceed simultaneously: that social life is to proceed, and all the elements of civilization are to proceed, along with these great works. As it is, it seems to me that the Government have very little at heart the interests of the colonists of New Zealand, who, in a matter of this kind, certainly deserve to be considered. I do not say the Government are generally called upon to interfere with the labour question, but I say that, in subsidizing a work of this kind which is to cost three millions, we are taking a course seriously interfering with the working-classes of the country unless we take proper precautions to save them from being injured in the construction of this work. As to the Loan Bill: first, let me say that, so far as the machinery of the Bill goes, I understand that the specific loans are to be appropriated to specific works, so that the moneys as apportioned in this schedule cannot be diverted from the purpose against which they are set. I would ask the Premier whether he is in earnest with regard to this schedule; because, if he is, it is likely to lead to very great difficulties if, as he has told us to-night, it is very possible that some of these lines will not be proceeded with at all. It is quite clear, if these lines are not proceeded with, there will be a breach of faith with the public creditor in diverting the appropriation in the schedule. I now come to the question of the schedule. And I wish to say honourable members are deceiving themselves very much if they think the adoption of this Bill is a question of adopting a policy of borrowing a million and a half. It is no such thing. It is entirely inconsistent with what the Premier has so well put to-night as his view of the policy of the country, "that borrowing is to be tapered off; that in two or three years our borrowing will cease, and that, if the colony is to be saved from ruin, we must cease borrowing." These are memorable words, and I am glad to have had the opportunity of reproducing them exactly as the Premier stated them, because the colony will look to him to save it from this ruin; and if he only asserts himself properly we shall have in him a champion of what I believe to be the true policy for the country in the future. These railways, if proceeded with as is proposed, will certainly involve an expenditure of not less than another

million and a quarter, which must be raised within the next eighteen months, and a much larger expenditure to complete them in the future; and therefore it is by no means a fair course to bring down this Bill and tell the country that we are limiting the borrowing to a million and a half. With regard to these works, some of them are mere padding, such as the Inangahua and Westport. There is no possible excuse for them. There is no possible excuse for the Blenheim-Tophouse line; and, with my knowledge of the country, I say, with regard to this schedule generally, there are not above two or three railways set down here which ought to be gone on with at all in the existing financial position of the colony. There has been an amendment proposed, and I shall vote for it, though it may not go as far as I wish; and I will vote for any amendment to help the Premier in what I understand to be his desire to curtail and taper off the borrowing of the country. But if the honourable member supposes that, after the debate that has passed this night, honourable members are going to allow this schedule to pass as it is, he is very much mistaken. The country will be awakened by the action of the Government to-night—by the attempt to stifle this debate; and honourable members will now feel that they have a duty to perform, and they will feel it in a manner in which they never would have felt it but for the arbitrary and, I think, improper action of the Government in forcing us to talk at half-past three in the morning to express the views we hold on a great question of policy like this. I wish, first of all, to speak as to what fell from the Premier with regard to the line from Blenheim to Awatere. I do not propose now to go through the list of railways in the schedule to this Bill, though I shall be quite prepared, in Committee, or on another occasion in the House, to express my opinions as to the merits of each individual line. I think, as I have said, that perhaps two of the lines in the schedule ought to be gone on with, but that in our present financial condition the rest may very well be postponed. The Premier said the object of the amendment was to force on the East Coast line from Blenheim southward. Now, is not that a most extraordinary statement to make, when there is a proposal by the Government to carry that line to Awatere? The Premier says the Opposition desire to force on this railway beyond Awatere. Why, is not this Government bringing down a proposal to make the line to Awatere? I will say what the Government, in my opinion, ought to do in this matter. The Minister for Public Works should say that the line to Awatere will not be carried further unless portions of the private estates there are acquired for settlement. I know that country, and I say that there is no finer tract of country, perhaps, in the world—certainly not in New Zealand—than this running from the Awatere through Starborough and Clifford and Weld's run. If the honourable gentlemen opposite really mean what they say, if they are interested in the settlement of the country, if they wish to settle a healthy and happy population, and to lessen the burdens of the country, then, in Heaven's name, go on with that railway and determine to take land for settlement. A good deal has been said as to the East Coast line; but I can state this: that the Government of which I was a member proposed to go on with that line only on condition that the land was taken for settlement and settled; and, subject to that, I think no better work can be gone on with in that Island. It is a country excellently adapted for small settlement, and, if the railway is made, alternate blocks should be taken for that purpose. Ten acres there are worth thousands of acres of some of the land through which the East and West Coast Railway will pass. I do not wish this House to discuss the desirability of that line being gone on with; and it cannot go into the question fully now. I do not blame any one for what has been done in regard to that line. Influences were brought to bear which prevented the line being gone on with and land acquired for settlement; and the going-out of office of the Government of which I was a member also tended to bring about the cessation of a work which might have been gone on with by degrees, coupled with progressive settlement. I have already spoken as to what I feel is a wrong that is being done in charging against the North Island Trunk Railway incidental expenses: those expenses may mean anything or nothing, as the Government may wish. The Premier, somewhat hastily—he will correct me if I do him injustice—when called on to explain about the incidental expenses, did not tell us what they were, but he told us there was some £30,000 which had been expended in constructing the line of railway, and he said that the incidental expenses did not amount to that sum. The impression left on my mind was, therefore, that very nearly £30,000 had been expended in works of very great importance, no doubt, to the constituency of the Minister of Lands.—(Oh!)—These beautiful pictures we have seen purport to represent canoes, timber, snagging, and so forth; and they show that a very considerable amount of work has been done. And we are told Government was to have two steamers to go to Pipiriki up the Wanganui River, where 2ft. of water has been obtained.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Where is that?

Mr. ROLLESTON.—The honourable gentleman surely has not read the public works departmental report, wherein it is proposed that two steamers shall go to Pipiriki, and that from thence traffic shall be carried on by road to the railway-line. And the House is fairly entitled to assume that nearly £30,000 has been spent already in incidental expenses in connection with the North Island Trunk Railway. I will not go through the railways in the schedule to this Bill in detail, but I must say that I feel very much disappointed at the action of the Government in letting a contract for the Livingstone Branch. The Minister for Public Works, it is true, said openly in the House that the tender would be accepted; but I think it is too mr-

to expect the House to form an opinion when an announcement of that kind is suddenly made; and I do think it is wrong, when the House is in session, to pick out a railway which certainly is not the least questionable railway on this schedule, and to let a large contract on it during the sitting of Parliament, and before members have had an opportunity of studying and deciding on the schedule of railways submitted. This schedule, if the House does its duty, is going to be ransacked from top to bottom; and yet we are precluded, by the action of the Government, from taking any action with regard to the Livingstone Branch. No harm would have been done by waiting until the House had come to a decision. There was no probability whatever of the contractor drawing out of his offer, or that any detriment would have been produced by a short delay. There was no probability of anything in the nature of his throwing up the contract, and therefore I think a wrong was done to the House by rushing forward this particular railway at the present time. I have done with the Public Works Statement and the Loan Bill. I think the House, if it has listened at all to what I have said, will have come to the conclusion that the whole thing is in a terrible mess. I think the matter is complicated very much by the divisions of opinion which exist between members of the Government, and the whole question is still more overshadowed by the financial difficulties the colony is in at the present time, and about which we are to observe reticence. I think it cannot be uninstructive to consider why it is that we are in this position just now, and I am going to try and convince the House of what I think are the two main causes of our embarrassment at the present time. One is, I think, the fatal facility of borrowing—the borrowing policy for which the Colonial Treasurer is responsible—and the other great cause, for which the Premier is mainly responsible, and which is affecting the deliberations of this House and making its action so uncertain, is the entire absence of party in the sense in which party should properly exist. Well, the honourable member for Inangahua—I am sorry he is not here now—made a speech which suggested to me what has been in my mind ever since. He said, as I understood him, that the Government could not be expected to be better than the House, and that the House could not be expected to be better than the people; that the people, at the present time—as I understood his argument—were ready for any amount of borrowing, and that the Government and the House must take what he believed to be the dictates of the people. That is not my view of the position, but there is a great deal of truth in it. But, at the same time, I venture to think that the course some honourable gentlemen have taken who hold that opinion is a course which is very largely responsible for the difficulties in which we are placed. As I have said, the Colonial Treasurer is the embodiment of our borrowing system; and the present want of party-organization in this House is due to the Premier. The honourable member for Inangahua seems passively to have abandoned himself to the belief that there is no such thing as party in the community, and that there can be no such thing so long as borrowing goes on. That seems to me to be the conclusion to be drawn from his remarks. He seems to me to say, in the words of the poet,—

Sooner or later I, too, may passively take the prim
Of the golden age. Why not? I have neither hope nor trust,
May make my heart as a millstone, set my face as a flint,
Cheat and be cheated and die. Who knows? We are ashes and dust.

I think, if members of the House approach the consideration of questions of policy like this, with such feelings as that, it is no wonder if the forms of our Constitution are of no avail to save us from trouble and disaster such as the Premier believes to be gaining on the country through our borrowing policy. The honourable member for Rangitikei spoke in a very hopeful strain. He recognizes what I recognize—the absence of that proper working of party which should characterize parliamentary government in this House; but he believes that principles are arising upon the lines of which a number of men will separate themselves, and ought to separate themselves. Now, to my view, there are two bases of parties which must exist in every popular Assembly in one form or another. The one principle is that which, I think, the Treasurer represents. It is the representation of class interest—of class and property as against the interests of the people; and the other is the representation of persons, and the greatest good of the greatest number, which, I believe, the colony at large looks on as the party of which the Premier ought to be one of the leaders. We have at the present time what is called "a coalition Ministry." We were told by the Treasurer, in one of his speeches,—

"The present Government was a coalition Government, representing the utilitarian and theoretical elements of Parliament. In the case of a person who was very ill it was usual to send for two physicians, one to attend to the moral and the other to the physical portion of his being."

I wish the Premier was not asleep, for I should like to ask him which physician he considers himself. He seems to me, if I do not mistake him, rather to fall in in practice with the theory that there should be no party government; but I should like to call to his attention what he stated in the address he delivered to the citizens of Dunedin, in the Drill-shed, in 1884. He said,—

"You are all aware that we have what is termed representative government. We have a Parliament that is called upon to administer our affairs, and whenever there is a Parliament elected for such a purpose party government is essential. If you do not have party government you descend into mere cliques, and nothing but log-rolling and jobs. But if you have strict party lines, if you have one party with some

defined principles, then you can hope to have really good government, each fighting for what they believe to be best. . . . Now, it is all nonsense to say that there are not two political parties. I say that one cause of the bad government of New Zealand, one cause of our depression, one cause of our jobs, one cause of our log-rolling, is this: that men have gone into the House and floated about without any defined party principles, and unable to unite with parties; and any person who flattered them for the moment got their votes."

That was the opinion of the Premier in 1884, when he came into this House for the third time. I wish he still held to that principle and acted upon it, because I think that the coalition at the head of which he has placed himself will be a blot upon his whole political career. He has been taken by the people to represent that class of views which, I think, is the basis of one party in all popular Assemblies, and the Treasurer is the representative of another. We have in the Treasurer no unfitting representative of the modern golden age. The propertied classes, syndicates, monopolists, companies, every speculative abomination, are his care. He revels at the tables of the money-changers. For him the mountains bring reefs and the little hills nuggets. A noble river like the Molyneux suggests syndicates and companies who may turn its course and enable its golden treasures to be rifled. He dreams of Pactolus. He tells the Canterbury Railway League, in an effusive letter,—

"The fabled Pactolus, which carried through Lydia its golden sands, has, I am told, its realities in numerous rivers running to the sea on the West Coast, the beds of which have yet to be exposed to the labours of the gold-miners."

He would fain emulate the performances of the Phrygian monarch whose name is associated with that golden torrent. Everything he touches he would turn to gold, or, failing that, to debentures, over the inscription and sale of which large commissions may be realized. The ancient king, so the fable runs, failed to realize the eternal fitness of things. He could not discriminate between the earth-born strains of Pan and the melodies of the heavenly lyre of Apollo. Hence the wrath of the immortals, who cared as little for gold then as they would now for debentures. Hence, for all time, to men of his own and succeeding ages, the whispering reeds tell of his crime and its punishment—

Auriculas asini Mida rex habet.

King Midas has ass's ears! The fable even now is repeating itself in respect of the honourable member and the colonists of New Zealand. The people who have been revelling under his guidance in dreams of golden torrents are fast awakening to the earthly realities of heavy debt and burdensome taxation; and again the words are whispered in the wind, "King Midas has ass's ears!" Our Lombard Streets, our usurers, our companies, our district railways, our insurance arrangements, have their advocates—not perhaps unduly in this House: they have a right to be represented in a House where all interests should find a voice. They, and the classes who would rob the people of free national education, the classes who look upon the lands of the country as their peculiar birthright, who build district railways for their own benefit at the people's expense, the tinsel aristocracy built up on borrowed money and mortgages, are sufficiently represented to form a large and powerful party in the Legislature of the colony. They have a fitting leader in the Treasurer. Let him lead them. To the Premier a large number of the people of the colony have been accustomed, until he formed his unholy alliance, to look as a man who would subserve no class interests, who would let nothing interfere with the liberty and opportunity which is afforded by a democracy to all its citizens to come to the front, who would be a determined foe to any tyranny of wealth or class, who would sweep away unjust privilege wherever it attempted to assert itself. We remember him when he first raised his voice in this House in the interests of liberty; when the public works policy of his present colleagues first triumphed over the free institutions of the colony; when the provinces were destroyed and this Assembly became the scrambling-ground for borrowed money. We yet believe that his natural force of character and his good instincts will dissociate him from the pseudo-patriots with whom he sits, and bring him back to the fold of the true Liberals who now sit on this side of the House. But, for the present,—

Faith unfaithful keeps him falsely true.

He has spoilt, it may be for years to come—I say it in all seriousness—any prospect of a proper ranging on the one side of the friends of liberty, and on the other of those who associate power and pelf in a manner inimical to the best interests of the people. He cannot suddenly break his chains. To retrace his steps at once is a work of superhuman difficulty.

The way to the Devil is easy and plain,
But the devil it is to get back again.

He sits by the side of a man who has denounced liberal land-laws as arrant humbug, who has decried our present education system, who has paraded himself as the apostle of Conservatism! What good can come out of such an alliance? The Ministry lack the "grace of congruity." I pray him to go into retirement to purge himself, and leave us in the meantime to fight with the Powers of Darkness which he has been instrumental in bringing into play. Let us see how this coalition works out not only here, but in the other branch of the Legislature. I believe I must not allude to that body, and therefore I will only speak of individual members of the Government. It is said of certain members of the Ministry sitting on the same bench elsewhere that when one says "Aye" the other says "No," and when one says "No" the other says "Aye." I ask, is that a proper spectacle in Ministers who are leading the policy of the country, and are supposed to be really interested in its welfare? Let me take an

instance of what has passed in this House, of which I am satisfied that members were really ashamed when it took place. Take the question of the Advances on Lands Bill, introduced by the honourable member for Port Chalmers. What took place here with respect to that Bill? In the Financial Statement we had had a lengthy paragraph explaining the deliberate views of the Government—a formal document, which, by the way, had to go to London, and therefore was more carefully prepared than it otherwise would be. The views there expressed were distinctly adverse to any such system as proposed by the honourable member for Port Chalmers, and the Hon. the Treasurer gave the country and the House to understand that the Government would have nothing to do with it; But when the Bill came on in this House, what was done? The Premier got up and, in a speech of very great power and clearness, expounded his views of the case. Members of this House had a right, I think, to expect that, in a question of public policy of that magnitude, the Government would lead the House and be of one mind. But what happened? The Premier went into one lobby by himself; the Colonial Treasurer, who himself had expressed his opinion as distinctly adverse to the proposals, paired in favour of the measure; and all the other members of the Government went into the opposite lobby. Never since I have been in Parliament have I seen anything that reflected so much discredit on our institutions as what took place that evening. I felt sorry that the honourable member for Port Chalmers accepted a vote affirming the principle of that Bill from members who, all round the House, stated they simply voted out of compliment and respect to him. Is this the position of the Legislature of New Zealand — that its members are on such grounds as these to lend their names to a principle of that kind, raising hopes in the minds of the farmers of the country, leading them to the belief that they are going to be given relief which every one in this House knows will not be afforded? Was that a proper position for this House to be led into by the members of the Government, and was it a proper position for the promoter of that Bill to take up, that the Bill should be allowed to be carried by the votes of Ministers who were bound, from their constitutional position in relation to the Premier, to vote against the Bill? I know of no more mischievous action than that which occurred on that occasion. It was a cruel mockery of the farming interest. I am not speaking upon the merits of the Bill; I cannot do so, because that would involve a long discussion; but I refer to the matter simply to show what bad examples are set to us by this Coalition Government—this coalition of the theoretical and utilitarian elements, as they were called by the Colonial Treasurer. I am sorry to have spoken at this length, and to have detained the House so long, but I do believe that the House has a great duty to perform in respect of the proposition now before it, and I do trust that it will not shrink from discharging that duty. For my own part, I shall give my vote on every occasion in the direction indicated in the last eloquent words of the Premier—in the direction of curtailing borrowing, and leading the people of New Zealand as far as possible to rely upon their own energies, and of inspiring them with a belief in the future of the colony, in spite of this "narrowing lust of gold" and this anxiety for a borrowing policy, of which the Colonial Treasurer is the embodiment and example.

Mr. Rolleston

The House divided on the question, "That the debate be adjourned."

AYES, 21.

Atkinson	Hatch	Richardson, G.
Bruce	Hirst, H.	Rolleston
Buchanan	Lake	Ross
Buckland, W.F.	Moat	Trimble.
Conolly	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Fergus	Pearson	Hobbs
Grey	Reese	Newman.
Hakuene		

NOES, 24.

Ballance	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Bevan	McMillan	Thompson, T.
Cowan	Menteath	Tole
Dargaville	Parata	Vogel
Duncan	Pere	Walker.
Fraser	Reid	*Tellers.*
Grace	Richardson, E.	Hursthouse
Kerr	Stout	O'Callaghan.
Larnach		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Barron	B.-Bradshaw
Beetham	Turnbull
Bryce	Garrick
Fisher	Levestam
Fulton	Te Ao
Hamlin	Gore
Hislop	Holmes
Hurst, W. J.	Coster
Ivess	Dodson
Johnston	Macandrew
Macarthur	Harper
Mackenzie, M.	O'Conor
Moss	Brown
Mitchelson	Cadman
Ormond	Guinness
Russell	Lance
Samuel	Montgomery
Thomson, J. W.	Stewart, W. D.
Wakefield	Steward, W. J.
Whyte	Smith
Wilson.	Seddon.

Majority against, 3.

Motion negatived.

Subsequently the debate was adjourned.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past five o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 27th July, 1886.

First Readings—Adjournment.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Mining Bill, Mortgage Debentures Bill, Port Chalmers Fire Brigade Site Bill, Sheep Bill.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—Sir, instead of proceeding with the Orders of the Day, I propose to adopt the usual course, which I suppose is the constitutional one on occasions like the present. It is probably within the knowledge of honourable members that a motion of want of confidence in the Government is proceeding in another place; and it is not usual to transact any business in the Council while such a motion is under discussion; and therefore I move, That we adjourn till to-morrow at half-past two o'clock.

The Council adjourned at three o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 27th July, 1886.

First Readings—Unemployed—Gold Duty—Kumara Water-race—Local Bodies' Indebtedness—New Zealand Loan Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Cathedral Site (Parnell) Leasing Bill, Property Assessment Bill, Rabbit Bill, Public Revenues Bill.

UNEMPLOYED.

Sir G. GREY.—There is one very important question—with respect to the unemployed in Auckland; and I think our minds ought to be set at rest about that without delay.

Sir R. STOUT.—I would rather the honourable gentleman would wait until to-morrow, when the Minister for Public Works will explain fully what we have done. I can assure the honourable gentleman and the House that this matter has not been neglected, and that we are doing all we possibly can.

Mr. MOSS.—I wish to say that I have received the following telegram from Auckland to-day: "Question of the unemployed getting very serious. Please do what you can.—F. JEUNE." I have implicit confidence in the statement of that gentleman. There has been a meeting of a thousand people this morning on the subject in Auckland. The information I have received is that they are really respectable men and cannot get work. The whole question has assumed very large dimensions—so large that it is impossible with any local means to cope with the difficulty. In order to discuss the matter I will now move the adjournment of the House. The question is so important that it is necessary to impress it on the House in this manner. Although the difficulty is experienced in other parts of New Zealand, I believe that no place is likely to suffer so much as Auckland, because for a long time it has been receiving large additions to the population from the southern parts of the colony. There have been prosperous times there, and large numbers of people have been attracted to the place. They are now without the means of obtaining employment, and therefore the suffering must be greater than in any other town in New Zealand. The information I have received is that the Government have not rendered anything like adequate aid. They have offered to spend something like £500 among this vast crowd of unemployed. It is also complained to me that the Government are offering 4s. 6d. a day to the unemployed, while they are paying 6s. a day to Natives who are working on the North Trunk Railway. Those Natives are not people in distress. They have land upon which they can settle, no rents to pay, no families to maintain. They are receiving 6s. a day, yet the unemployed are only offered 4s. 6d. a day. We, sitting here, do not feel the distress, we do not see it; we unfortunately meet in an out-of-the-way part of the colony. What do we know of what is going on in other places? What do members from the South know of what is going on in Auckland? If they did, I am perfectly sure they would rise to a man and insist on immediate relief being granted; and my object is to bring the subject before honourable members as forcibly as possible. I am sorry to see the light way in which the Government seem to regard it. I hope it is only seeming. I have implicit confidence in the gentleman who has sent me this telegram.. If they knew him they would know that importance was to be attached to it; and I hope the Government will take some steps to satisfy themselves at once as to the distress existing and the extent of the distress.

Mr. HATCH.—I second the motion for the purpose of making one remark on the subject. When the honourable member for Parnell talks about southern members not having the slightest idea of the distress in the North, I would like to give him an idea as to the way we deal with the difficulty in the South. If we have any unemployed the Municipal Council gives the work and pays the money. It appears to me that Auckland and other large cities, feeling the pressure of charitable aid, wish to obtain from the Government a fresh amount of money with the view of relieving the district, which ought to pay for charitable aid or assist the unemployed. If the inhabitants of a rich city like Auckland set to work to relieve the unemployed the difficulty soon overcome.

Mr. T. THOMPSON.—I feel sure that, if the honourable member for Invercargill was in possession of the same information as the members from Auckland, he would not speak in the way he has spoken about the distress in Auckland. I may say that, in response to an application from myself, the Minister for Public Works informed me that he had given employment on a small work near the railway-station: but that will only give employment to forty or fifty men, at the outside. There is no question that at the present time there is a large amount of genuine distress in Auckland; and immediate steps ought to be taken to afford some relief. I feel certain the Government must be in possession of the same information as the Auckland members have, and must feel the necessity of something being done immediately.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—With regard to what has fallen from the honourable member for Parnell, I would say that the Government fully realize the position of this matter, and have taken steps, and will take steps, to do everything that lies in their power to meet the sudden demand for employment that has sprung up in the City of Auckland. But, at the same time, as far as the Government are aware, the local authorities there do not appear to have done as much as has been done by the local authorities in other parts of the colony. I have also been assured—and have taken steps to ascertain whether the information is correct—that at the present time any number of men who are really disposed to work can go out on the gumfields and earn far higher wages than the Government can offer them in the town. The difficulty is that a great number of those men would not leave town on any consideration whatever. We have offered them free passes to the gumfields, and to give them other assistance if they are inclined to accept it. The work which the honourable member for Auckland North has referred to was immediately put in hand because it was the only piece of authorized work we had available. There is no doubt that as soon as the estimates are passed the Government will have other works, and will employ a considerable number of men. At the same time, the Government have the matter in hand, and anything they can do will be done. The local authorities must assist, and no doubt will assist, the Government.

Sir G. GREY.—It is my opinion, with some knowledge of the subject, that to order several hundred men on to the gumfields at once is not a proper step to take.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—I did not say that any order had been given. What I said was that instructions had been given to the officials to ascertain whether any of the men were willing to go, and, if so, assistance would be given to put them to work.

Sir G. GREY.—I am not at all satisfied. Men unused to the work cannot make a living at once.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Some of them can, surely.

Sir G. GREY.—Some of them, perhaps, who are accustomed to it. But I would like to know what is to become of the residue.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—We will do the best we can.

Sir G. GREY.—I am assured that there are cases of extreme distress at present, and I think there should be some instantaneous relief.

Mr. PERE.—Sir, I am sorry that the questions on the Order Paper have been adjourned. I was anxious that the honourable member for Parnell should put his question No. 18, and that we should discuss it. It is as follows: "To ask the Government, If they are aware that, since April, 1883, persons committed for trial have been and are subjected to the same restrictions and privations as convicted prisoners?" That, I understand, refers to the Maori prisoners. I think it is an important matter, and I ask now, is it not possible to have a reply to that question? I ask the Government if they will make some explanation in regard to it. My mind is troubled by something I have heard with regard to the Native prisoners.

Mr. HOBBS.—I think it is a very cold kind of charity to tell the destitute and unemployed to go into the country. It is just as I have said—people are too fond, in the towns, of telling the unemployed to go into the country; but how that would better their position I am at a loss to understand. It has been stated that the authorities have been instructed to furnish them with free passes: but free passes are of very little use where there are no railways, and north of Auckland there is only a railway to Helensville, and the gumfields in that neighbourhood have been completely worked out. Therefore it would be of no avail to give free passes to the unemployed to go there for gum-digging. To suggest that is simply trifling with the House, though I do not say that was intended. It requires some money even to go to the gumfields. Those going require food and tools, so that it is useless to tell the absolutely destitute to go to the gumfields. I believe the Government will do their best in the matter. It is a very urgent question, and I hope will receive prompt attention.

Mr. BALLANCE.—With reference to what fell from the honourable member for the Eastern Maori District, I may inform him that the question he referred to is one which deals with prisoners of both races, and of course the question would be answered by the Minister of Justice. But I may inform the honourable gentleman that the Maori prisoners are treated just in the same way as European prisoners in the same position are treated. No distinction whatever is made between them; and any alteration in the regulations, of course, must be made so as to apply to prisoners of both races. I do not think it would be advisable to have any distinction made between them.

Mr. MOSS.—This way of treating the difficulty—by saying, "Go into the country and seek work"—seems to me heartless altogether.

It is not the only remedy that can be applied. We know that the country is not what it used to be. The time was when men going about the country looking for work had shelter and food given them by the settlers; but, owing to the public works policy, that time has gone by, and people travelling now must stop at hotels, or, at all events, pay for their provisions. If they lie for a night under a hedge, the probability is that the police will take them up as vagrants. Altogether, we have become so civilized that the old conditions do not apply at all. A great responsibility rests upon the Government: it is they who introduce the immigrants and glut the labour-market. The honourable member for Invercargill says that the authorities at Auckland are not doing their duty. How does he know what the authorities are doing? I believe they are doing all they possibly can. I believe the pressure of public opinion compels them to do so, and, if we had the pressure of public opinion on this House as directly as the Auckland City Council has it, we should not talk in this way. But because we are in this out-of-the-way place, and not under the direct pressure of public opinion, we venture to talk as we do. I feel perfectly sure that no one in the City Council of Auckland, under the eye of the public of Auckland, would dare to speak in a light way of the troubles and difficulties that have overtaken these unfortunate people. Reference has been made to another question on the Order Paper, of which I had given notice. I do not know why the Native Minister got up to answer that question; but I hope the Minister of Justice will take that matter in hand, and I hope he will not allow himself to be trammelled by red-tape and official rules so much as to allow his natural sense of justice and his sympathy with the unfortunate to be clouded. I wish it to be distinctly understood that I intend my question to refer to all prisoners.

Sir R. STOUT.—It is very unfair, after a question has been postponed, to talk about it.

Mr. MOSS.—It is not more unfair than that which the Premier is now saying and the casuistry he is resorting to. I did not ask that the question should be postponed, nor did I raise it after it was postponed. It has been said in the newspaper this morning that the question was to be put by me with reference to the Native prisoners. It is nothing of the kind. I wish to see equal justice done to both races. The Native Minister does not monopolize that desire, though he lays great stress on it so often; but we who sometimes oppose him have an equal desire to see the same justice done to persons of both races, even when they are in prison. I wish the House to understand—although the paper this morning states that I was asking the question on behalf of the Maoris—that it is not so. I ask it on behalf of a number of persons of both races who are now in prison awaiting trial, and who are subject to restrictions and privations which I think they should not suffer until, by conviction, it is proved they have been guilty.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

GOLD DUTY.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister of Mines, If he will press on the Gold Duty Reduction Bill, and take proceedings to insure the Mining Bill becoming law? The following telegram on the subject spoke for itself:—

"County Council have passed unanimously resolution regretting action Legislative Council in rejecting Abolition Gold Duty Bill, expressing hope that Government will introduce another measure this session abolishing duty.

"JAMES CLARKE,
"County Chairman."

Mr. LARNACH said the Gold Duty Reduction Bill was the third on the Order Paper that day, but it could not be proceeded with until the debate on the Loan Bill had been finished.

KUMARA WATER-RACE.

On the motion of Mr. SEDDON, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House showing—(1) The amount received for sale of water from the Kumara Water-race; (2) the cost of the Kumara Water-race, and the amount expended on the same during the last financial year; (3) the net percentage of profit to the colony on the said race for the year 1885.

LOCAL BODIES' INDEBTEDNESS.

On the motion of Mr. O'CONOR, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House showing the indebtedness of all local bodies, the amount of interest, sinking fund, and the security in each case.

NEW ZEALAND LOAN BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. COWAN.—Sir, I desire to make a few remarks on this Bill, which has now been discussed by the House for many days, and discussed in such a manner that nothing can be adduced as to the features of the Bill or the public works policy of the Government that will be new to the House. I think I shall be consulting the convenience of the House by being brief in the remarks I have to make. If we look back to the proceedings at the last sitting of the House, and the length to which the debate was prolonged, it must not only have taxed your patience, Sir, but I can assert that it was a very considerable strain on the patience of other honourable members, who have opportunities of retiring which you, Sir, do not enjoy. I must say that I think it was unfair on the part of certain honourable members, during last sitting, to extend their remarks to such a length as they did, because, although it might have been useful from the point of view of party tactics, I think the proceedings at the last sitting, at all events, had a strong appearance of an attempt by the minority to coerce the majority in this House. The opening debate on this Bill savoured very much, to my mind, of a want-of-confidence debate; but it had this peculiarity: that the speeches were not follow- any resolution which might have b-

to follow the speeches of certain members of this House. The proceedings, however, resulted yesterday in an amendment, which was introduced by the honourable member for Mataura, and, although not in the specific terms I have indicated of want of confidence in the Government, the amendment cannot be considered in any other light than as a direction to the Government to take back their public works policy and amend it as indicated in the amendment. The policy, as honourable members know, is set forth in the schedule to that Bill, and, seeing that this amendment traverses that schedule, and proposes that some items shall be struck out and that other items shall be increased, I cannot see that the Premier had any other course open to him than to take up the position which he did and accept this as a motion of want of confidence in his Administration. You have ruled, Sir, that the terms of the amendment were in order, and I accept your ruling on that point; but it struck me last night, and more forcibly to-day, after seeing the amendment in print, seeing that it proposes to increase an item of appropriation, that it was scarcely in order. But I accept your ruling, Sir, on that point. The very prolonged debate which took place on this Bill has had the appearance to me of having been more personal than was necessary, particularly during the last sitting. From the tone of several members of the Opposition I have been forced to the conclusion that the fight which has taken place has more the appearance of a fight for office than of a fight for the best interests of the country. The action of the honourable member for Mataura in introducing this amendment leaves me in the position of being uncertain as to what is behind it. This is commonly the position one is put in in regard to motions of this kind; because on all previous motions of want of confidence in the Government I have found myself exactly in a similar position. During the last sitting we heard that the honourable member for Egmont had not been consulted with regard to this motion till yesterday; and I accept that. But I cannot—although I have confidence in the honourable member for Mataura—but think that the honourable member for Egmont, in the event of this amendment being carried, will be the honourable member for Mataura's chief. I do not think, from my own personal knowledge of the honourable member for Mataura, that he is ambitious to be Premier of this colony; but I assert this, from my knowledge of him: that he is well qualified to be Public Works Minister in any Administration. I, however, know that closely allied with that honourable gentleman politically there is another member of this House—the honourable member for Wakatipu—who is not only ambitious but who is equally qualified to fill the office of Public Works Minister in any Administration. If the amendment is carried, no doubt by-and by the difficulty in which I find myself will disappear. But I trust the amendment will be rejected by this House by a substantial majority. It is not to be expected that each member, or even a majority of members, of this House can be fully satisfied with the schedule of this Bill; I may say, frankly, that I am not satisfied with every item in the schedule; but I take it that our duty here as representatives of the people is to see that a schedule appropriating money such as this is shall be framed in a manner that will be equitable to every district in the country, and will carry out, as fairly as possible, the intentions of the Government towards finishing railway works on which money has been spent to a revenue-producing point. With regard to this Bill, I may say that I regret that there is any necessity for it. I am one of those who will welcome the time when borrowing will not be required in this country. This Bill is consequent upon the public works policy, which has now been in operation since 1870; and I regret that the public works policy has not been completed by the previous borrowing, so as to render further borrowing unnecessary. But, seeing the position in which we are,—with a large number of uncompleted works in every district of the country,—that must of necessity devolve not only upon this Government, but upon every Government succeeding them, to still borrow money with a view to completing those works which are in an unfinished state. My opinion goes in the direction that these works should be finished to payable points before any new works are commenced, and it is in that direction my feelings go with regard to the schedule as a whole. The resources of this country are now being taxed to the utmost to raise the interest required for the borrowed money; and every Bill such as this which provides for further borrowing increases the burden which we have to bear. That portion of the Bill which allocates the loan to particular works I entirely approve of, and I think that is a matter upon which this Government deserve to be commended. The error of the public works policy hitherto, in my opinion, has been that too much borrowed money has been expended in unproductive works. No doubt the peculiar circumstances of the country have to some extent to answer for that state of things; but I think the time has now come when borrowed money should be spent in as small a degree as possible on buildings and works of that character. I regret very much that the proposals of the Government with regard to school-buildings were not received with favour by this House. I approved of that measure because of its decentralizing tendency. I believe the time has now come—and if we do not accept the task it will be very soon forced upon us—when this question of school-buildings must be dealt with by Parliament in a manner different from the present plan. The funds for works of this kind must be found partly, if not wholly, by the districts. I regret that the Government were not able to carry out their views in that direction this session. Another peculiar feature of our public works policy is this: that the more miles of railway opened in this country for traffic the

less the average return. We have not far to go to seek an explanation of that; and this is the explanation, which must be patent to every one: that we are now getting into the position of having a larger number of miles of railway than our population requires. Therefore I consider that this question of immigration—the whole question of increasing our population—requires to be considered in connection with our public works policy. I notice that the Government have made small provision for immigration, and I think they were wise in not going further in that direction, because this is a question which requires very careful handling. It is not many hours ago that we heard in this House of the question of "the unemployed" at Auckland, and that question now is creating considerable anxiety in the north part of this Island. But those members who come from the South can bear me out in this statement: that the question is not a new one there. We have had it for several winters, and we had it in a very extreme degree at a time when we heard that things were uncommonly brisk in Auckland. The honourable member for Parnell has given us an explanation to-day on which I lay considerable weight—that those of our labourers who were in the position, during the last three years, to leave the South have done so, and that, as doubtless was the case, a portion of them have found their way to Auckland. I would say to the honourable members from that district who are in the House now that in dealing with this question of relief they must not depend entirely upon the General Government. It requires very considerable local effort. I am glad to say the local efforts put forth in the South, along with very moderate assistance from the General Government, enabled us to meet that question in a fairly-equitable manner. There is an idea abroad that it would be well if we could get immigrants here with a certain amount of capital; and no doubt every one will give his assent to that proposition. But the question is, What inducement can we hold out to such men to come here to join us, looking at the state in which we have been for many years? I am glad to say that the cloud which has been hanging over us in the way of low prices of produce and bad times generally is now likely to clear away; but the agricultural industries of this country, to which the large bulk of intending capitalists with money will be attracted, have been in anything but a position which could hold out any inducement to such men to come here and join us. Then, we have had presented to us, day after day, petitions from agriculturists from all parts of the colony, asking for a modification of the terms on which they hold their leases. The ground asserted by the petitioners for making these applications is that they are unable to meet their obligations owing to the low value of produce. I hope and believe that the cloud is now lifting; and, if present values keep up, I have no doubt that most of the petitioners will, in a few seasons, find themselves in a more satisfactory condition. I am aware that it is impossible for all claimants on the Government to get relief; but I regret very much that the Government has not seen its way to extending help to this class hitherto. I hope, however, that the improvement in the value of produce will soon do away with any necessity for looking to the Government for help. With regard to the question of immigration, I think it is very undesirable to introduce immigrants, except on the nomination system; and I shall oppose any expenditure except for that system, and for that requisite for the union of families at present separated. As to roads and bridges, I think it is essential to make provision for both of those works, because they are so intimately connected with the question of the settlement of the land, and with the question of increasing the revenue of the railways. As far as I can see, the Government are to be commended for the provision which they have made in this respect. As to the question of the purchase of Native land, that is a matter on which the Government have been severely twitted during this debate. When we consider that pressure has been brought upon the Government to obtain a considerable area of land along the line of railway in this Island prior to its construction, I think it is a sufficient warrant for what the Government have done in this direction. They are twitted with using some of the main trunk loan-money for the purpose of purchasing lands. I think the Government have done fairly in using that money. No doubt the amount that has to be devoted to the purchase of land will reach a considerable sum, and when it does it will be competent for any Government—and I imagine that it is only necessary for them to ask the House for power—to propose that the money be recouped to that railway loan. I think the Government have done right in what they have done in this respect. Another point on which the Government have been twitted is that of railway administration, and I think that this is a question upon which they can fairly be twitted; but what Government has sat on those benches that could not be twitted in the same direction? The railway administration is a vast one. It goes over such an area of this country, and the requirements of the various districts are so diverse, as was fairly stated by the Premier last night, that there cannot be expected to be satisfaction on every point. It seems to me that the greatest objection to the popular administration of the railways is that the Government are bound by cast-iron rules; and there is some reason for that, because, were it otherwise, were the Government able to make concessions to particular individuals, as in the case of a private company, we should have supporters of the Government getting concessions, while members of the Opposition would be aggrieved because they did not get concessions enough. I say that that is a very good reason why the management of the railways should be [illegible] by some rule. If you want to mak[illegible]
tration of the railways popula[illegible]
per cent. of the passenger far[illegible]

If you strike them all off you will make the management still more popular. This is the direction in which people want redress, and I admit that my views go in the direction of reducing fares and freights, and I should be glad to support a motion in this House to do that, and to cast the deficiency on the accumulated wealth of this country through the property-tax. It is only by such a process as that that you can make railway administration really popular. I know, in my own experience, that the railways are losing a large amount of freight through the impossibility of giving concessions for large quantities, especially when it is desired to move live-stock from one point to another. I am aware that it is cheaper to travel stock by road than by train, notwithstanding the fact that while being driven they deteriorate in value. If the Government were in a position to make concessions you would get rid of some of the difficulties, and the revenue of the railways would, at the same time, be increased; but I cannot see how that is to be done under the present circumstances. I may say that, as one who travels about the country a good deal, it has struck me that there is a very much larger staff of men employed than is necessary. That is a question which no doubt the Minister for Public Works has paid attention to, but I believe that retrenchment can go still further in that direction. However, I take the Statement which has been made by the Minister as a most valuable evidence that the administration of the railways in this colony is receiving due consideration. The Minister has told us that he is working, this last year, 1[illegible] miles more railway without any additional cost as compared with the expense of managing the lines previous to last year. That indicates fairly good management; and retrenchment in the general salaries has been given effect to. There is another little item which needs attention, in order that a better impression may be created in connection with railway management, and that is the paying more attention to local wants in the way of giving residents in the towns more facilities for crossing railways at streets. In the district I come from there is considerable dissatisfaction to the Railway Department in consequence of their action in this matter. I am aware that [illegible]

liament expires, this Government will put on record in the shape of a Bill their matured opinions with regard to the appointment of Railway Boards. I may say, in connection with this subject, that the management of the railways of the South Island from Wellington does not work well. To manage the railways of the South from Wellington is analogous to managing the London and North-Western line from France. The case is exactly analogous; and that idea is not more absurd than the system which we at present have in force in this colony. Then, the question of party lines has been mentioned to the House by various members, and the Government has been twitted with destroying party lines. To my mind, it is not the Government, but the public works policy, which is responsible for this. So long as we have the public works policy, so long as we require to borrow money for the purpose of carrying on that policy, so long will local wants occupy a higher position in this House than they ought to do. I believe, myself, that the time is not far distant when parties will be more thoroughly divided than they are now, but I do not expect that time to come until the public works policy is more near completion than it appears to be now. I was amused by the remarks of the honourable member for Napier when he referred to the absence of party lines; for, having lamented that, a few sentences further on he indicated to the House in what direction the public works policy as provided for in this Bill was deficient. It seemed to be deficient because it did not appropriate a large enough sum for his own local railway. Then, the honourable member for Mount Ida took up exactly the same position, though in his case it was the Otago Central that had not enough given to it. And so long as a Government have the disposal of borrowed money, so long will they find it to be to their interest—a cardinal point in their retaining a majority——

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Will the honourable gentleman allow me to explain? I [illegible] say that there was not sufficient money [illegible] the Otago Central Railway. I said [illegible] money. What I said was that [illegible] was unfair and impolitic that the Otago [illegible] colonial lines should be kept [illegible] while entirely new lines were being [illegible]

[illegible]AN.—I was saying that, as long as [illegible] in power has the distribution [illegible] and as long as the public [illegible] the country are unfinished, [illegible] must without doubt be de[illegible] their position on giving an [illegible] each district of the money [illegible] borrowed. I will not detain the [illegible] to say that I trust the [illegible] of the honourable member for [illegible] be rejected by a substantial [illegible] also to express a hope that those [illegible] members who intend to continue [illegible] will not follow the bad example [illegible] last night by prolonging [illegible] such a very wearisome length.

Mr. SUTTER.—The Premier last night twitted me with having opposed any reduction, or scheme of economy, and specially so in connection with school-buildings; and the honourable member who has just sat down made a somewhat similar charge against me. Now, I distinctly said to the Premier that I would vote for any measure which would allocate the cost of school-buildings on local bodies, if it were properly done; and that what I objected to were attempts to do so by side-winds, such as inserting a clause in the Local Bodies' Loans Bill, the Counties Bill, or the Municipal Corporations Bill. If such a clause had slipped into any of these Bills there is no doubt that next year we should be told that the local bodies had to find the money whether they liked it or not. What I say is that, whenever any alteration is required—and I know one will be necessary before long—in order to assist in the erection of school-buildings, it should be done by amending the Education Act, and not by coming down and slipping a clause into a Bill which has nothing whatever to do with the Act. Fancy the economy of a Government which borrows money and lends it out to Boards of Education, charging interest for it out of the very loan granted by the Government! Did any one ever hear of such a ridiculous idea in point of economy? It is a perfect farce. I may mention that I suggested an amendment to the Bill—which I suppose I have now the right to refer to—to enable Harbour Boards to charge duty on property belonging to railways, and I was told that I should not be allowed to do this, simply because it would interfere with the profits of the railways! That is a pretty state of things. The public are to be victimized in one direction in order that something may be made in another! I never heard of anything more ridiculous. I have already mentioned that it is not a million and a half that we are going to borrow this year, but that, in all likelihood, we shall borrow two and a half millions. In the two years we shall borrow half a million, the sinking fund which we have to pay in the two years; and then there is about £400,000 of sinking fund standing to the credit of the loan of 1876; and, if that loan is inscribed this year, which it is very likely to be, that amount also will go to public works, so that we shall really have two and a half millions instead of one and a half to spend in the two years. There is economy for you! The Premier said he was anxious for economy, and that he intended to educate the country to meet the difficulty which is before it, and teach it that it must cease borrowing altogether in two or three years. But I think honourable members will admit that there has been no such extravagant borrowing during the last five years as there has been this year; and the schedule of this Bill shows me a lot of new railways which are to be made simply to consolidate votes.

Mr. T. THOMPSON.—I will confine my remarks to stating my reasons for voting as I shall vote on this Bill, and to explaining the position in which I stand in this House. I may say that I am not, as is pretty well known, a supporter of the Government, nor shall I be so long as the Ministry is constituted as it is at present. It is also well known that I am not a supporter of the leader of the Opposition. Long before my advent to this House I was opposed to his policy, and I am not even now satisfied that the time has arrived for his return to those benches. I am as much opposed to excessive borrowing as any member of this House; and I may say I was very much gratified to find that Ministers, in obedience to the strongly-expressed desire of the people of this colony, so modified their borrowing proposals as to bring them down to a reasonable amount—an amount which, after listening to the addresses of members on both sides of the House during the debate, I am convinced would not be materially reduced by any other set of gentlemen who might hold seats on the Government benches. At the same time, while I do not take exception to the amount proposed to be borrowed, I certainly do take exception to the way in which it is proposed to be spent; and, if I could hope or believe that the amendment of the honourable member for Mataura was an amendment intended solely to work in the direction of retrenchment in any way, I would support it. But I do not believe the amendment goes at all in this direction. I think that those of us who are not satisfied with the schedule to the Bill can, at the proper time, take steps to amend it. At all events, should the Bill go into Committee, that is the course I intend to pursue; and I hope that, when the time comes, Ministers will be induced to make some alterations in a direction that will give satisfaction to the majority of members. I am exactly in the same position with regard to this matter as I was in regarding the amendment brought forward last session by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. I then considered that no real retrenchment could be made by carrying that amendment: in fact, as I described it at the time, it was a sort of shoddy amendment; and I fear that there is much the same sort of thing about the proposal of the honourable member for Mataura. The state of the labour-market in different parts of the colony at the present time, and especially in the North of this Island, points to the desirability of having as little delay as possible in passing the public works estimates, so that works may be put in hand specially in order to give relief to those unfortunate people who now so badly want something to do. That is another reason why I should vote for the second reading of this Bill. Some honourable members, in speaking to the question, have taken exception to the small amount allocated to their districts. Well, I have a grievance too. It is a small grievance, and is connected with the district which I represent. It is in regard to the amount put down for the Customhouse at Auckland. Last year £4,000 was put on the estimates for carrying out this work; and I am sorry to see that the Minister for Public Works this year has reduced the amount to £2,000. I cannot see any true economy in this, because,

as I understand, the Government are now paying rent for very unsuitable premises in which to carry on the work of the department; and the amount paid so paid would more than cover the interest and sinking fund on the amount necessary for erecting new buildings. It is a work which is very much needed, because the department is now considerably hampered for want of accommodation. I have only to say, in conclusion, that, should a direct issue be placed before me, I should not hesitate to do what I have done heretofore, and what I will always do while the Ministry is constituted as it is at present. But I cannot assist in removing these gentlemen from the Government benches by a side-issue. I shall therefore vote for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—There was one remark in the speech of the honourable member for Hokonui which struck me rather forcibly. Speaking about party, he said that, as long as the public works policy was in force, and the Government had power to give money to certain districts, so long would they use their power to gain support in this House in an equitable manner. The honourable gentleman finished his sentence very well, in saying that it was "an equitable manner." But the only conclusion to his logic was that, as long as they had public-works money to spend on certain districts, they would use it to gain the support of those districts. I must say that I said to the honourable gentleman, that so long as this Government are in power and their public works policy shows the slightest hint of their purchasing the Wanaka Flums Railway, so long will the honourable member follow them—or any Government that proposes such a purchase.

Mr. HOLMES.—Sir, I rose to explain, lest in order that any honourable member should charge another with following a Government so as to get them to purchase a railway in which he is interested."

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is clearly out of order to impute unworthy motives to any member for the way in which he gives his vote.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—I do not think that an unworthy motive.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Not that he gives his vote in support of a Government that will purchase a railway in which he is interested.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—I mean to get money spent in his district.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The way in which the honourable gentleman put it did not at all bear out that interpretation.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—[illegible] I will [illegible] it, Sir. The honourable gentleman said that he thoroughly approved of the idea of completing our present railways before starting new ones. He also said that he approved of the idea that we should finish present lines before commencing new ones. It is an argument which says that [illegible] we go on with [illegible] lines. [illegible] Place [illegible] Wellington [illegible] years ago [illegible] sent a letter [illegible] was made at some public meeting [illegible] and [illegible] a million [illegible]

the schedule for the Seaward Bush line. Now the Seaward Bush line in this amendment has £10,000 more allotted to it than it had in the schedule of the Loan Bill. The only two alterations, therefore, are putting more money on the Seaward Bush line, and also with respect to the idea that we should finish present lines before commencing new ones. Therefore I fail to see the soundness of his logic when he says that he is going to vote against the motion; and I am driven to the conclusion that there is some motive-power at work which is stronger than the Seaward Bush line, or the argument that old lines should be completed before new ones are commenced. I would need time to say one or two words about the unemployed. When I first came to the House I asked for a return showing the amount that had been expended on the unemployed in the South. That motion was opposed by the Government and was defeated in the House; but we knew that for years past a large amount of money had been spent down south in this direction, and during the whole of that time the North did not get a cent spent in that respect. Now that we have our little trouble in the North Island it seems to be a strange thing that honourable members from the South find out that we have local authorities, and that they are of opinion that these should do everything. The time may come sooner than we expect when the local authorities will have to do this, in any case.

Mr. H. RICHARDSON.—We have had "unemployed" at work in the North Island for the last twelve months.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—That brings me to the remark which I got up to make in regard to our public works policy. If we look at the state that we have got into at the present time, we shall find that there is an immense quantity of unimproved land lying alongside the railways. If we branch off from the main line, not a far distance—certainly a great deal better than where the old settlers used to have to travel to get to their market—you will find a large tract of unoccupied territory. While we have all this land, surely we have no need to push on our railways anywhere at the present time for the purpose of opening up the lands of the country. I think, until you have used the lands you have already open more fully than is the case at present, there is no occasion to make any new lines for that purpose. We ought, therefore, to consider the real necessity for borrowing. It is not for the purpose of making new ways—as far as some of those that are proposed are concerned, we might just as well make farms or cut down bush—but it is for the purpose of spending money in the colony. That is the real object. It is for the purpose of paying interest. There can be no doubt about that. We spend a million a year on [illegible] and that, of course, produces a large amount of trade and a large amount of Customs revenue, which helps to pay our interest on the debt; but we really do not care much about the work on which we spend the money, because, whether it pays or not, we do not seem

to benefit much by it. Why not, by way of a change, instead of running up all these lines which are not going to pay, try and spend the money in some other way? No recent Ministry have brought in any idea of anything but making roads and railways. We have got almost enough railways and roads for the country we have opened up, and it will be a very serious question whether the half-million of money we are spending on roads would not do more good than if spent on railways simply for the reason that it was to be spent. There is a large amount of money sent out of the colony, moreover, for railway material when the money is spent on railways, so that we do not get the advantage of that here. It is a very sad thing to think that, with the small population we have in this colony, and the vast millions of money we have spent, we should be in the position that we are in to-day, of not being able to employ the labour we have in the country. We are not able to keep our floating population without the borrowing of a certain sum of money every year; and that is the problem we have to solve. The question is, How are we to do it? Are we to go on borrowing for the purpose of keeping these people in employment or not, or are we to find some other means of employing them? In travelling over the Auckland-Waikato Railway everybody is struck with the idea that the trade of the world and competition is so keen now that the growing of wheat and grain of all sorts is not half so profitable as it used to be, and the cost of producing a great many other staple articles is such that it really does not pay to employ labour to the same extent that we used to do. And I hold that if the Government, out of the amount of a million and a half which they are going to borrow, would spend £10,000, instead of on some useless railway or bridge, in the practical testing of some method of providing employment for the people, the money would be very fairly spent; and while it was being spent it would be raising the interest. There are many things that could be tested in this colony, particularly in the North of Auckland. Private individuals will not take up these things, somehow. But why not let the Government, instead of spending money on a Minister of Forestry, or sending people who had never seen oranges to America to see what they are like, test some of the great industries that flourish in climates like that to which I have referred? Let the Government introduce an article, and show the people how it is manufactured: so in regard to the manufacture of silk, the growing of tea, and the cultivation of tobacco. Let us import people who are thoroughly trained and understand the work, and give such industries a fair, practical trial. This would be a great deal better than spending the money on useless railways, as at the present time. With regard to the mining interest, instead of having professors going round the colony and giving lectures which the auditors forget as soon as the professors have disappeared, let every village in the colony have a case fixed up containing samples of the different minerals, and so forth, and the different materials used in the process of manufacture, so that they may be brought face to face with them, and be able to recognize them if they accidentally come across them in their travels. That would be far more profitable than the billet even of the Minister of Mines himself, and it would be a step in the right direction. In regard to borrowing, we spend a great deal in one or two instances in trying to develop the mineral resources of the colony, and we might just as well spend it in this direction as on railways that do not pay, or anything else. Men might be engaged in putting in tunnels. They would be employed, and we should be paying the interest, and this kind of work would be as reproductive as any work on which they could be engaged. I am certain it would be a splendid thing for the Government to undertake, and we should reap enormous profits. There is a great deal of that sort of work that we might attempt; but this indiscriminate borrowing for railway construction I consider a great mistake. The East and West Coast Railway we have not finished with yet, and that, to a certain extent, will not be a debt on the colony. If the English people make it, and make money out of it, it will be all the better for the colony; but if it is a failure as far as profits go, we shall have nothing to do with it. Whether it will be as profitable as some people try to make out or not, however, I think it would have been better to have granted the company the interest on the money, and let the company manage it; because, as has been said, we have got into a cast-iron system of railway management, and there is no bending it at all; and the Government have a happy knack of driving away business instead of attracting it. All their actions tend in that direction: if you go to them at any time they do not attempt to meet you in any way, but they simply go by these cast-iron rules, which do not apply to the colony in all cases. Every locality wants different treatment from others, but we could bring about nothing of that sort without an alteration in our system. I think it would be better for the colony now to try some system of local management of railways, as the present system is not a success. I fail to see that we are getting any better: certainly, the management has not been any better for the last two or three years. I do not wish to detain the House any further, except to record my protest against this borrowing of money merely for the purpose of spending so much money a year. And I would just like to say that, from the tone of the speeches of the Premier and the Colonial Treasurer last night, I think there is a slight danger of a lapse occurring, as far as our borrowing is concerned. I heard the Treasurer say that the honourable member for Egmont ought to know, or did know, that raising a loan was rather a ticklish thing at the present time. Now, while we are fortifying the whole of our ports against the Russians, are we fortifying ourselves against not being able to borrow any more on the London money-market?—because

the consequences of our not being able to borrow would be a great deal worse than the consequences that would result from a visit of the Russians. The Russians could only knock down a few buildings and take away a little money; but the stoppage of a loan on the English market would plunge the colony into bankruptcy—it would put us in a fearful position! I hold that it would be wiser to knock off the fortifications, and for the Ministry to try to rack their brains to bring in measures to avert the disaster that will occur supposing our loans are refused in the London market. There is another matter, scarcely connected with a public-works debate, but I wish to refer to it. While the colony is not in a good position, while we have from all parts of it cries about "the unemployed," and while the destitution which has begun in the South is gradually coming in the direction of Auckland, we have from fifty to a hundred Bills on this Order Paper, and we are working away on these Bills, and there is not one of them that really deals with the question of giving relief to the colony. I think we are very wrong in that respect, and that we ought, as business men, to take into consideration the position of the colony. There has been a Committee appointed to inquire into the position of the colony; but we ought to appoint ourselves a Committee of the Whole to take up that question, and we ought to have Bills brought in which would enable us to consider the good of the colony, and not simply be dealing with the consolidated measures that we are having. There is another question which should receive very large consideration, and that is the rabbit question. That question, if one would look at the plans outside this room, is a very serious one. We, fortunately, have not felt it in Auckland; but, from what I can gather, we do not know that the time may not come when we shall have an inroad of rabbits as bad as we have them in the South, and the rabbit-plague is such a plague that that alone might reduce the colony to a fearful condition. Instead of continuing with a few merely political railways, and instead of squabbling over the expending of another million or two, I think our undivided attention should be given to the consideration, like reasonable men, of the interests of the colony, and that we should earnestly set to work to try and give more relief to it at the present time.

Mr. LAKE.—At this late time of the afternoon, after the prolonged sitting of last night, I have been troubling my head for some time to find out what there is really at the bottom of this objection to the amendment moved by the honourable member for Mataura. If I understand the statement reiterated again and again by the Premier — and with which I heartily concur—that his desire is that the existing railways should be carried as soon as possible to a paying point, surely the honourable member for Mataura has met him halfway. What he said was simply this: that new lines which have no particular prospect of paying should not be considered at a time when the colony is admitted to be almost on the brink of a precipice; and I think what was said last night by the Colonial Treasurer was at least a very strong warning to us that we were very much nearer the dangerous point than we perhaps expected. I do not know that I need go into every item of the Public Works Statement. That has been treated by far better hands than myself; but, before I say a few words upon it, I should like to refer to one or two remarks made by different speakers. In the first place, though it seems a long time to go back, I cannot help referring to the very curious defence made by the Native Minister to the charges of wasting money in the purchase of lands—a very curious defence; and a very curious corollary, it seems to me, is to be found in well-known events. We had the purchase of Mr. Churton's property. That appears, according to the Premier, to have been perfectly answered by the statement that it was made on the recommendation of a Judge of the Native Land Court; but I fail to see that that justified the Government in giving more than double the property-tax value for that property. The property was valued, according to the last property-tax valuation, at £2,000: it has been purchased through a commission agent for £4,600, and £200 added for commission to the buyer; and, when taxed with this, what was the answer that the Native Minister gave? "The property-tax does not represent the real value." If that is the case, why do they not keep to that plan? Had they kept to that plan, possibly we should not have had the notorious purchase at the North Shore, Auckland. I understand that in that case the property-tax valuation led to double the value of the land being given. In that case the Government say, "The property-tax value was so much: we could not give less." In Churton's case they say, "The property-tax value is £2,000: we must give double the value." Surely, if the argument is good in one case, the argument in the other must be wrong. Then, I should like to draw attention to one or two remarks in which it appears to me that the Hon. the Colonial Treasurer and the honourable member for Auckland West were greatly mistaken. Those two honourable gentlemen went to considerable trouble to show and to contrast the difference in the treatment of the Native question under the late Native Minister and the recent Native Minister. I could hardly imagine any language much more undignified than that the Colonial Treasurer used when he referred to "the great speech" and "the little speech," and charged the member for Egmont with that pettishness which was so conspicuous a feature in his own speech. But I do not think that many gentlemen in this colony will agree with him with regard to the statements he made respecting the honourable member for Waitotara. He talked about the Parihaka affair, and spoke of sending up troops, and the white horse, with all the banter he possibly could; but I hold that the present House believes that the present Native Minister would never

have dared to show his face had it not been for the action of the honourable member for Waitotara. The present Native Minister is acting up to his light, and I believe—at least, I hope—his action will be successful; but I say that he could never have advanced to the position he now holds had it not been for the decided steps once taken by the honourable member for Waitotara. Another honourable gentleman, the honourable member for Auckland West, expressed very great astonishment that the honourable member for Waitotara should have resigned his position because of the non-agreement of his colleagues with him on a point of policy on one occasion. I can quite believe he was astonished, for no one in this House could believe that the honourable member for Auckland West would so have resigned had he had the opportunity. But he will never have that opportunity given to him. He speaks, again, of vacillation and change of front on the part of the honourable member for Egmont. It is rather early for the member for Auckland West to expect the House to forget that it is not long since that honourable gentleman paraded about as the self-styled leader of a non-existent party. It is not so very long ago that that honourable gentleman so far assumed to himself power that he actually had not got, that he sent a verbal communication to the honourable member for Egmont stating that he was prepared to treat with him. I hope that this is the last that we shall ever hear of that honourable gentleman upbraiding others with vacillation or change of front. There is one thing we all know. The political weathercock looks straight to the quarter whence favours are supposed to come: and in that position that honourable gentleman will always be found. Now I will refer to one or two remarkable things introduced in this debate. And first of all, as to this land-purchase question. The Native Minister tells us that the colony requires a large amount of land for the purpose of the North Island Trunk Railway; and he tells us, at another time, that the Parliament forced this acquisition of land upon them. Well, I do not deny that there is a very strong feeling in that direction—that the land should be acquired. But I think it was equally manifest that the time when the land should have been acquired was before the railway was commenced—that suggestion was supported by honourable members on both sides of the House; but the Government must needs rush into that railway with what I may call almost indecent haste; and the result of it is that we shall pick up all the rubbishy country, and not a single acre of good land. The land within thirty miles of Te Awamutu is perhaps some of the best land in the colony; but I do not think the Maoris are likely, within the next four or five years, to part with it. Then the honourable gentleman states that, because the House urged upon him that it was necessary to acquire Native land, therefore it was just and proper to charge those Native lands, no matter what the quality was, to the North Island Trunk Railway. We are told that the railway will be credited with the proceeds of the land that will be sold. Well, we have some little experience of what becomes of Government land when sold under ordinary circumstances. The making of roads and general arrangements for the opening of the land for settlement leave very little profit on the land. But what are we to expect in this case? Is it not almost a certainty that the land will be opened under perpetual lease or deferred payment—perpetual lease, probably? and so it may be a thousand years before we get any money out of it. We have now, from all sides of the country, people coming and begging to be released from engagements which they have entered into with their eyes open. The deferred-payment settlers, the pastoral tenants, and the holders of these much-lauded perpetual leases are all in the same boat; and I do not know what steps the Government will take to get rid of those demands that are rushing in upon them. Then, as to the proposal to charge cost of Native lands to the North Island Trunk Railway Loan, I appeal to the southern members especially, as they had the choice of this route, and we are indebted to them for having given us a patient consideration, and I do hope they will all stand up against this iniquitous proposition and cast it out. I will not allude to the minor provision of 2½ per cent. being taken out for hospital and charitable aid, further than to say that the money for the purchase of Native land, and this 2½ per cent. for hospital and charitable-aid purposes, might just as well have been taken out of funds for the Otago Central Railway or any other line as from this line. It seems to me that, as the money was voted for a specific purpose, the purpose of making that North Island line, most certainly the purchase of Native lands at a distance from the railway—some of them are twenty-five miles from the line—cannot be considered as part of the expense of acquiring either the railway or the plant. Of course, we know the straits the Government were in to make that wonderful £800,000 come out somehow; and therefore perhaps it is not very much to be wondered at that they should find out this extraordinary item of rolling-stock—£300,000—which they have used for the purpose of converting what was practically a deficit into a surplus. But I would warn the House of this: that this railway material—much of which is allocated to different districts for years before it can be wanted—is taken from our ordinary stock, and if it is allocated to those lines it means that next year we shall have to go on the loan-market and buy a large amount of material to replace it. Either the Government obtained a great deal of material that they did not want, or else they must replace what they are taking away. Another point is the way in which the money for the North Island Trunk Railway has been spent upon purposes which we cannot find any evidence of in the Public Works Statement. In Appendix H to Table D.-1 of

the Public Works Statement of 1885 I remember reading a most glowing statement, which I fancy did not exactly seem to be the production of an official. It spoke of the Wanganui River, and went into raptures over the beauties of the scenery, and said that hereafter tourists would come from the north and the south to the river, and go down to the Town of Wanganui. I thought, myself, that it almost had too much of the ring of poetry for a practical official. I turned to see who was likely to be the author of it. As far as I can see, it really must have been inspired, at any rate, by the Native Minister. The Minister says "No." Well, it is a very strange coincidence of noble minds. It was to the following effect:—

"Independently of giving access to the railway during construction, the improvement of the Wanganui is a work of considerable importance in connection with the traffic on the railway. For the whole distance from Taumarunui to the open country, ten miles from the sea, the river flows through gorges and canons of surpassing beauty and grandeur, so that it cannot fail to become a popular tourists' route. Tourists will go north and south by rail to Taumarunui, and by road from Napier, and thence down the river to the Town of Wanganui."

I ask if that sounds like the business-like comment of the ordinary public works official. I am bound to take the denial of the Minister for Public Works that the Native Minister was the author of it; but there is a singular coincidence in the fact that throughout the elector speeches of that honourable gentleman he constantly urges the improvement of the Wanganui River as one of the great necessities of the day. He tells us that it is absolutely necessary that the river should be snagged and harbour works carried out. I recollect he lately said that he said £20,000 ought to be spent [illegible] this river, and that Sir James Vogel would give it in a moment, and would not give two straws of it, and finished by saying that the electors would return him for Wanganui if he showed he could get the river improved. It is a very desirable thing to demonstrate in his eyes that this river should be snagged; but how it can be said to be necessary for [illegible] on the North Island Trunk Railway I do not know. The Minister for Public Works said that £[illegible] had been spent in snagging that river. Does that [illegible] two [illegible] items in the Public Works Statement [illegible] two snagging parts?

Mr. [illegible] CLARKSON.—No.

[illegible] Works Statement [illegible] Works Statement [illegible] how that money has been spent [illegible] made a grant for the [illegible] Northern [illegible] Wanganui [illegible] Works [illegible] miles away from the line, some evidence should be shown that it is wanted. Then, we can see traces of a road being made from Kaura to Waiweka, and down to the river—a distance of twenty-five miles. I cannot find any detailed accounts of that, and I presume it would come under the heading of "Roads alongside the North Island Trunk Railway, to give access." But I fail to see how it can be said that the snagging of the Wanganui River can give access to the line. Then, with regard to the tunnel, it was undertaken before any other part of the line, I imagine, in order to be ready by the time the line was brought up to it; and stores will soon be brought up to that tunnel as they have been brought up to the present—from Te Awamutu. Not one pennyworth of goods has passed up the river to that tunnel. Then, about the general treatment of railway affairs, the Premier yesterday asked us, in very forcible and glowing language, to point out the blot. That is a question which, I am perfectly sure, he is justified in asking, and I own that the bulk of complaints are to general and do not specify the particular points in which the management fails; but I do not think any one in the country will say that there is any satisfaction, from one end of the colony to the other, with reference to the management of the railways. The present Minister for Public Works and also the Native Minister, before coming into office, expressed themselves in favour of a non-political Board to manage the railways. Personally, I do not believe in such a Board, and am not surprised that they dropped it; but the Public Works Minister said that he would not remain in office unless he had his way in the matter. Now, notwithstanding the fact that the honourable gentleman has been for two years at the head of affairs, I say that the management of our railways is as bad as ever it was. I do not intend to delay the House further, beyond stating that I shall vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Manawatu, and shall do my utmost, when the proper time comes, to throw this sum of £100,000 off the vote for the North Island Trunk Railway.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Before this debate closes I wish to offer a few observations on the Bill and on the amendment; but, before doing so, I must refer to the speech which the Premier made last night in such impressive language. In the course of that speech he referred to the speech made by the honourable member for Wakatipu, which he said was characterized by sound and fury. I wished to lead the House to believe that that was its main [illegible] there was nothing in it but [illegible] remain a matter of [illegible] honourable member for Wakatipu himself; but I think [illegible] a little time to [illegible] of the Premier, must [illegible] that his speech also [illegible] of sound and fury. I [illegible] serving, before I am

No. 22.

NEW ZEALAND.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SESSION 1886.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

27th July to 29th July.

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WELLINGTON:
BY AUTHORITY: GEORGE DIDSBURY, GOVERNMENT PRINTER.

1886.

Price 2d.

lone, that that is so. In dealing with the criticisms made by members of the Opposition on the Loan Bill he asserted that they invariably finished their remarks with the complaint or whine that there was not sufficient for their districts. The summing-up of his speech was practically this: that the Opposition was actuated by personal motives only—by small local requirements and local wants—and that the Government and members on their side of the House were the only members who were actuated by wide colonial views. That is, practically, all that that part of his speech meant. Now, speaking for myself as one of the members of the Opposition, I would ask the Premier whether he would apply that to myself—whether, in any representations I have made to him, in this House or outside, he can fairly say that that was the burden of anything I had to say to him. I do not think he can answer that in the affirmative. I would ask him also, what has been the conduct of his own Government and party? What about the great amount of time that has been taken up and wasted in this House in connection with the East and West Coast Railway? What was that but localism on a very large scale? Any one who knows the history of that movement from the beginning will know that that is the case, and that the Government assisted to the utmost extent the local party who carried that through in obstructing the business of this House and the country until their wants were satisfied. Then, as to the district railways, what was the action in this House in respect to them but localism of the worst character—localism that has put on the shoulders of the colony a very large debt, and altogether in opposition to the professions which the Premier so largely made to the House last night? Then, as to charitable aid, what about the localism of the Government there? What was done in this House when that Bill was going through Committee? Some members of the Government went into one lobby and some into the other lobby, catching votes by supporting localism of the worst character, and thereby destroying their own measure. What right, then, has the Premier to cast upon the members of the Opposition the aspersion that the burden of their speeches has been, "What have you got for my district? You have nothing for my district"? He has no right whatever to take up such a position. He also said that, in their intense localism, the country members are never satisfied unless they can get everything cast upon the Consolidated Fund—that they are never satisfied unless they can get the lands relieved. I would ask him whether I and other country members did not give him honest support, when he brought in his Charitable Aid Bill, to put rates upon the land. How did his Government bring it in? They brought it in so that the rates should be levied as a poll-tax, and I assisted him to make a more equitable adjustment of the rates.

Sir R. STOUT.—There was never such a proposition in the Bill as a poll-tax.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—The term may be wrong, I admit. What I mean is this: that the Bill was brought down so that population should be the basis of rating, and not property.

Sir R. STOUT.—Population was to be the basis of rating, but the rate was to be levied in the ordinary way that local bodies levied their rates.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I appeal to the honourable member whether I and other country members did not assist him to put rates more upon property than it was as the Bill was brought in. I ask him, is not that correct? Then about localism in connection with Justices of the Peace. Are there not bitter complaints all over the colony as to the way in which the appointments have been made? Is it not the case that, because the honourable member for Wairarapa North happens to belong to the Opposition, he cannot get any Justices appointed for his part of the district? I have the same complaint to make as to my part of the district. In the most populous centre of it there is only one Justice of the Peace, and, in spite of the representations that have been made by myself and others living in that part of the district, and in spite of the great inconvenience that has been suffered by business people and others there owing to there being only one Justice of the Peace in that centre, no other has been appointed. Then, again, as to the credit which the Minister for Public Works claims for saving £50,000 to the producers by lowering the railway rates. Every member of the Government has put it to the House that we are acting under a cast-iron rule, and that therefore the Government cannot show favour to any particular district or to any persons employing the railways. But I ask honourable members, and North Island representatives particularly, to note that there have been no concessions whatever to the North Island districts out of this £50,000 saved to the producers—certainly none in my own district, and, as far as I am aware, not in any part of the North Island. The Minister for Public Works says "Oh!" Well, I will apologize at once if I have done him any injustice. What I say is this: that, of this £50,000, by far the greater proportion applies to the reduction of the tariff in the South Island.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—All over the North Island, too.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Reductions to a very paltry extent in the North Island.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Native coal.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Does the honourable gentleman tell me that the reduction of rates on the carriage of native coal affects the North Island to anything like the same extent as it does the South? Surely he does not wish to put it so!

Sir R. STOUT.—Yes.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—There was another question dwelt upon by the Premier last night, not for the first time, and that was the question of roads *versus* railways. As I have more than once put it, several members of

vernment, in season and out of season, have never done preaching as to their determination to put a stop to borrowed money being expended on making roads, and their intention that it shall, as largely as possible, be spent on railways. Now, the roads may fairly be divided into two classes. One class, such as the road which connects Christchurch and Hokitika, the road which connects Wellington and Napier through the Seventy-mile Bush, and the roads which connect the important centres on the north-east coast of this Island—these roads really perform the functions, so to speak, of railways in their particular districts, and the colony is largely interested in keeping open this communication between the different centres. It is also largely interested in keeping open such roads as that in the Seventy-mile Bush, because of their value in opening Crown lands for settlement. So far as my district is concerned, it is not interested in any road of that description, and I have never made any claim on the Government for roads of that class. Now as to roads to open up Crown lands. I ask the Premier the question whether, in usefulness to the colony and in actual value, the expenditure now proposed in the schedule to the Loan Bill to connect Blenheim with Tophouse or Inangahua with Westport by railway can for a moment compare in importance with roads to open up Crown lands of such value as that in the Seventy-mile Bush, or in various other districts in the North Island. I ask the honourable gentleman that question. I admit that railways mean the taking of produce to market at the cheapest possible rate, and that they must be made in order to allow our farmers to compete with the Indian, American, and other producers throughout the world; but I would point out that in such bush districts as the Seventy-mile Bush a railway may be of very little value without roads. A railway may actually pass a settler's homestead without its being able to make any use of it at all. Roads in such districts are therefore indispensable, and the [illegible] of settlement [illegible]. Any practical man who [illegible] must see that it should be the [illegible] of the Government to open the Crown lands for sale and settlement in such districts as that, and that they must open them by roads in the first instance, before settlers can be put on such lands as these. [illegible]

say this to them: that until they face their duty in this matter they will never give satisfaction in the newer districts of the colony. The Premier, in one of the eloquent passages of his speech last night, dwelt on the question of borrowing: in fact, that was the climax of his speech—that the colony cannot afford to go on borrowing, that if the colony is not to be ruined we must stop borrowing, and that our only hope to stop borrowing is to cast the burden on localities and upon the Consolidated Fund. The honourable gentleman said he believed that in two or three years the colony must absolutely cease borrowing; and he went on to taunt members of the Opposition who had commented on this Bill that they are constantly harping about borrowing, but that they are not sincere. He further asserted that they had no spirit of self-sacrifice—that they insisted that the land must not be touched, and that local rates must not be meddled with. The honourable gentleman asked also how the Civil Service Bill had been treated, and insinuated that the amendment of the honourable member for Mataura, in its terms, stamped the honourable gentleman as being dishonest in his non-borrowing professions. First, I would say to the Premier that the amendment of the honourable member for Mataura is exactly upon the lines that he wished this House to fall in with—namely, that uncompleted works must be pushed on to completion, so that borrowing can be tapered down as quickly as possible. How is it possible to taper down borrowing if new lines are to be put in our loan schedules? Is that the proper way to taper down borrowing? Let me show the House how the Premier has endeavoured to taper down borrowing since he has been a member of this House. His Government took a step in this direction when they supported Meiggs's scheme, under which [illegible] a year was to be given, and to be partly a burden on the colony and partly a special charge on the districts interested in the East and West Coast Railway. The honourable gentleman endeavoured to taper down borrowing, did he not, when he advocated with such zeal the purchase of the district [illegible]? He also endeavoured to taper down borrowing when he permitted a member of his Government to give us the famous [illegible] address, and, later on, a similar speech in Auckland. That must have convinced honourable members of the sincerity of the Premier on this question of tapering down borrowing. [illegible] in the present Loan Bill and in the Public Works Statement we have a [illegible] of the Premier's desire to [illegible]. Here we have a loan [illegible], and, as the honourable member [illegible] pointed out, the whole of [illegible] appropriated at once, instead of, as the Premier gives us to understand, spreading [illegible]. In other words, when, next year Parliament meets we shall only have a [illegible] to appropriate for new works [illegible] and a half. That is an instance of how the Premier proposes to taper

[illegible]

off borrowing. In the same part of his speech the Premier told us that his views had never changed as to borrowing since the commencement of his career in this House. I am in the habit of judging men largely by their actions. Let us see how the Premier set to work in order to give effect to his views. There is an old saying that men are best known by those they associate themselves with, and we find the honourable gentleman associating with himself in his Government the present Colonial Treasurer. I do not wish to say anything disrespectful of that honourable gentleman, but I will ask the House whether, throughout the country, such an assertion as that of the Premier would not be met with ridicule, seeing that the present Colonial Treasurer is a member of his Government. From the beginning of his career in this colony down to the present time, has not that honourable gentleman been the very incarnation of borrowing? Is it possible for him to bring down a Bill to this House without a clause in it in connection with borrowing? I appeal to the Bills of last session and of this present one in proof of my assertion. What have we got from the Colonial Treasurer from the date of his first speech in Ashburton until now? Nothing but a yearning after borrowing, and a constant conflict with the House in regard to his wild schemes of borrowing. Last night we had the Premier, on the one hand, delivering the most impassioned speech I have heard in this House in favour of tapering off borrowing; and, on the other, the Colonial Treasurer impelled to give utterance to his wishes in the opposite direction. That is only an example of what we have seen in the past as regards these two honourable gentlemen. I would not wish the Premier or the House to mistake my meaning on this matter. Since I have become personally acquainted with the Premier I have always had the highest respect for him. I am fully aware of his invariably good intentions, and let me assure him that, if he showed more strength of character—if he became more really the Premier than he has been—he would gain a much larger support in this House and in the country. Speaking for myself, there are many of his aspirations which have my entire sympathy, and I have always been ready to give him my heartiest support in connection with important questions. But what I and other members of this House complain of is this: that, having enunciated a policy, he has frequently gone in another direction, under the influence of his colleague the Colonial Treasurer. So long as that is the case, I shall always distrust any professions with regard to the curtailment of expenses and keeping down borrowing. And now a word or two with regard to local government. The Premier told us that this side of the House was to blame if local government showed any want or inefficiency. I was astonished when I heard the Premier give utterance to these words. What scheme of local government did the Ministry bring down last session? Is it necessary for me to go into its absurd details? Is it necessary for me to say that in this also the Premier belied his aspirations of last night? If the colony was not supposed to borrow directly under that Bill, local bodies were invited to do so to the extent of six or seven millions of money. Was that a scheme which this side of the House is to be blamed for defeating? I think the honourable gentleman was very unfortunate in his allusion to this question. Then, as to immigration. The Premier was never much in favour of State-aided immigration—his aim was to make the colony attractive. I have no doubt that is his aim; but I am satisfied that the House and the country are not with him as to the way in which he attempted to give effect to his aim. What has he been doing with regard to our waste lands? Despite the strongly-expressed opinion of the country, he has chosen in the administration of the land to give undue prominence to the perpetual-leasing portion of the Land Act. It is well known that we have had the balance of immigration between this and the Australian Colonies against us for some time past. Having been connected with land and its management for a number of years, I am in a position to state to the House that a great many of the colonists we have lost have left simply because their requirements were not met by the Lands Department. Money, and what is much more valuable than money, good settlers, have left the colony because the administration of our lands did not admit of their settling under favourable circumstances in the colony. That is the way in which the Premier has given effect to his aim to make the colony attractive. It is not in any antagonism to the perpetual-leasing portion of the Land Act that I now speak. I have always given a cordial support to this and the preceding Government in their attempts to liberalize the land-laws—to give every opportunity to industrious colonists to settle down on the Crown lands. My remarks are simply made with the view of putting my opinion on this question before the House and the country. In this connection I would like to say a few words as to the land-tax. The Premier and the Minister of Lands wish very much to increase the burdens upon the land. They are of opinion that the general taxpayer is bearing too many of the burdens of the colony, and that the land escapes taxation to a larger extent than it should. I would ask them to note the career of many of our best settlers in the North and South. I ask them to note the hardships which these men have undergone in connection with settlement. I ask whether the position of numbers of these men is so very attractive, after so many years of toil. How many of these men are now ruined, and unable to find a home for themselves! On those grounds I would ask the Government to pause in their constant endeavours to add to the burdens of those who settle the lands. We all know that to the bulk of colonists settlement in the towns is much more attractive than to go into the country and face the hardships of settlement. We therefore ought to pa[illegible] fore we render residence in the c[illegible] attractive than it is; and I am

practical man in this House must agree with me in these remarks. Now a few words as to railway management. We have heard over and over again that, upon whatever points the Government may be assailed, they are simply invulnerable as to their administration. With regard to railway administration, well do I remember reading a speech of the present Minister of Railways previous to his coming to this House, at the last election. Well do I remember the unmeasured condemnation which he gave to those who had been connected with the administration of railways previous to that time. What have we got as the result of his management since he has become Minister of Railways? Have we had any radical reforms such as he pointed to in his speech on that occasion? I altogether fail to see that we have had any of them. I admit that he has very probably done his best; but I speak simply of results: and in regard to that part of the railway system with which I am more intimately acquainted I have to confess that I am very much disappointed. On the Wellington-Masterton line at the present time we have three officers doing the work that one used to do. It has always been a reproach to the people of the Wairarapa that that line was a burden on the colony, and that it was one of those political railways which should not have been made for years, if at all; but if honourable members will look over the Public Works Statement they will admit that the progress of traffic on this line rather belies these assertions, and that, with the exception of the Greymouth line, the traffic of this line exceeds that of any other line in the colony.

Mr. DUNCAN.—What about the cost of the railway?

Mr. BUCHANAN.—That is given in the tables accompanying the Public Works Statement. I may also point out that the inhabitants are not altogether responsible for the cost; for it is generally admitted now that the Railway Department made a mistake in adopting the route which they did—that a more practicable route exists, and if the railway had been made by that line there would have been such a difference in the cost as to make the line compare favourably with the best lines of the colony.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Which way?

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I do not suppose that the House wishes me to respond to that, and to go into all the details as to which way; but I have no doubt that the Minister for Public Works is quite aware of the route I mean. The Minister for Public Works also takes great credit for the fact that he has succeeded in working 130 miles of additional railway without any increased expense. I scarcely see that he is entitled to take so much credit to himself as he desires to do. We know that in the commencement of any business the expenses are much heavier than they are after some years of practice, and I have no doubt the same rule applies to railway management. About sixteen miles of an additional length has been added to the Wellington-Masterton line, and the Minister for Public Works has not had any—or, at least, very little—additional expense in consequence of that addition to the mileage. No extra engineers are wanted, and no stokers. There might be, perhaps, an additional stationmaster at Mauriceville, and one or two more maintenance-men to look after the line; but that does not mean very much expense. It is certain therefore that in that instance an extension of mileage does not mean a proportionate extension of expenses. I therefore do not see that so much credit attaches to the honourable gentleman as he would attempt to claim. As to the schedule to the Loan Bill, the Premier, in speaking last night, made a comparison between the Blenheim-Tophouse and Inangahua-Westport sections, and the East Coast line *viâ* Kaikoura, which was included in the schedule to the Three-million Loan Act. He wanted to make out that it was necessary to accept both of the first-mentioned lines, otherwise the House would have to construct the East Coast line to Red-post. I myself do not at all see that. As a matter of fact, I protested at the time against the inclusion of the East Coast line in the schedule to the Loan Act of 1882, and I shall continue to do so, because we have no Crown land in that direction, and our loan-money can obviously be expended on much more profitable works than upon a line from Blenheim to Red-post, or upon either of these two sections mentioned in the schedule to this Bill. I would like also to express my own individual opinion as to the amendment of the honourable member for Mataura. I think he would have done much better if he had struck out the £175,000 altogether, instead of adding that sum piecemeal to several other sections in the way he proposes; and, as far as I am concerned, I shall do my best to give effect to that opinion when the Bill passes into Committee. Now for a few words on the main trunk line. That is a very large question—one in which I have always taken a very great interest. I do not approve of the course adopted with regard to this by some members of the House. I contended last session that the time had not come for the construction of the main trunk line until the Crown lands now available elsewhere for settlement were occupied to a much larger extent than they are, and that we were not justified in going at a headlong pace in endeavouring to purchase Native land, many thousands of acres of which would be worthless for settlement for years to come. The strongest strictures were passed on the Government by the honourable member for Waitotara for the manner in which they are purchasing these lands—on the commission system. The Government, in reply to him, took care to avoid the question, or nearly so. There was no real attempt at justifying the course they had adopted. It is true the Minister of Lands pointed out to the House that he had been urged to purchase Native lands in the first instance, before continuing the construction of the line. There can be no question as to the wish of the

House on the subject — that the line shall not be constructed until a sufficient quantity of land has been obtained; but I maintain that the House does not therefore wish the Government to go into the purchase of Native land with undue haste. From information I have received from many reliable quarters, there is no doubt that the land now being purchased is largely poor land—land in no way fit for settlement. I therefore ask the House whether it is wise to go on not only purchasing land of this class, but also purchasing it in the objectionable way mentioned by the honourable member for Waitotara. I am satisfied they are now largely doing what the previous Government were so strongly reprobated for doing—that is, placing themselves in the hands of Native agents, who will simply endeavour to purchase as great a number of acres as possible without any regard whatever to quality. I will now confine myself to making a few remarks on the speech of the Treasurer. And, first, as to the tone of that speech, its language, and the demeanour which characterized the honourable gentleman while addressing the House. As a comparatively young member of the House, it would scarcely become me to speak with the decisiveness which might very well come from older members; but I feel it incumbent upon me to say that I thought it was in very bad taste on the part of the honourable gentleman to hector honourable members who have had quite as long a standing in this House as the honourable gentleman himself. I say it was very great presumption on the part of the Treasurer to address himself in such terms as he used with regard to the honourable member for Akaroa. By what right did the Treasurer address himself in such terms as he did to that honourable gentleman? He also spoke of effacement of the legislation passed in this House by the Atkinson Government, and ventured to affirm that in a year or two there would be very little of it left on the Statute Book. It is a very curious thing, in connection with a statement of this kind, that the honourable gentleman, who last year was so anxious to repeal the Roads and Bridges Construction Act, should this year feel it incumbent upon himself to introduce the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill—a measure founded on exactly the same lines. In explaining the provisions of his Bill he said that the cardinal difference between it and the Roads and Bridges Construction Act was that his Bill was based on the willingness of the localities to be rated. But I would point out that under the provisions of the Roads and Bridges Construction Act there was the very same machinery as he proposed for taking a poll of the ratepayers so as to ascertain their views. In this case, therefore, the honourable gentleman is altogether at sea as to the facts of the case. Then he makes further remarks in a jeering way as to what he calls the abortive attempt of the honourable member for Egmont when, by a series of resolutions, he tried to oust the present Government from office last session; and he pointed out that another honourable gentleman who votes on this side of the House went much nearer attaining his object of turning the Government out than the honourable member for Egmont. I would merely point this out: that the Government were so much in dread of these same resolutions that the next sitting-day after they had been proposed we found them at the bottom of the Order Paper. The Government did not dare to place them on the Order Paper in such a way that they could be dealt with. So much for the sneer of the honourable gentleman as to the attempt of this side of the House to oust the Government. And now with regard to his remarks about the rise in the price of wool and his prediction in relation thereto in his Financial Statement. I would remind honourable members that in his place in this House he once sneered at the idea that the prosperity of New Zealand depended on the prices of wheat and wool, and said that he would introduce industries into the colony of equal if not greater importance. The result was the introduction of his Beet-root Bill, the Fisheries Bill, and others of the same character. But time has had its revenge on the honourable gentleman as on other members of the Government, and he is now obliged to come to the House and confess that the rise in the price of wool is really a matter of very great importance to the colony. Then, again, he told the House that the credit of the colony was suffering injury from statements made by members on this side of the House: in other words, he would lead the House to believe that it was to the detriment of the colony to have the truth told. He shuffled to a certain extent out of that by stating that only part of the truth had been told, and further on he counselled the House to maintain reticence as to future borrowing on the part of the colony. For my own part, I wish to protest against such a course of conduct as this. I say, if the colony conducts its affairs as it ought to do, it has nothing to fear from the most outspoken statements as to its financial position. If the honourable gentleman would not, as he has already done on various occasions, plunge the colony into excessive borrowing there would be very little danger to the credit of the colony. I maintain that, as in the case of individuals, so with the colony. Everything is to be gained by a full and fair statement of its affairs on all occasions; and we shall be able to take our place in the London money-market in a position second to no other colony if we follow such a course as this. Then, again, he was good enough to make another allusion to the resolution of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay last year, and he credited that resolution with a depreciation in the price of labour in the colony to the extent of 10 per cent. Now, I am one of the many employers of labour in the colony, and I have reason to know the condition of the labour-market, at any rate in the country districts; and I say that the statement of the honourable gentleman is very far from the fact—that there is such depreciation in the price of labour

per cent. In the district in which I live we find that, although labour is less profitably employed than I should wish it, still there is no such depreciation as he pointed out. He further charges the honourable gentleman with doing great injury to the labouring-class, because this 10 per cent. remains in the hands of the employers, and is therefore not so usefully employed as if it went into the pockets of the labourer. But, even supposing his contention was correct, what does the employer do with the 10 per cent.? It does not remain in his hands; he must employ a further number of workmen to profitably utilize his capital. Does the honourable gentleman mean to infer that the capital lies idle? The thing is ridiculous. In concluding my remarks, I have only to say this to the Premier: that I hope he will put the pledges which he renewed to the House last night into more effective operation than he has done in the past; that he will, as he alleged he would do, make every effort to taper off borrowing, and assert his position as the real head of the Government. If he does this I promise him that, as far as I am concerned, he shall have my honest support in any such course. I shall vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Mataura.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I have listened, Sir, to what I may term the sugar-and-vitriol speeches of members on the opposite side of the House—the sugar applied to the Premier, the vitriol very nicely rubbed into the Treasurer. I must say that I entirely disagree with the manner in which the Opposition has dealt with the Colonial Treasurer. The frequent squabbling about what that honourable gentleman said, although he distinctly contradicted the statement, was, in my opinion, very unmanly. When the Colonial Treasurer tells honourable members that he never made statements of the character imputed to him, they ought to believe him. But what do we find? Although the head of the Opposition may be inclined that way, we find that the rank-and-file one after another continually impute motives to the Treasurer with regard to matters which he has distinctly denied over and over again. Before I go any further I would like to deal with the honourable gentlemen opposite who have been saying so much about repudiation. I will ask this question: Have Her Majesty's Opposition in this House become so low that they are prepared, like their great prototype of old, Judas Iscariot, to sell the interests of the country for a few dirty pieces of silver, which are to be obtained by sitting on those benches? That seems to be the only object they have in view. It is well known that they are mere place-hunters——

Mr. SPEAKER.—I hope such language will not be used in this House.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I will withdraw that, Sir. I will put it this way: that they are desirous of obtaining seats on the benches which are at present occupied by members of the Government. Now, we find some of those honourable gentlemen criticising—I do not know whether they have criticised the land policy, but they have criticised nearly everything else. I contend, with regard to the land policy of the Government as at present administered, it is far beyond anything that the past Government could lay credit to. Take the Statement of the Minister of Lands for instance: you will find that more settlement has gone on during the time these gentlemen have been in office than ever before; and, when the Opposition makes such statements as these, you may put them down for what they are worth. I say that the manner in which the public works policy has been treated is a very unfair one. There has been no attempt made to fairly criticise the Public Works Statement. A few isolated lines are picked out here and there. But I contend that there is a great saving shown in the Statement, and any one can ascertain that by carefully reading it for himself. I am sorry to see that there are so many in this House who have missions. Some have a mission for finance. We have eight or ten Treasurers in the House, and something like the same number of Ministers for Public Works; and we know that when they are afflicted in this way they, to use a very expressive term, "get off their chumps." That was exactly the position of the member for Wakatipu the other night; and his best friends admit that whenever he dabbles in anything connected with public works he is what is called "a shingle short." I do not object to his dealing with public works, but I like him to do so fairly, and not look through spectacles of a peculiar hue. The honourable member for Napier the other night complained very sadly because the Government did not place on the estimates a large sum of money for the purpose of aiding immigration. He wanted the Government to expend the money in the direction of paying the passages of capitalists—men of money, he said; but does he mean to say that £30 or £40 paid to assist the passage of a man with money would keep him here if he were not disposed to stay here? I should like to know the conditions under which they would be brought out—whether they would be brought out here at our expense, and, after going round the colony, return Home much pleased with their pleasure-trip. Perhaps the honourable gentleman thinks such a scheme would bring out a large number of speculators for the land he has to sell. I contend that this line of argument is altogether out of place in an Assembly of this character. The honourable member for Napier said the Government were wearing the Opposition's clothes. It is a well-known political fact that the late Government—the present Opposition—never had any clothes of their own to wear. It is true that they—if I may use the term—"prigged" a brand-new suit from the member for Auckland East; but when they came to try them on they found that they would not fit at all, the consequence being that they had to cut and contrive. And by the time that they had to leave those benches they had so wasted their material that, had it not been for the honourable member for Waitotara,

who had reserved a Maori mat for such a contingency, the honourable gentlemen would have left those benches with even less clothing than it is reported Adam and Eve had on when they were driven forth from the Garden of Eden. I hope, therefore, we shall hear nothing more of the Government wearing Opposition clothes. It is purely a farce. I thought that, seeing there was no chance of introducing new matter in the way of figures and so on, I would deal with the subject in this way. This is a variety, if it is nothing else. It is not my intention to go through the speeches of honourable members who spoke during the present debate. The honourable member for Parnell, I am quite sure, is sincere in believing in the nostrums he prescribes for the cure of the diseases that the State suffers from. It is possible that, if that honourable gentleman and other financiers in this House live long enough, they may have a chance some day of dosing the State with their nostrums: and then they may find out that they have made a mistake; for what they thought was a cure would be a killing process. I contend, if there are any who have a right to complain about the Public Works Statement, it is the members who come from the part of the country that I represent. There is nothing there for us. But you do not find us whining about it.

An Hon. MEMBER.—You have your East and West Coast Railway.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Our members, I say, do not whine about it. They allow the poorer parts of the colony to reap the benefits which they are willing to give up at present. That is the position they take up. Whether it is a wise one or not I am not prepared to say. The people in that part do not think so—they do not think they get the proper share of the loaves and fishes that they ought to get: and I entirely agree with them. I must congratulate you, Sir, before I sit down, on the vast amount of patience which you have shown throughout this debate—the virtue of long-suffering; and I sympathize with you in having to sit there so many hours listening to the weary platitudes which you have continually brought under your notice.

Mr. LOCKE.—I wish to say a few words in reference to the course I intend to take to-night in giving my vote. I object on principle to the constant bringing-up of these matters—these half-votes of no confidence, which are not brought by the leaders of the parties, but by others. I will follow a leader with a great deal of pleasure, but I object to the way in which these half-confidence motions are brought down. I think the schedule mentioned by the honourable member for Mataura would have been a far more satisfactory one than that set forth in the Bill. I object also most strongly to a great many measures of the Government and the way they are to be carried out, more particularly in reference to the Native-land question, and the system of purchasing Native lands by a commission of 2d. an acre and 30s. a day, without any organized scheme for the supervision of the work done, the quality and value of the land to be purchased, the proper selection and defining of reserves for the Maoris, and many other points that could be named. I shall not speak at length on this question, as my views are so well known, nor on the Public Works Statement, as that has been well threshed out by other members. I have, therefore, only to say that if the leaders of the party—and I have a sincere respect for the Premier, and also for the leader of the Opposition—were to be brought into conflict in a proper way, I would take a part on either side. I would take which side I thought best. I must say that, on the present occasion, no single member of this House has spoken to me either on one side or the other as to the course I intended to take. I intend to give my vote on the present occasion with the Government. I thought it was right that I should make this explanation as to the action I intend to pursue, because my feelings have been generally with the Opposition, and the vote I intend to give is on the principle I have named with reference to the leaders coming down with a straight vote of want of confidence, instead of this constant dragging of members through one lobby or the other on side-issues.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, we have a very serious subject to debate this night. Several nights already have been passed in discussing it; but such subjects as the present condition and the welfare of New Zealand I feel sure we cannot devote too long a time to carefully considering. These are questions on which the greatest interests depend. I have been particularly struck by this circumstance: I frequently hear it said, "Give New Zealand another chance." Those who use that expression imagine that the very pouring of a vast supply of borrowed capital into this country will make an extreme change in it—a change for the moment good, and to be followed up by no future disaster. But, if we consider for a moment, we shall find that a vast amount of capital may exist in a nation and the greater part of that nation be plunged at the same time in the deepest misery; that there is no relation whatever between abundant capital in a country and the happiness of its inhabitants—that is, "capital" in the sense in which we generally use it. I do not mean to speak in scientific terms when I say abundance of money in a country may be accompanied with the greatest poverty. Now, what is the case in Great Britain at the present moment? There we see one of the greatest nations the world has ever seen—the mistress, I may say, of all navigable seas, the owner of all the richest portions of the globe, and with such an abundance of money or treasure in her possession that she hardly knows what to do with it; and yet millions of her population are in a state of the greatest possible misery. Now, it is quite certain that, if the abundant capital in England were by patriotic citizens properly applied to the relief of destitution and the establishment in the land of other industries than those existing, and to

opening-up of new markets, and, I will say, new possessions, a very great change might be wrought in England within a very short period of time. But that is not done. The mass of her statesmen seem, apparently, afraid to venture upon any new experiment. England, as a nation, hardly ever puts forth her strength. Her statesmen certainly seem afraid to move; none of them seem capable of any great conception — of such a conception as would help forward the progress of that new social state which is undoubtedly rising in the world. They dread its approach; they are afraid of what may happen; but they do nothing to guide its course, or to render it that beneficial power which I am certain it will be hereafter. They stand aghast at the prospect which seems to meet their eyes, of an old civilization shaking and vanishing from under their feet, and a new civilization coming on. That is the state of England. Her money avails her very little, and it will avail her but little unless it is well applied; and I say that if we were to get more money here, unless we know what we intend to do with it, it would not, in my opinion, be a blessing, but, on the contrary, it might prove a very great misfortune. But, now, do not think from my saying that that I would argue that we are to get no more money. Let us look at our own position at the present moment of time. I ask honourable gentlemen to pay no attention to what the Government may tell them, or what the Colonial Treasurer may tell them, but to look the facts clearly in the face. No more unpopular thing can be said than that at the present moment we are borrowing money to pay the interest on our debt; but I unhesitatingly affirm that we borrow every penny of interest we pay, and that we are adding to the borrowed money the borrowed interest on our debt every year. The thing is perfectly plain. The commonest understanding can take it in at once. What do we borrow this year? A million and a half.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Two millions.

Sir G. GREY.—No. You say two millions; but it is a million and a half. That is the necessary sum for this year, and that is what we borrow for this year. And what interest are we now paying? £1,600,000. Now, put it in this way: Supposing that a cry was raised for no more borrowing, and was acceded to at once, and we were told that there was to be no more borrowing, what would be the consequence? You would have to send to England £1,600,000 from this colony to pay interest on your debt, and you would not have a single penny left for any internal improvement or for any necessary expenditure whatever. The greatest distress must at once prevail in the colony; great misery would fall upon it: but the sum must be paid, and we should be struggling against debt and against poverty. I think I shall be safe in saying that at least twelve or fifteen years would be required before we should emerge from the difficulty in which under such circumstances we should be involved; because this sum having to be sent away every year is exactly the sum, £1,500,000, which we require for our annual expenditure, and without it the colony would be impoverished to the last possible degree. I think that must be clear to all. Therefore I contend that for some time borrowing is a necessity from which we cannot escape; and I further say this: that we ought to take measures to relieve ourselves from these causes to which I am alluding—that we ought to take some decided steps in that direction; and I say that such steps can with safety be taken. Let us look at New Zealand as she is situated now. Here you have your great cities, one of which we are in, separated by long distances from one another. You have your great stores, your shops, your merchants, your tradesmen, your citizens of various kinds; and I say they have none of them enough to do. Your warehouses could hold more, your shops have only half the customers they require, you require additional population in so far as your cities are concerned —population of a peculiar kind. Then, in regard to your country you have railroads made through the finest portion of New Zealand, you have roads made — you have the skeleton of a great nation; but you have not the muscle and flesh with which to fill that up. I say, therefore, that the measure I propose, and which I say the Premier prevented being brought forward this session—which incumbered our Order Paper, but never has been allowed to have a fair hearing—is a measure that would have brought to you farmers with capital for every farm in the country. That measure has not been allowed to come up, and to be made law, as I believe it would have been by this House if it had been brought forward. In that respect I think a great injustice has been done to myself, has been done to this House, and has been done to the country. Whether it was from jealousy, or what the cause was, it is not for me to say; but one measure which I believe was a great measure for helping this country was allowed to die stillborn, and has been sacrificed. To what? To a ball. That is the deity to which that measure was sacrificed and offered up. Very well. I say that would have been one very great relief to the country. But let us look further. I have not only traced out the state of New Zealand, but I have given a sketch — just a few strokes— which I think all will admit to be true of the present condition of New Zealand; and I say that it would be in the power of England to unite this great Empire into one consistent whole, to place every one of her colonists in reach of all her possessions, to relieve England of a great part of her surplus population, and to open new fields of industry and new commerce to the British nation. And you will ask, How could that be done—how could that fall in with the plan that you propose? Yet it is an essential part of the plan which I propose to you, or one feature which would help it forward very much indeed. Now, any honourable gentleman who has studied the movement that is going on in the United States and England would have remarked

that there is a universal assent given to this principle: that the State must gain possession of the railroads which traverse its territory; it must command all the great means of communication throughout the country; it must see that accommodation is provided for its people to travel from one part of the nation to another with the greatest facility and at the least cost; and that unless the State secure that power great evils will arise from private companies possessing these means of communication, which, as I have stated before, the Governments of different nations are so anxious to get into their hands—which end, in fact, most Continental Governments have accomplished. Now, if there is anything in what I say, I think honourable gentlemen will feel this: that, Great Britain, as a mercantile nation, possessing so many outlying portions of the Empire, such great colonies, it would be her duty to secure the ocean as a road belonging virtually to herself, and to see that on that road are established rapid and excellent means of communication from one part of the globe to the other. Let me explain what I mean. Take, for instance, the track from Great Britain to Australia through the Suez Canal. That track, like a great road, passes nothing but stations—Gibraltar, Malta, through the Suez Canal to Ceylon, thence to different parts of Australia and different parts of India; and I contend that, if Great Britain, rising to a sense of her duty, would put on large Government steamers, such as we have done here ourselves, and make arrangements by which passengers could go from one part of the Empire to another at the lowest possible cost, as far as possible equalizing the cost of passages to each portion of her dominions, something on the same system as telegraphs are established—I say, if she would do that, and would maintain constant and frequent communication by these vessels passing from one part of the Empire, carrying her subjects who choose to travel and who choose to be settlers, at the lowest possible terms, supplied with the best possible accommodation, that in that way she truly might be mistress of a great empire, and in the case of New Zealand—our own case—would soon supply to us a population able to pay their own passages out on those terms, all bringing some capital, and able to occupy the lands which under the system I speak of would be thrown open to them. It was by her great Roman roads, and her perfect system of communication throughout the entire empire, that Rome rose to, and maintained, her imperial greatness. I think honourable gentlemen will see that a system of this kind would furnish England with really the greatest navy in the world—not intended for war necessarily, but her vessels would be capable of being turned into war-vessels; and I believe that she, establishing a system of the sort, would never have occasion to use those war-vessels against a foreign Power, because she would be too powerful. I think, therefore, that I have shown that England, in one way of employing her capital, might do a great good; and I believe if her statesmen set their minds to devise such a plan it would soon be found that this great Empire would be in a very different condition from what it is at present—in every part distress and poverty necessarily existing, whilst capital, fertile lands, all lie open to her use. Altogether the prospect open to us is very great, if we will only look at it fairly and fully. Now, I have spoken of the misery in Great Britain. It is hardly necessary for me to enter into any details on that subject. Take up any recent work, or look at the state in which her city populations live, more like animals than human beings, without hope, without sufficient food, without sufficient clothing, exposed to a rigorous climate, often, even in the depth of winter, unable to have fires in their rooms at any period but when cooking their meals. Look at the country population—the agricultural population—and you will find their misery equally great. It is impossible to contemplate such scenes without the heart being moved with pity and desiring in some degree to relieve them. I say, if we would throw open our lands here in the manner I propose, if we would give large openings to the population of Britain to come here, we might very much relieve the miseries under which they suffer; and other colonies and countries would undoubtedly follow our example, and thus the relief afforded would be great indeed. Some centuries must elapse ere all waste lands could be filled up. I spoke of the Government taking possession of the railroads. Now let me look at that question as it exists in our own country, and direct the attention of honourable gentlemen to that subject. Firstly, with whose money were those railroads in New Zealand which I have spoken of constructed? With the money of the whole people. Who have reaped the greatest benefit from them? The persons through whose property they passed—those persons in whose properties stations are established and villages grow up, where there is every means of removing goods at the cheapest possible rate. These are the persons who chiefly benefit from the railways. Enormous value was given to their property — a very great value indeed. What did they pay for those benefits? The law at first said that they were to pay a proportionate part of the cost of making the railways; but they were principally, or they made up a great part of, the law-givers of the country, or those who returned the law-givers to Parliament, and by a law made by themselves they relieved themselves from that just servitude which was put upon them. The result became this: that the whole population had equally to pay the cost of those railways. Let us take the labouring population. They have to pay, head for head, as much as any other person in the country, or very nearly. You will find that when taxation is distributed into the places where it naturally falls—that is, upon the heads that have really to pay it—very nearly an equal sum is paid by every individual in the colony ' the cost of the construction of those railw'

Now, attempt is being made here to make the railways pay that cost: but what does that mean? It does not relieve the charge upon the people at large; it simply establishes another kind of tax—an invisible tax which you pay without knowing what you are doing. You pay, apparently, for being carried on the railway. That is the fact; but, upon the other hand, the railways are our own, and you are making the many pay for the few: that is, those who travel on the railways made by their money have to pay a tax to relieve the great landowners whose properties are enriched by the railways. That I look upon as a very great hardship indeed. I look upon it as a very great drawback to the welfare of the colony. What I think ought to be done is this: As I said once before this session, we should abandon all intention of making a profit out of our railways. We should make them pay the working expenses and look for nothing more than that, and then allow the people to travel on some fair system, and allow goods to be carried on some fair system, throughout the whole colony, something upon the plan on which the telegraph is worked, so that as far as possible you should render all land of equal value so far as transport goes, and so that a man fifty miles from Christchurch should have little more to pay than the man living five or ten miles from Christchurch. If a man gets into a train it matters little where he gets out. In that way, produce, wherever produced, would be of almost equal value to all producers when it reached the market. Labour could be easily obtained. The labourer could easily carry his labour to the best market; because, to me, this appears very hard indeed: that a great capitalist wishing, for instance, to invest £10,000 in the interior can carry the whole of it in his pocket in bank-notes without trouble. That is his capital; and the labourer's only capital is his power to labour. But he is obliged to pay exactly the same as the capitalist, except that the one may travel in a first-class carriage and the other in a second-class carriage. The whole system of our railways appears to me most absolutely unjust; and that, I think, is one of the first great reforms we should carry out here. Now, I want, if possible, to get honourable gentlemen to agree with me on this point: that is, to some extent, I cannot trace to what degree the existence of "the unemployed" in this colony is to be attributed to the system under which our railways are conducted; but it arises, in part, from the difficulty they experience in carrying their labour to the best market,—in distributing themselves over the country from spot to spot where they are wanted. However, without dwelling too much on that subject, this we must agree on: that the appearance of "the unemployed" in numbers in different parts of the colony is a very alarming spectacle. In a new country like this it seems almost incredible that such a large number of persons should suddenly be thrown out of employment in our great cities, that there should be apparently very little chance of their immediately getting employment, and that really great distress and suffering should exist. Many persons will tell you that there is really little distress, after all. They will try to laugh it off. But I know for a certainty, and from authorities that I cannot doubt, that there are really good hard-working families who are plunged in great and quite undeserved distress. Now, I contend it is the duty of the Government to give all those people employment. That is an absolute necessity. Here I have heard it said that the local bodies must do a great deal; and I heard in the course of this afternoon an extraordinary statement made on this subject. One honourable member remarked that he was glad that some of the southern people who were out of employment had obtained employment in the northern districts. Well, their appearance there is followed almost immediately by distress in Auckland. That is, too much labour is poured into one part of the colony from another; and I think no one will contend that, if you allow free circulation of labour from place to place, and if too much labour congregates at one place and distress occurs there, it will be fair to throw on that locality the charge of getting rid of that distress, and by your railway-rates prevent the working-men—the real owners of the railways—from escaping to a place where they would be of value. Although my views may appear communistic, I say it is the duty of the State at large, under such circumstances, to provide labour for the people thrown out of employment. I say that they ought not to be allowed for a single day to continue without employment. The loss of the work of five or six hundred men for a single day is a great loss to the whole community—a loss which can never be replaced—so much wealth absolutely gone. I say, therefore, there should be no delay whatever in that respect; and I say, secondly, that they ought to be put to remunerative employment—that is, to employment which absolutely pays. But to put them to stone-breaking or work of that kind, to get rid of them, if done solely for that view, is a mistake. Remunerative employment should be provided for such persons. Then, again, I say this—and I fear this will be a very unpopular thing for me to say: I contend that they ought to receive a just day's wages—that they ought not to be beaten down to the lowest sum they can take—that that ought not to be done, but that such just wages ought to be given to them as would admit of their obtaining healthy and proper food, clothing, and lodging for their families. That they are entitled to. I have seen that, in some of the discussions which have taken place with these unemployed, it has been said, "Oh, we can only give you so much, because, if we gave more, it would interfere with the farmers." Now, I contend that it is the duty of the Government to keep wages at a fair and just standard, because to try to keep them lower than the wages which those competing for labour will give is to say that you will bring down wages below what is absolutely necessary for proper and respectable

subsistence to a man and his family: for the private competitors for labour will gradually reduce wages to the lowest sum upon which people can exist. If, therefore, the Government does not give fair wages, it must lead to a general fall of wages below the just and fair standard; and that means, to plunge the labouring classes—not one, but the whole of them: the meritorious, the worthless, the industrious, and the indolent—to plunge them all, in a moment, into one common suffering, which once got into it would be found very difficult to raise them from again. I therefore do hope, in view of the expenditure which we must carry on from loan for some time, and remembering that all pay equally the capital and interest of those loans, and that all have an equal right to advantage from them—I do hope that, in all cases of destitution of the kind I speak of, the Government will act upon these, as I think, just and liberal and proper principles which I have tried to lay down. And you must remember that a fall in wages, the fall in food and clothing, the fall in respectability which poverty brings on, are not the only disadvantages. There is also the disadvantage of degradation—the keenest disadvantage of all. I must take the liberty of saying that the Premier has on several occasions spoken most unmercifully to people of this kind. I was particularly struck with one thing, showing the difference that poverty makes in a man, as compared with another man who is not poor. It was a conversation which passed at a meeting of a deputation, which presented resolutions; and what was said to them? It was said that one of the resolutions suggested what was untrue—they were not told that they were mistaken, they were not set right quietly and gently, but the word "untrue" was used. And then a discussion was entered into; and what took place? Mr. Job Bitcliffe—who, I must say, appears to have had almost the patience of Job—said this: "As to the first resolution, it is true, and cannot be denied. I should be sorry to say that the Premier said what was untrue." That was the word used. What was the answer to him? "If you do I shall order you out of the room." Could Mr. Bitcliffe have ordered the great man out of the room? No; there was a difference between destitution and wealth. You may rely upon it that, if your population sink into poverty of the kind into which they seem to be sinking in several parts of the country, it will produce a change in that manly self-respect which I think every inhabitant of New Zealand should possess. Now, it may be asked, "What work would you put 'the unemployed' on?" To that I answer, Let them open up roads through the Crown lands, and from out of their number pick the most deserving of those who are fitted to be country settlers, and settle them on the lands through which they have constructed roads. If you place the unemployed in the vicinity of new settlements, where the roads are incomplete, and let them give great value to the lands there by the making of roads and other public works, I feel sure that ample work could be found for these persons who are now out of employment. The suggestion that was made to-day in this House as to how to dispose of the unemployed was, I think, as cruel a proposition as could be made—because I know what a gum-digger's life is, and the peculiar qualities that are required in those who undertake it—should you thus waste skilled labour; and I say that it would be much better, instead of having recourse to some casual thing of that kind, to put your unemployed on works where, from being in the vicinity of farms and the occupied parts of the country, they would be likely to get employment or to settle themselves, which would give them a hope in life and a chance of doing well in the country. I should now wish to make a few remarks on the proposed expenditure, and to refer to subjects that I think are really of far greater importance than people generally imagine. During this session, and, in part, during last session, we have passed a series of Acts, some of which place large amounts at the absolute disposal of a Minister—larger far than is usually done. Now, I say that ought not to be done. For instance, to give a lump sum of £100,000 for the purpose of purchasing Native lands—that is, in my opinion, a thing that ought not to be done. It is giving a Minister undue powers. Who can tell what is meant by the vague words, "purchase of Native lands"? We have had cases brought forward in which great objections have been found to the way in which money has been spent—some of them justly, some of them I do not quite agree with. I say this giving of such large powers of that kind is a wrong thing. Then, again, Acts have been passed, and especially one this session, which gave very large powers in a peculiar direction. By the Act I refer to, power is given to a Minister to appoint Commissioners with power to manage Native lands. It gives the power, very great indeed, of creating offices and paying people out of the property of the Natives. It gives the Natives no fair chance themselves of choosing persons to manage their property. Altogether, great powers have been given by us to the Government, which I think ought not to have been given. I will give another instance. In regard to the Insurance Association powers were given, or were assumed, to purchase buildings. I say these powers ought not to have been given or used, but the House ought to have been asked to vote specific sums for the purchase of specific places which persons had agreed to sell on given terms. All these things lead to private arrangements, which are totally opposed to the system of public expenditure usually followed in civilized countries. It is to avoid such evils that certain sums are voted for specific objects, and purchases are carried out by regular officers and submitted to the heads of departments to approve of them. By that course no Minister is directly or indirectly mixed up in the spending of large sums of money which are appro-

priated in detail at his sole pleasure. That, I think, is one great mistake we have made. I believe, if that mistake is got over, it will be found that we can very greatly reduce our expenditure, and I am certain, from what I have heard, there are numerous instances in which a great saving might have been made in sums of money that have been spent. Just the same thing took place with regard to our defences. To me it was—I was going to say an unpardonable thing; but, perhaps, there is nothing which is unpardonable—but to my mind it was a very wrong thing, purchases suddenly made for a great amount by a single Minister, instead of each amount being voted by this Parliament in the manner in which I conceive it ought to have been voted. Now, in these two ways I think great saving in our expenditure could be made. Let us now look at the general question of expenditure. Is it possible to effect any great saving in it? I answer that I believe it is. If it were wisely done, and by degrees, a very considerable reduction might be made in the expenditure throughout the country. But I still firmly believe that the best way of getting out of the difficulty would be by filling up the country with farms in the manner in which I have proposed, or which other gentlemen have proposed in various ways, all tending to the same object. I naturally think my way the best, and no doubt they each think theirs the best. If that were done, if our population were increased by men of that kind, able to work upon their own farms, and each bringing capital with him—each enriching the portion of the country to which he went by spending his money in improvements and not in the purchase of land—I believe if that were done there would soon be such a large increase of population that the cost of our present administrative establishments would be proportionately very much reduced per head, and that the taxation would be much more easy. I think a reduction of cost could be effected in that way much better and much more easily than by a sudden reduction at once, which would fall disastrously on many deserving families. Although it is getting late, I must deal with one other subject still, closely connected with what I have been speaking of. It is this: that the plan I propose would have the effect of breaking up voluntarily, and not in a revolutionary manner, nearly always with the consent of the owners and to their benefit, the vast properties which are now possessed in New Zealand, and which many people would at the present time be very glad to dispose of. But I say this: If you do not break up these properties, if you allow them to continue as they are, and if you still have within your very midst numbers of destitute persons—a number which will constantly increase—this is as certain as anything in the world can be certain: that in not very many years you will have a population here as destitute, as miserable, and, I believe, in all respects as badly off—I think even worse off, on account of the great extent of these estates—as the miserable population in Great Britain and Ireland now is. I feel certain in my own mind that must be the case. When we reflect upon the words which fell the other night from the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, what conclusion can we come to? That honourable gentleman said this in reference to the great outlay on public works which had been carried on here by a vast expenditure: that there were persons who had encouraged that vast expenditure, and had encouraged this borrowing and spending propensity, to give a greater value to their properties, which had been often unfairly acquired; and, having done that, they had sold out, abandoned the country, and left us to pay the cost of that which had enriched them. Those debts which we have to pay, and which the miserable and poor have to pay their share of—I say those debts are what will sink us into much less wealth than we ought to have, because that is even now the case from the heavy taxation—will sink a great part of the colony into destitution. I agree with the honourable gentleman in what he said, that, in point of fact, those gentlemen have done—what? They have really broken their pledges, they have repudiated their share of the public debts, and they have left us to pay the debts which they have repudiated. That is the case. And then I thought further on this subject, when I saw it stated in all the papers that there were crowds of colonists in England, and how they were fêted, how they were received in every part of the country, the honours paid to them as our representative men; and I knew that amongst them were many persons alluded to by that honourable gentleman. I said to myself, Who are the real colonists? Where are those patient farmers who by years of toil have made the country? Where are the soldiers who carried their rifles in all the wars, who suffered wounds and hardship of every kind? Where are they? The Volunteers, the men of the line, men of the navy—all equal in their service—many of them deprived of the little piece of land to which they were entitled, and which they have been kept out of for years: what honours fell upon them? I thought of the miserable population which might spring up by the course taken by those men who went off with this wealth, paid for by the people of New Zealand; and who have left the poor in the country to pay the principal and interest of the money which they carried off with them. I thought to myself that I saw those titles scattered broadcast amongst so-called representative colonists—Sir This and Sir That, Companion of This and Companion of That, and so forth. I asked myself, Are these titles given without payment, without cost? Is it a free gift of the English Colonial Minister's? And I said, No; the payment for these things is hereafter to be demanded—that payment will be the sighs and sobs of thousands of little children in New Zealand, badly clothed, badly fed, reduced to a state of starvation, to which a great part of the population of England is reduced. That will be the payment these titles. And I did hope the Parliament

of New Zealand would insist, if possible, even this session, upon their lands being yet in some way thrown open to the people of the colony, and some steps taken to see that proper expenditure is enforced on the country for the future, and that the Government shall not give money for buildings and land here and there at the will of a single Minister, but that every specific thing shall be voted as it ought to be voted, and that in this way we should enter on that course which may lead us at last out of those difficulties which undoubtedly surround us, and which I have tried to put before you this night.

Mr. BEVAN.—Sir, I have been drawn into offering a few remarks on this debate, a debate which I think from its commencement has been a purposeless one, for I cannot see, at this late period of the session, what good object it can serve. During the first part of the debate I determined not to offer any remarks whatever; but the aspect of the case has changed, and therefore I think it is my duty, following the advice of the honourable member for Egmont, as one of the representatives of the people, to raise my voice and state my views on this occasion. I must, first of all, protest against the tone which the debate has taken from the commencement. In referring to the honourable member for Waitotara—who was the first to open this debate—I regret very much that from the moment he landed here from England his style of speech has been of the most gloomy character. He imports misgivings into all his utterances, and foreshadows dangers which none but himself can see. The speech he delivered, to my mind, was thoroughly answered in a most able manner by the Minister of Lands. It appears to me that it has been the idea, throughout the political life of the honourable member for Waitotara, that the Colony of New Zealand was always surrounded with dangers and troubles ahead. I might be permitted to call that honourable gentleman's attention to an earlier period of his political life, when, I presume, a happier family was on those Government benches than he is disposed at this moment to admit sit there now. Chance has thrown in my way an utterance of the honourable gentleman given in the year 1876 on a remarkable occasion, and one in which he evidently took great pride. It was on the return of Sir Julius Vogel, our present Colonial Treasurer, as representative for Wanganui. I wish these utterances to be recorded, in order that they may again bring to mind some of the honourable gentleman's views of that period. The honourable gentleman was chairman at a banquet given to Sir Julius Vogel on the occasion, and he is reported, in the *Wanganui Chronicle* of the 18th March, 1876, to have spoken the following words, when, as chairman, he proposed the toast of the evening—namely, "The present Ministry, coupled with the name of Sir Julius Vogel, the guest of the evening:"

"In coupling the name of Sir Julius with the toast, he considered he was connecting the name of the foremost statesman in the Southern Hemisphere with that toast. Confining himself more particularly to the Ministry, he would remark that Mr. Richardson was pre-eminently fitted for his position, as also was Sir Donald McLean, to whose efforts he attributed much of what had been done in preserving peace with the Native race. Major Atkinson was also spoken of as a most valuable man, both in the Assembly and Ministry. Mr. Bryce dwelt at considerable length on the public works scheme and the present financial position of the colony. He looked with doubts into the future, but believed that, if the ship was in danger, with Sir Julius at the wheel, ultimately everything would come out safe. Anything which he he might say would not add further to the reputation of Sir Julius, as no better evidence of the estimation in which he was held could be adduced, seeing that he had been elected, though a stranger, by such a large majority."

These few words were, I presume, the honest impulse of his heart. I cannot imagine that the honourable gentleman was excited by wine. Contrast now—"only get him out of the way."

Mr. BRYCE.—Will the honourable gentleman allow me to correct what, I think, is a mistake? The latter part of what he quoted is mine, undoubtedly; but not the first part.

Mr. BEVAN.—I copied the words from the *Wanganui Chronicle* this afternoon. If the honourable gentleman doubts it I will produce the paper.

Mr. BRYCE.—The honourable gentleman referred to the Chairman's remarks first, and then mine.

Mr. BEVAN.—"Mr. Bryce (Chairman)" is printed in the paper. I am not responsible for the reporter's error. But it would appear to me, with my knowledge of political events since that period, that if any change has taken place it is not in regard to the Colonial Treasurer—because I think it will be freely admitted throughout New Zealand that he is still pre-eminently one of the foremost statesmen in New Zealand—and if any change has taken place it is in the honourable member for Waitotara. I had hoped, when the honourable gentleman returned from England after vindicating his honour, that he would have been a champion of the honour of New Zealand, and not have returned to this colony with the gloomy views he has. His forebodings have been followed by many speakers, as the followers must utter the remarks of their leaders. I protest most emphatically against the attitude which some honourable members have taken up, and I protest against the colony being referred to as it has been during this debate. I am not going to dwell on figures or facts, because they have been thoroughly answered by the Minister of Lands. The honourable member for Manawatu spoke drearily and dismally in this chamber for over two hours to empty benches. He spoke to his constituents through *Hansard*, and he talked a lot, and absolutely said nothing to the members of this House, for very few heard the honourable gentleman except those who kept the House together. The member for Mount Ida, who is al-

described as being a most forcible speaker and making grand speeches—believed to be a budding Disraeli, according to some minds—that honourable gentleman says that we must not borrow, that it is almost sinful to borrow, but you must give £500,000 for the Otago Central Railway. If the Ministry were considering the interests of this great colony they would not spend another shilling on the Otago Central Railway—for this reason: Looking at the maps and plans in the lobby, you will find that the whole of the Otago Provincial District is infested with rabbits, costing the colony something like £35,000 a year. The railways in that provincial district return about 2 per cent. on the capital invested, and cost the colony £75,000 a year interest in excess of what they return. It is recorded in *Hansard*, and I repeat it, so that it may go into *Hansard* again, to remind honourable members of these facts. I maintain that we are not justified in laying out another shilling on the Otago Central Railway. The honourable gentleman is always fossicking among the musty records of the past; and that is how he comes to give us all these grand speeches of which we read in the morning paper—sketches from works on political economy—speeches which form very nice reading indeed, and would be very interesting lectures if they were delivered elsewhere. But I say that in this House it is our duty to express our own opinions and leave others to express theirs. However, I will not take up time by referring further to the remarks of that honourable gentleman. I come next to the honourable member for Wakatipu. His fiery denunciations still ring in my ears, and I believe they still ring in the ears of all who heard them. But, after all, his whole speech was nothing but a series of denunciations which fell upon the unfortunate head of the Minister for Public Works. Was there anything to justify it? I say, Sir, that there was no justification whatever for his denunciations. There was not a single point which he could take up and in respect of it make a charge against the Minister for Public Works. With his bump of self-esteem, this large contractor in Tasmania, in Victoria, and in this colony assured the House that he could regulate everything. Sir, I like to hear his sonorous tones, but, still, I should be glad if the honourable gentleman could only realize the truth of the words of Bobbie Burns,—

> Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us
> To see oursels as others see us!
> It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
> And foolish notion.

If the honourable gentleman would only take these lines to heart I do not think that he would thrust himself so much upon the House as he does. Then, he was very severe in his condemnation of the construction of the Midland Railway. He was to go Home to England and tell them all about the miserable country which the railway was to pass through.

Mr. FERGUS.—I beg to say that the honourable gentleman has made a great mistake. I never said anything of the sort.

Mr. BEVAN.—I accept the honourable gentleman's explanation. It was not said in this chamber.

Mr. FERGUS.—Nor outside either.

Mr. BEVAN.—Well, I accept the explanation. But I was going to say, if the honourable gentleman had made such a remark, that I would advise him to let the people at Home know that he was coming, in order that they might provide a torchlight procession to welcome this honourable gentleman who once sat on the Government benches for twenty-four hours.

An Hon. MEMBER.—He did not.

Mr. BEVAN.—Well, I understand that he was intended to be among that happy lot of Ministers who were there for only twenty-four hours. At any rate, I believe he was public works adviser to the Ministry that existed for twenty-four hours. However, one thing is very certain—the honourable gentleman very frequently gets up and makes speeches which are carefully preserved in *Hansard;* but if the public like to go to *Hansard* they will see that the honourable gentleman is invariably in a minority, and therefore they cannot place very great reliance on his judgment. The fact is, he follows his masters, he follows his leaders, and takes their opinions for his own. With regard to the construction of railways and public works, it may be the case that he knows a great deal more about them than I do, and he therefore might be tolerated more if he would display a little less of that bump of self-esteem. And now I pass from him to a more generous theme. I wish to refer to the honourable member for Egmont. I say "a more generous theme"—in this respect: because he is more statesmanlike in his criticism. There is no doubt that he does possess a knowledge of finance, and that he does, like all who possess a knowledge of finance, also possess a knowledge of a sort of legerdemain by which he is able to twist and turn figures about to suit himself, and to prove, at any rate to his own satisfaction, that he is quite justified in coming to any conclusion to which he does come. There is, however, one characteristic which the honourable gentleman has developed of late, and which I have noticed, and which, I believe, several other honourable members have noticed also. He is always trying to show that the Colonial Treasurer knows nothing of finance. Well, it is only an illustration of the old proverb that "two of a trade will never agree." But, Sir, I think that most honourable members will recognize that the Colonial Treasurer is a master of finance when he is on these benches, and that he is a master of finance when he is off them; whereas, in the case of the honourable member for Egmont, he is a master of finance when he is on these benches, but not when he is off them; and therefore we do not go to him for advice at the present time. We look on the Ministry as being quite able to guide us, and administer the affairs of the colony; and we recog-

ize that when the honourable member for Egmont was on those benches the colony was fast drifting into a deplorable state of desondency: and, indeed, he frequently told us, when he occupied the high position of Colonial Treasurer, that if we did not strive for economy we should all be ruined. And the panacea that was to cure all our evils was that wonderful scheme of national insurance. We were to bring out paupers from the Old Country, and then tax them for being paupers, so as to keep them paupers. That was the doctrine which the honourable gentleman preached, and it was because he preached that doctrine that the people of the colony insisted on a change, and the present Government came into office. Then I come to another point. If we have had the address delivered at Tuapeka quoted to us once in this House this session, we have had it brought before us fifty times; and the same may be said about the Invercargill speech. But no one has said a word about the remarkable speech made in Auckland, when the Auckland friends of the honourable member induced him to come up there and address the people. We have never heard a word about that remarkable speech. That speech was to be an ample refutation of the figures and deductions of the Colonial Treasurer; but what was it? What did he tell us?

Mr. SEDDON.—He never said one word as to the goldfields and mining industry.

Mr. BEVAN.—Yes; I thank the honourable member for Kumara for reminding me of that. The speech was altogether a failure. It gave us no information on points to which the honourable member has referred, but it gave us full information as to the price of butter. We admit that the honourable member is an authority on butter; and we are quite willing to admit that he was correct when he told the Auckland people that 7d. per lb. would pay him for butter. But, Sir, there was nothing in this speech to instruct the people of the colony on its finance. What he sighed for was a return to the good old days. Casting a glance at a good coat which he had on his back, he said he would like to go back to the old "blue-shirt days." No doubt the honourable member has resided in a district in which, in those good old days, money was more plentiful; Imperial money and colonial money was poured in there for the support of the troops; and I have no doubt that those are the times which the honourable gentleman referred to and to which he would like to go back. But I do not want to see these good old times return; I want to see the present times made good times; and those are the best statesmen who put their shoulders to the wheel and try to help forward the coach of State by their wisdom, by their judgment, and by applying their knowledge of what is required to make the present times good. Instead of merely casting reflections on the Ministry and their shortcomings, let the honourable gentleman assist us to put the ship of State in repair, and let him preach to the people and instil into their minds the virtue and power of self-reliance, instead of indulging in gloomy forecasts. I have nothing to say about the speech which the honourable member for Egmont delivered in this House, but I give him every credit for it. He is very courageous. Nay, more than that, I believe he is a true statesman, and all that he needs is to be in better company. Perhaps he wishes to be in better company. Referring to a remark of the Premier's, he said that a death-bed repentance was better than no repentance, and that he feared it was not far off in the case of the Ministry. But if the honourable gentleman is waiting to see a death-bed scene I am afraid he will be disappointed, for, whatever this House might do, we must remember that the people will have an opportunity of expressing their views directly, when we must all go to the country; and I do not think that they have any wish for the death of this Ministry. Then I come to the speech of the honourable member for Waikouaiti. I never hear that honourable gentleman speak without some concern. He always speaks in such a tone of injured innocence: the colony is always "going to the dogs" according to the honourable member. The other day, when speaking, he took it upon himself to question the necessity for a valuable public work now in progress in the neighbourhood of my district, and which is mentioned in the schedule to the present New Zealand Loan Bill; and hence it is my duty to put the honourable gentleman right. The honourable gentleman, as I have said, always appears to me to address the House in a tone of injured innocence, as if he were hardly safe in trusting himself to express his sentiments—as if he would like some one to take him by the hand; and the burden of his song always is that the country is going to the dogs: but he does not tell us how it is to be saved. He has often said in his speeches, "if I were on those Government benches." Has the honourable gentleman sufficient conceit in his composition to imagine that he will ever be there? I hope he has no such idea, for I am sure that he will have to keep a back-seat for some years to come. He must be content, yet awhile, to be the ornament of the lawn-tennis court and the beau-ideal of afternoon tea-parties. He is like a good many more, always in a minority, and has to follow the bidding of his great masters, as the honourable member for Waimea once described them. Well, the honourable gentleman told us that he had gone up through the Otago Central Railway country at his own expense, and had seen for himself that the money intended to be spent on the Otago Central would be money properly spent; but that he certainly objected to a penny being spent for the Hokitika-Greymouth Railway, which runs through a country that he has never seen. Where does the honourable gentleman show his fairness? I asked him to explain why he thought the expenditure would not be justifiable, but he only said that he had been told so-and-so. Now, the honourable gentleman ought to know that hearsay evidence is generally regarded as no evidence at all. If he had only asked any impartial

he would have got a very favourable opinion of that line. If the honourable gentleman would only visit the district—and I should be very glad to welcome him there—he would see that the country possessed not only many natural beauties, scenery which is unsurpassed in the world, but also gold and mineral resources in greater profusion than they are to be found in any other district in New Zealand.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No rabbits?

Mr. BEVAN.—No rabbits, I am proud to say; but plenty of honest and daring men, not afraid to carve out their destinies in the forests, without even a road or a railway to help them. I notice that all the Opposition members oppose anything being given to a Government supporter. They seem to think that if they could only get such things knocked out of the estimates they would be happy. My honourable friend on my right, the member for Franklin North, spoke in the same way. He is a very good fellow in his every-day affairs, and is distinguished by a very remarkable laugh. It has been said of him that it may be heard from Onehunga to Auckland—I do not know how many miles that is; but when I heard his speech the other night, in his jerky, disjointed, and incoherent style, I wondered where was the beginning of it, and where the end, and with what it was padded out; and I came to the conclusion that he talked about nothing, for there was nothing in it. He talks upon every subject that comes before the House. He is the political Mentor of the House: and so it is that there are some men in this world who think themselves perfect lexicons of knowledge, and there are many of them who, like lexicons, though they may be gilt-edged, still are very often bound up in calf. I next come to the honourable member for Geraldine. He has heard of me before, and I have heard of him. When I heard the honourable gentleman this morning protesting against the unseemly hour at which the business was being carried on, protesting in the most despondent way at the course we were pursuing, I really thought it was time to send for a physician for him—he spoke in such a despondent manner that I feared there must be something really wrong with him; but when the matter came to a division, and he was not allowed to go home, he rose to the occasion and delivered a most eloquent speech, almost in the grey light of the morning, and lasting for fully two hours. It was a most bitter speech. There was nothing else in it but grave imputations levelled against the Colonial Treasurer. All sorts of charges and covert insinuations were hurled against that honourable gentleman in a manner which I thought was wholly unjustifiable, and certainly, I thought, not manly. The honourable gentleman's history as a politician is well known in this colony. How has he immortalized his name? He has never immortalized it as the Colonial Treasurer has done. He has never proved himself a friend to the people. When he held a portfolio as Minister of Mines what did he do for the people on the West Coast? Was there a man among the mining community there who had one word to say in his favour? No, not one. Was there any body of miners brought together at any time who, if you mentioned his name to them, did not receive it with disfavour? From what cause was that? The cause was the neglect of the position which he held, and the want of that interest in the industry which he, of all men, should have displayed. That is the position which he has occupied on the west coast of the other Island. In 1876 I happened to be in Christchurch, and saw in a shop-window there a magnificent presentation to the honourable gentleman. He was then the idol of Canterbury, and I only wished, as I saw that presentation, that it was made of gold, for then it would have been far more acceptable to him. He was, as I have said, the idol of the people there in those days. But what is he in 1886? His name is a political reproach. He is politically execrated, and no man has been oftener caricatured than he has in that large and wealthy district. I assert that the attitude which he assumed this morning towards the Government was not such as one who once held the position of a Minister should have taken up. It was not right by covert insinuation and unjustifiable assertion to cast imputations upon a gentleman who occupies the position of Colonial Treasurer—a gentleman who has spent a quarter of a century in the service of his country, a gentleman who has done so much for New Zealand, a gentleman who has raised us and our country to the high position which we now occupy. I say that to cast such reflections was unbecoming and unmanly on the part of the honourable member for Geraldine. It is time that every member of this House who has any manly feeling should rise and denounce such conduct as that, and declare that an end shall be put to the unworthy manner in which that honourable member takes upon himself sometimes to speak. I remember an occasion when the honourable gentleman came to my district, and when he was looking at a magnificent building, of which we were naturally proud. He stood on the balcony never noticing the building at all, but observed that there was a magnificent crop of cowgrass around. His thoughts by day and his dreams by night dwelt only on the grass upon which the herds and flocks of the plains, which so rejoice his eyes, feed. I would remind the honourable gentleman of the results of some of his administration. I would remind him of a little sale of land that took place in the West Wanganui district, where ninety thousand acres were sold for £10,000. That was only half a crown an acre for eighty thousand acres, but, as it was a wholesale transaction, ten thousand acres extra were thrown in. That land contains gold, coal, and other minerals; and yet the Government of which the honourable gentleman was a member let it go for that price! That happened in 1883.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—You do not know much about it.

Mr. BEVAN.—Possibly my honourable friend is interested in the matter—perhaps he was the

purchaser of it. Then, we had the sale to the Wallsend Company of 150 acres at £5 an acre, making £750, when it was really worth £7,500. That was part of the administration of which the honourable gentleman is so proud. Then, again, we have the case of the Brunner Township, leased for £50 a year—a township of 1,250 acres, an honourable gentleman near me tells me. Certain poor men have been put to reside on that land, and they have to pay taxation for it, and they pay rent for it; and now, I ask, how much is received for that land? I presume that fully ten times its natural rental is received for it. Some men think that that honourable gentleman ought to be placed on the Government benches again; some men think that he has a claim on the gratitude of the country. But I deny that altogether, and every honourable member who has the interest of the country at heart will deny it, and the whole people themselves will deny it. He was the Minister of Lands, to whom we had a right to look for some explanation of these transactions, but he has never given any; but I say that there are many papers which might be called for and laid on the table of the House which would throw a curious light on the administration of the Lands Department when the honourable gentleman was at the head of it. And he is the honourable member who talks about unravelling the schedule of this Bill, and speaks in censorious terms of railways being given to political friends. Why, Sir, the political enemies of the Government are far more represented in these railways than are their friends. These are the things which I wish to bring to light, and to record in *Hansard*, and these are the things which the honourable gentleman ought to be ashamed of. Last night we heard a great deal about golden streams, and he spoke sarcastically of the Colonial Treasurer and of his desire to develop the latent wealth of those golden streams. Yes; but I would ask, what has the political life of the honourable gentleman himself been but golden streams? I would recall his mind to that, and tell him that he has never done anything to develop the golden streams which have so materially added to the wealth of this colony. He was the very last man who should have made such an attack on the Colonial Treasurer, and it displayed very bad taste on his part, particularly when he knew that the honourable gentleman whom he was attacking was not present, but had to be taken away from the House, suffering as he was. I say it showed execrable taste on the part of an honourable member who had once occupied so high a position in the management of the affairs of the country, and I can only say that I hope the day is long distant when we shall see him again occupying such a position. I have had very little experience of political life, but what I have gained teaches me that, if the Opposition in this House, banded together as they are, are to be taken as evidence of what Oppositions are in all countries, then there must be something rotten in the state of Denmark. They band together and they hang together for weal or woe. You never find them in opposition to each other. They talk about dissensions in the Cabinet; but you do not find any amongst themselves, for they have a purpose to gain—they unite together and they determine that they will gain it by fair means or by foul. If I may use a term which is now pretty well known in this House, I might designate them as the political "Agnews" of the Treasury benches! And now a word or two with regard to the honourable member for Akaroa. I was pained last night when I heard the way in which he spoke of the Colonial Treasurer. There is one thing I should like to say a few words about. My honourable friend the Colonial Treasurer sometimes does not hear very well what has fallen from honourable gentlemen, and it is only right that we should give him a little latitude in that respect; but I was pained indeed to hear an old and experienced politician like the honourable member for Akaroa speak as that honourable gentleman did of the Colonial Treasurer, as if he would not take a seat in the Cabinet of which the Treasurer was a member. And what for? Does that honourable gentleman disgrace a seat in a Cabinet? I say, No. He is an ornament to that position and to the country. That is my opinion of the honourable gentleman; and I say that he and his colleagues are honourable men, who are prepared to do their duty honestly and faithfully. As a young member of this House I do not often speak, but I hope I shall be listened to, and I say now that I was pained that the honourable member for Akaroa should have done as he did last night. I say it is no disgrace to sit with the Colonial Treasurer in the Cabinet. He is a master-mind—he has the genius to conceive and the ability to perform; and I say we should rise as a House and set our face against such a statement as that it would be a disgrace to sit in a Cabinet with the honourable gentleman. And now I come to the honourable member for Auckland East, who treated the House to one of those eloquent, pathetic, and old stock speeches for which he has become so celebrated in this House. I have heard them so often that I could almost repeat them word for word. The honourable gentleman's speech last night consisted of very old bones hashed up again for our delectation! Dear me! the suffering youths, the unborn millions, the trodden-down serfs, the people who have done no harm, and all that sort of—shall I call it claptrap? Yes, if it be parliamentary, I will call it political claptrap, for I can find no fitter word for it. When one hears that honourable gentleman speak, with all his noble sentiments, with his eloquent periods, and his pathetic appeals, it almost brings the tears to one's eyes. But what has he done? He is always talking about distinctive titles. He bears one himself: why does he not drop his distinctive title? No one forces him to keep it. The chances of fortune have made that man; he has been exalted by his Sovereign and been head of the State; and has he not received

from the State full recompense for his works? Has he been like any other members here doing our duty to our country, who landed on these shores in the early days to work out its destinies and try to make a living for ourselves? Has he not been petted, riding in carriages on silken cushions? And yet he comes here and lectures us in the way he has done! I say that had I this morning had my way the honourable gentleman should have made his speech or else have gone home to his bed. Let me tell him that, with all his eloquence, he has one little piece of effeminacy, which prevents him from making a speech until the gallery of the House is crowded. With pride I may say to him that I am a follower of the present Government, which does its duty to New Zealand. No man had greater reverence or respect for that honourable gentleman than I had when I entered this House; but I soon found him out, with his intrigue and button-holing of members of this House, and the covert manner in which certain things were attempted to be done in order to cajole the House from time to time. I felt satisfied there was a good deal underlying all that—bitterness, dissatisfaction, and disappointment, and, if I might be permitted to use the term, lust of office. I would say, too, in conclusion, that as long as I have a seat in this House I will set my face against any attempt at party intrigues, and, though I stood alone on this floor, I would express myself again in the way that I have expressed myself to-night. But I have still a few words more to say, in conclusion; I have a few lines written out here which I will read, as they apply so much to the honourable member for Wakatipu. His disposition, his style, his manner, all remind me of the famous Ingoldsby legend in which the following lines appear:—

In holy anger and pious grief
He solemnly cursed that rascally thief:
He cursed him at board, he cursed him in bed,
From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head;
He cursed him in sleeping—that every night
He should dream of the devil and wake in a fright;
He cursed him in eating, he cursed him in drinking;
He cursed him in coughing, in sneezing, in winking;
He cursed him in sitting, in standing, in lying;
He cursed him in walking, in riding, in flying;
He cursed him in living, he cursed him in dying.
Never was heard such a terrible curse.
But what gave rise
To no little surprise,
Nobody seemed one penny the worse.

Mr. HATCH.—It was scarcely my intention this evening to make any remarks; but this whole debate has gone over such an immense amount of ground, and the few remarks which have fallen from the honourable member who has just sat down, moreover, almost call for correction. I would just suggest to him that, when he gives us such an oration as that which we have listened to to-night, and with the greatest pleasure, he should try to be a little more correct in future. I regret very much that honourable gentlemen who come from the West Coast sometimes look so slightingly on the work done in the South. He will allow me to correct his statement when he said that the railways in the South were working at a considerable loss—at any rate, if not at a loss, at a very much lower rate of interest on the working expenses than most of the other lines in the colony. Now, if he will look at the Public Works Statement, which we are here to discuss, he will see that, while the Greymouth line pays £5 9s. 3d. per cent., the best of any line in the colony, the southern lines are paying a fair proportion as compared with that. It must be remembered, however, that this is a short line and can scarcely be called a railway in the ordinary acceptation of the word, for it is really a connecting-line for bringing coal to the border. The second-best-paying line is that of Napier, about which we have already heard from the honourable member for that district. This pays £4 18s. 9d. per cent.; and the third-best is the Westport line, which pays £3 19s. 2d.—another coast line; next the Hurunui-Bluff, a southern line which really returns two-thirds of the whole revenue derived from the railways in the colony at the present time. A very few remarks will suffice to satisfy me this evening. I was in hopes, when the debate commenced, that we were going to rise to something more than the level of an ordinary vestry in the Old Country. I was sorry to hear the honourable gentleman who has just sat down throwing off a considerable amount of thunder and—allow me to suggest—mud about various honourable members, one after the other, just in the same way as the eruption of mud on a recent occasion. It seems to me that bringing up these recriminations in the way that we do is nothing but throwing mud on the colony to a greater extent than it deserves. It would be interesting to look at the progress of other countries in connection with the railway system. My ideas on this subject are like those of many others. The railway system of transit that we have has reduced the difficulties that the country settlers have to contend with in getting their goods to market. The roads will never suffice for this purpose. There has been a good deal said to-night about the desirableness of opening up the land. But the opening-up of land is utterly useless without constructing railways to carry the produce after the land is settled. Honourable members will find that the present rates of railway carriage are just about one-sixth of what they were about thirty years ago for carrying goods to market. Will honourable members say that this has not been a saving, and a benefit to the community at large? Has it not reduced the price of commodities to the general public—a reduction that we could look for in no other way? I do not intend to go into it far, but there are one or two remarks that have been made in reference to railway management which I should like to refer to. The remarks of the honourable member for Auckland East were drifting to a matter which is now before a Committee. His remarks, and those of the honourable member for Hokonui, seemed to infer that we should carry everything and everybody for nothing. I am not one of those who think that such a system ought to be adopted. We cannot afford it. It would lead to fresh taxation, and nobody would be satis-

sd. There was something said by the honourable member for Wakatipu about the establishment of Boards. He spoke particularly about this, and some members are evidently inclined to think that these Boards are a direct way of doing the business of the country. I am, however, not inclined to think that the Boards will do much good. The Minister for Public Works, when he saw that the House was not in favour of this proposal, retired from the position taken up, and the matter is now in the same position as it was in before. If the Government would send for an expert from Home to manage the railways, the same as has been done by Victoria, I would go with them. But I think a Board otherwise constituted would only increase the expense of traffic, would increase the rates that we should have to pay, and would be to the discomfort of the whole community. There is a great deal to be said in the way of saving expenditure, and that is a matter which the Minister for Public Works and myself do not generally agree upon; and—though I do not wish for a moment to anticipate the report of the Committee which is now inquiring into the system proposed by Mr. Vaile—looking at the length of time that has been taken by this Committee with reference to this particular system, I regret very much that they have been prevented to a large extent from going into the question of the general management of railways. I am confident that a large saving may be pointed out, from first to last, in the working of the lines—or, more correctly, in the management of the whole department. By this we should be able to reduce the rates of fares and the rates of goods. I shall take the opportunity, when that report comes up, if that Committee cannot go into these particulars—which I am afraid they will not be able to do—of asking some pertinent questions of the Minister for Public Works, which will perhaps enable us to see the cost of general management and assistant management, and Traffic Managers, and Inspectors, and agents—there are so many of them that it is absolutely impossible to know where their work is. And if you go to the lowest man you have to go, step by step, to the highest one in order to find out the position. This is the way our money is spent; and there is so much to do that we are not able to get a reduction in freights and carriage until a radical reform is worked in the conduct and supervision of the lines of the colony. I can point out many instances of the most ridiculous waste of money and time that has taken place in connection with the most paltry alterations at small stations, which have come under my notice. There is another matter which I should like to point to in connection with the public works of the colony, and that is, that the railways should be used to a larger extent than they are with a view to assisting to keep in order the roads, which are their natural feeders. I could read letters here from our own County Council, which is the largest and—I may perhaps be pardoned for saying—perhaps the best conducted in New Zealand, showing that they suffer extremely in connection with the high rates for haulage of metal and gravel which is required to keep up the roads for feeding the railways. That is a point that is never looked after by the department: but it seems as though the department must grab up every penny, regardless of other consequences. I have, with other gentlemen, waited upon the Minister for Public Works and represented this matter to him. In that district, years ago we could get material carried—that is, ballasting contracts—for 1s. 3d. per yard; but the unfortunate people down there, who have to be taxed to keep up their own roads—they are not like the people on the West Coast, whose members are always begging money for roads and water-races, and so on, but they have to collect the money themselves—have to pay 6s. 6d. for the haulage of gravel and metal for the repair of their roads for a distance of twenty-eight or thirty miles. I say, so far as the department is concerned, that is a perfect disgrace. There are one or two remarks I should like to make in connection with the amendment before the House, and which amendment, I may say, from the manner in which it was brought forward, I cannot see my way to support. The amendment was not a new thing to me. I had heard of it before, although it only came up yesterday, when it came up much to my disgust. I say that, because I regret exceedingly that the Government, after telling us that they would push on the business, were so obstinate as not to go on with it on Saturday morning. If they had continued sitting on Saturday morning we should have been doing business in the ordinary way this week; but, instead of that, we have been kept here till late in the morning, and have been vomiting out mud on the Tarawera principle. The honourable gentleman who brought this forward has not acted as he ought to have done by the Government, which has dealt so leniently with him. The fact is that he has got every single thing he asked for, and more; while the unfortunate people of Invercargill, which is a much more important place, being the chief town in the Southland District, have had to put up with a paltry amount, which amount I know the honourable gentleman was glad of, because, I understand, it will take the line to Oteramika, close to that honourable gentleman's property. Under these circumstances I think he has nothing to grumble at. If he wants this additional sum for the Seaward Bush line, why does he not propose to take it from the Edendale line? He does not do that, because that line suits him too; but he proposes to take it from other districts. The honourable gentleman writes a letter to the district asking them to assist him and me to get the Seaward Bush line. I think, if he really intends to work fairly, that when the schedule comes down he should be prepared to divide the amounts for the Fortrose and the Seaward Bush lines. I think that would be fairer than taking this amount from the Tophouse line. There is £20,000 for the Seaward Bush line and £40,000 for the Fortrose line, and I think he

should say, "We will divide it, and you shall have £30,000 for the Seaward Bush line." That would be better than taking the whole from some other place in order to give £10,000 to the Seaward Bush line. The honourable gentleman throws an important part of this business upon the honourable member for Awarua, and recommends him to look after it. In his letter to the Committee at Fortrose, dated the 17th June, he says,—

"Your copy of resolutions carried at public meeting held at Fortrose on the 3rd instant, *re* the Seaward Bush Railway, duly to hand. I have paused in reply, in consequence of advice of another meeting to be held in favour of the Edendale-Fortrose line. The result of this latter meeting and a largely-signed petition in favour of the last-mentioned railway I have now received. The Seaward Bush Railway is within the Awarua electorate, and it is Mr. Joyce's privilege to move in this matter; and the attitude I take is, while not acting in any way against the Seaward Bush, to guard against any action which might injuriously affect the Edendale-Fortrose. In my opinion any attempt to interfere at present with the proposed allocations for these works would be unwise. Mr. Joyce and myself, indeed all the Southland members, agree with this opinion."

Two letters were also read from myself, the second being to the following effect:—

"Your favour to hand; and your railway business has my best attention. You should have pushed the matter when the Premier was your way. Invercargill and the representatives for the South generally have always been for present ideas. Have you a distinct promise from your member, to whom you refer me, that he will favour this as against the other line in progress?"

He is perfectly right himself to adopt his plan: that is looking out for himself. I shall not trouble the House with a report of the whole of this meeting. Of course, people at meetings sometimes say a great deal more than they ought to say. The only thing I may say is this: that, while I have to thank the honourable member for suggesting that we should get £10,000 more for the Seaward Bush Railway, it really is not enough; and it is "too thin," as I have heard a good many honourable members say, for a member to think of trying to upset the whole business of the country, and delay the business of the country as we have done with a useless debate, which it was almost admitted, from the first, must come to nothing, in order to get a matter of £10,000 for his own district, especially when that might as easily have been done if he would have agreed to the votes for the Edendale and Fortrose lines being divided.

Mr. DODSON.—One of the Opposition, having to speak after the honourable member for Hokitika, would be sorely tempted to reply to that honourable gentleman's speech. I might have done so some years, say thirty years, ago; but age has proved to me that a speech which contains nothing but fulsome flattery of friends and reckless abuse of opponents is a speech that can do no good in this House, and that requires no reply, and that it is a speech that is more likely to do injury than good to the honourable gentleman himself. That any member of this House has a right to address the House in any becoming language that may to him seem proper is, I suppose, a thing which no one but the honourable member for Hokitika would attempt to dispute; and his assertions will not deter me nor, I suppose, any other member who chooses to speak from speaking, or, in doing so, from taking an independent course. As the motion has been made one of want of confidence, I will, for a short period, travel outside the exact lines of the motion, and refer to one or two reasons why I am on the Opposition side. I may say before proceeding, that I have confidence in several of the individual members of the Government—I believe they are actuated by good intentions; but as long as the Colonial Treasurer sits on those benches I frankly acknowledge that I shall have no confidence in any Government of which he forms a part. In making this plain statement, I do so without personal feeling against the honourable gentleman. We have never crossed each other's paths. I have never had anything from him but what might be termed courteous and gentlemanly treatment; and it is merely his political career that has guided me into the opposition I have offered to the Government—an opposition that, I think, will continue for a considerable time. The Treasurer began his speech last night in the usual way with him. He said, "There have been two speeches—one a big one, the other a little one." The big one, of course, was delivered by one of his friends; the little one by an opponent. Well, I would say there were two speeches last night—one a big one, the other a little one, and both were on one side: the one was the speech of the Premier, and the other the speech delivered by the Treasurer. I am sorry I did not hear the Premier's speech. I have only read the report in the newspapers; but from what I have read, and from all I have heard of it, it was a speech that did that honourable gentleman credit, and that did credit to this House, and credit to the colony, both in the matter and the manner of it. But what can we say of the other speech—that of the Treasurer? What was its tone and sentiment—to pass over the fact that it was diametrically opposed to the speech of the Premier in policy, that there was no agreement between them? Wherever the Treasurer touched on a line of policy it was utterly different from the policy which was proposed by the Premier. But, leaving that aside, what was its tone? It was singularly querulous and ill-natured, and what one would almost suppose a speech of a disappointed man. And there was another thing that struck me, and that was the patronizing manner in which the Treasurer treated the members of this House, and in which, in fact, he treated the colony. This feature is frequently observable in his speeches, and in the speech of last night we had a very good specimen of it. The part I refer to was this: He

Mr. Dodson

said, in reply to the honourable member for Egmont, that he had returned to this colony on account of the condition into which that honourable member had driven it, or words to that effect. Well, it would be a very simple matter to conjure up a very pretty picture of the honourable gentleman in London, when he discovered that New Zealand was drifting so much to the bad, that we were all going wrong, and that it was necessary he should leave his pursuits in the Old Country—leave the Stock Exchange and the chairmanship of companies in which he was so ornamental; that he should leave all these things, take his carpetbag in hand, and come to rescue us out of the overwhelming difficulties into which we were drifting. Then, he came out here; and what were the first words he said, after he got into power and discovered the financial position of of the colony? He told us that the finances of the colony were sufficiently elastic to satisfy the most exacting Treasurer. If that was the state of the colony then, his statement last night, that he returned to set our finances right, must have been wrong, for there was nothing to set right. Certainly one or other of his statements must be wrong. The main difference in the speeches made by the Premier and the Treasurer last evening consisted in distinctly opposite proposals—namely, borrowing and no borrowing. Those were, probably, the most distinctive features in the two speeches. The Premier said, and, I believe, honestly, that he wished to bring the borrowing to an end. In that I join heartily with him, and would join with him or with any one else in an endeavour to shape a course that will lead to finality in the borrowing of the colony; but I cannot join with him when he says that is to be brought about in two or three years. I cannot think he himself could mean that. Probably what he meant was that we should begin to do it in two or three years. I am as sure of this as of anything I can be certain of: that the time will come when we shall be unable to borrow; and we had better anticipate that time by shaping our course accordingly than have to deal with it when it is forced upon us—when we have drifted into such a state as will probably lead to the bankruptcy of the colony, or the bankruptcy of its inhabitants, which would be very nearly the same thing. Probably being somewhat opposed to borrowing ought to lead us to the idea that we should not now begin new works; and, as there is one new work in the schedule which refers to my district, and which is also assailed by the amendment, I would like to refer shortly to that line—the one from Blenheim to Tophouse. That line, when the Midland Railway is built, will be a necessity—it will be absolutely necessary as a feeder; and, as a means of completing the system of railways, that line should be completed. But I never thought, and do not think now, that there is any immediate necessity for its construction. My district is no better off than other districts, and we have a right to every consideration so far as the appropriation and spending of public money is concerned. But, knowing all this, and also the feelings of my constituents, I say that we do not wish, simply for the sake of money being spent in our midst, that that line should be commenced until it is absolutely required and necessary. It is not necessary until the Midland line touches Tophouse. Therefore I am quite willing that the money set apart here for the Blenheim-Tophouse Railway should be devoted to other railways in the country that have been begun, that have already had large sums of money spent on them, and that cannot be taken to any paying point without further expenditure. This proposed allocation in the amendment therefore meets entirely with my approval. I would much sooner see the £25,000 put down for the Awatere line expended than see this other and larger amount spent on the Blenheim-Tophouse line. The proposed vote for the Awatere Railway would carry the line to a paying point, and would open up land of very great richness. The line would then be payable, and would be useful to the district and the colony. The Awatere line was begun in 1881. A small contract was also let in 1883. In 1882 £90,000 was put on the Three-million Loan schedule for its completion, but, out of that large sum, the contracts let up to the present time are for something less than £18,000. It was let before the present Minister for Public Works came into office. I do not blame the honourable gentleman for the slow progress that has been made with this particular contract. The contract was a peculiar one, and it was necessary to show some indulgence to the contractors, who had to contend with unforeseen difficulties. The Minister for Public Works has been indulgent and lenient to them, and has extended the time for the completion; but that is no reason why other portions of that line should not be let. In 1882 the then Minister for Public Works said it was a line that, when completed, would be a valuable line, even without forming any portion of the East Coast line. The honourable gentleman, in 1884, also said that the line would be pushed on to completion; but he has not let a single contract. All the money spent up to this time has been lying idle, and the railway is of no use to the country in its present state. Common prudence would point to the necessity of completing this line: and it is only one of many others in the colony. Rather than undertake new lines the uncompleted lines should be finished and put into a perfect state. Finish those we have, and then take up the other ones that are necessary, and run them on quickly. There have been several complaints in the House against beginning new works, but I am only with those honourable members in a limited sense. There will always be new works cropping up. As new settlements are formed they will require roads, bridges, and railways; and the colony will have to undertake those new works. Before leaving the Awatere Railway, I should like to refer to a

remark made by the Premier last evening as to the reason why it has not been pushed on. I understood him to say that if the increased amount were put down for the work it would be done in the interest of one large landowner —the owner of Cheviot. It would be nothing of the kind. It would not go within a hundred miles of that estate. It is evident, therefore, that the honourable gentleman was speaking of a line he knew nothing about when he made that remark. I now wish to refer, shortly, to the question of Native affairs. The Native Minister is not one of those gentlemen to whom I have any objection as occupying those benches. He has conducted the Native affairs of this colony with prudence, and justice, and fairness; but, at the same time, his policy would be of no use and could not be carried out but for the more vigorous policy of his predecessor (Mr. Bryce). That policy, at the time it was initiated, was the proper one for the country. I was astonished to hear the Treasurer's sneers last night about Parihaka and "the white horse." The Treasurer had no right to speak in that way. The late Native Minister accomplished good work at Parihaka, and prepared the way for the mild policy which is being pursued by the present Native Minister. Had he remained in office he would also have seen it necessary to pursue the same policy as has been pursued by the present Minister. We can afford to be merciful now, because we have mastered the Natives; but we could not be masters while Te Whiti, with his thousand warriors, were herding together at Parihaka. I do not like to say anything personal, but I am strongly tempted to do so on account of the conceited way in which the Treasurer speaks in this House. He is not the prophet he sets himself up to be. We were told that he took credit for his foresight in forecasting the rise in the price of wool. He made a happy shot that time; but I am not sure that his prophetic vision is always good. If it were, with his business abilities and with the predilections of his race, we should not have him now in this colony; but he would be in a more favoured country. I was rather pained — and no doubt the House also was — at the comparison he drew between himself and the honourable member for Akaroa. He has mistaken the honourable gentleman. No honourable member who knows the honourable member for Akaroa would suppose that he had in his mind, when he spoke of being a colonist, any idea as to the financial position of the Treasurer as compared with his own. The honourable member for Akaroa does not care a pin whether a man's income is a hundred pounds or ten thousand. It is exactly the same to him whether a man is in possession of a large income or a small one. And it was wrong of the Treasurer to say that the honourable member for Akaroa had such an idea as that in view, when he was reminding him that he — the honourable member for Akaroa — occupied a different position from himself. But what are the facts? Is not the honourable member for Akaroa a colonist that every one of us has a right to be proud of; a colonist in every sense of the word; one who has spent his life working in the colony, and who will probably remain here for the rest of his days? Is the Colonial Treasurer a colonist in that sense of the word? Let him leave those benches, and what guarantee have we that he would be with us for a month? He will go to some other country to save it from troubles and difficulties, as he has saved this. We were promised many things—I am not going to refer to his promise to make the colony progress "by leaps and bounds," but he promised much that has not come about. Those of us who knew the colony could see what was coming, and could see that it was not in the power of any Treasurer or of any Government to bring back prosperity, which had disappeared for a time. It was only downright conceit, and want of knowledge of his real abilities and the real facts, that caused him to say he could restore the prosperity he promised us. The Treasurer ventured to say that he will be remembered as long as the honourable member for Akaroa will be. Yes, it is beyond all question that he will be remembered. Our children and grandchildren will remember him, and his so-called glorious public works policy. I have denied from the first, and I deny now, that the policy of public works which the honourable gentleman thrust on the colony has done us any good. It has left a burden that will oppress us for years to come. Sir, it has left us in this position: that we must continue to borrow. We cannot stop. There is no use in thinking that we can taper off—suddenly, at all events. We must continue: that is the position in which this public works policy has left us. Another thing I have to complain of: the reason I think his continued occupancy of those benches is a calamity is that his policy is causing every local body and every man out of work in the colony to come to the Government to supply their wants. Day after day, month after month, and year after year is the feeling growing that the General Government should find the money to meet every want, every requirement, of every body and every individual in the colony. There is not a man out of work who does not instantly apply to the Government. Where is the independence, the pride, the self-reliance, which they had a few years ago? It is all gone; and now, when there are a few men out of work, they come rushing to the great Jove, who is to give them all they want—they come to the Government and ask them to make a dole to them. They look for work, for money, and the supply of every conceivable requirement, instead of relying — as the colonists long ago did rely—upon their own exertions, their own carefulness, for their advancement. These are the things I fear; and that is the fear that has long possessed me as to the results of the Colonial Treasurer's policy. Personally I have no feeling whatever against him. It is only as Treasurer in charge of the finance of the colony, as one who, in his very

nature and instincts, is the embodiment of extravagance and recklessness, that I am against him. I am very glad to see that the Premier has this session, much more than last, put down his foot and made his personality and influence felt, and I hope the honourable gentleman will continue to do so. But, at the same time, as long as the present Treasurer has charge of our money so long shall I fear for the colony and our affairs. Another thing in his speech last night struck me as being peculiar—we are getting a good deal used to it, and very tired of it. He has lately undertaken to give little fanciful sketches; and last evening we had a lecture on truthfulness. We were told that it was not always desirable to speak the truth, and that there were a number of elderly ladies who ran about from house to house speaking the truth. The honourable gentleman seemed very happy in showing this, so much so that I thought he might indulge a little himself sometimes in this way. But are we not to speak truths to each other? Are we to speak untruths? Are we doing wrong in speaking truthfully of our own affairs? The honourable gentleman says that in thus speaking the truth we run down the colony and put its position in a false light. But he knows quite well that nothing of the kind can do us any harm. No one knows it better. And I maintain this: that we have a right to tell the whole world what our position really is. The honourable gentleman said last night that it was not always desirable to mention our intention of having another loan—that we have quite enough to do with the present. I think that any one who reads between the lines of what the honourable gentleman said will see that some hint was conveyed that we ought to be cautious about speaking of future loans. That is what it amounts to, if it means anything at all. And I am very glad indeed that an intimation has been conveyed to the honourable gentleman, and hope he will act upon it, and that it will make him anxious about borrowing for unnecessary works. I never had much confidence in the honourable gentleman, but I can remember that, when he spoke at Ashburton in 1884—this was before he joined the Government—he said he could see his way to make enormous savings, and particularly that there was one branch of our expenditure—education—in which he could save £100,000 and still give a good system. Now, what was the meaning of that? It showed that the honourable gentleman knew nothing of the matter, for he has not attempted to carry out his promise. He has not done anything in the way of reduction in respect to education, beyond attempts to shift the charges for buildings on the local bodies. The honourable gentleman ought to suggest some scheme to carry on our educational system at a less expense to the country. But we know he has done nothing of the kind. The moving of the amendment has placed me in a little dilemma. There are a good many in my district who may be disappointed; but I cannot help that. It will be for me to make the necessary explanation, and I have sufficient confidence in my constituents and believe they have sufficient confidence in me to allow me to take my own course in this House as long as I am a member of it.

Mr. DUNCAN.—Sir, I shall not detain the House at any great length, but it is necessary that I should say something in reply to the honourable member for Geraldine. That honourable gentleman, whenever he rises to address the House, refers to a public work in the district I represent, known as the Windsor-Livingstone Railway—a work initiated by the Hall Government, of which he was a member.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Not initiated.

Mr. DUNCAN.—Initiated, Sir, and carried out. Before I sit down I will tell the honourable gentleman more about that than ever he heard before. The honourable gentleman's speech was one which he had taken a great deal of care in preparing. What was the purport of his speech but an evident desire to cast ridicule on the Colonial Treasurer? I will follow the honourable member for Geraldine through a few of his statements. I always pay great attention to that honourable gentleman's speeches, because they are instructive generally, and very well put; and that was particularly the case last night, when he seemed to be in a bitter temper. The honourable gentleman said his Government were determined that railways constructed by them should bring in, besides working expenses, a fair percentage on the cost of their construction. The whole of the railways of the colony were classed, as it were, in one category, and one class of charges was made for the whole colony. When this is taken into account, and the way it was carried out, it will be easily seen why the railways did not pay. If the railways had been the property of a private individual, or even of a company, there would not be the present state of affairs. It is my opinion that the Government have never seriously looked into the matter of the railway tariff. They have never got themselves into the position of endeavouring to make the lines pay. This was always a feature of the management of our railways; they never made any effort to go to people to see what work they could get to do. You have always to go to the Railway Department to find what you can get work done for—you have to go to them and see what they demand, and a very short time indeed they will speak with you if you remonstrate in any way whatever. The management of the Railway Department is not what it ought to be. There are times when the traffic on the railways is at a minimum, when trucks are lying in the sun idle, and when there is plenty of work to do on which the trucks could be properly employed and earning a great deal of money. There are many kinds of work which could be done in the slack seasons of the year—carrying such things as gravel or road-metal from one place to another, building-stone, and so forth. Not only that, but it would create work at a time of the year when work is not plentiful, and this

cry of the unemployed would not be heard. It is a disgrace to New Zealand that the word "unemployed" should be heard here, because the colony is extensive enough, and the works are varied enough in character on which men might be usefully enough employed—and work for all the men in New Zealand. The next thing that took my attention was what the honourable gentleman said with regard to the north extension of railways in Canterbury. He stated another thing which was new to me, and which, I believe, was new to the House. He was alluding to the line on the East Coast, from Canterbury to Blenheim, and he said that it was determined by the honourable gentleman's Government to deal with this matter.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Perhaps the honourable gentleman will allow me to correct him with regard to the question of the Livingstone line. I find in the Public Works Statement of 1879 that line mentioned in the liabilities up to June, 1879, which was some months before we took office.

Sir R. STOUT.—But not with the branch line.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—The Livingstone line was begun before we came into office.

Mr. DUNCAN.—The next thing I will touch upon is with regard to roads and bridges. The honourable gentleman stated that he had determined that roads and bridges should no longer be made in settled districts. I would just refer him to a very short time back. I well remember that, a few years ago, a vote was taken for a bridge on the Taieri River—a vote of about £14,000. If the Taieri is not a settled district I say there is no settled district in New Zealand, because when I first came to the colony, nearly twenty-four years ago, the Taieri was a settled district then, and this bridge was built then.

Mr. TURNBULL.—It was to rebuild a bridge.

Mr. DUNCAN.—Yes. Next the honourable member for Geraldine said that the present Government were making themselves responsible for the class of immigrants they were introducing. I do not think any responsibility attaches to the Government in this matter. The honourable member for Napier said he was in some manner disgusted at the way the Government treated a gentleman who was to be sent Home as immigration agent. I think the time has passed when immigration agents should be sent Home. I never saw any good come from immigration agents. I think it is a good thing for the colony that this gentleman was not sent Home as an immigration agent. Then the member for Geraldine said the Government ought to provide that the contractors for the Midland Railway should not interfere with local labour by bringing in Chinese and coolie labour. I am not aware that this contract for the Midland Railway has ever been gone into. I do not think that any English contractor would bring out Chinese. It will be time enough, when the contract is entered into, to make a condition with reference to this; and I hope the Government will see to this matter. The honourable gentleman stated for the first time that his Government intended to take land from the large landholders in Canterbury for the construction of the line from Christchurch to Blenheim by the East Coast. I never heard that stated in the House before. He says the Government intended to take the land as the work progressed. That he was to take the land to pay for this line is a thing I never heard stated in this House before, nor have I seen it in print, and what the honourable gentleman brought that forward for to-night I cannot state positively. Now I come to the point that caused me to speak to-night. It is this Livingstone Railway-line. There is a little history about this line. At the time of, or just immediately before, the election in 1882, an honourable gentleman—Sir John Hall, the then Premier of the honourable gentleman's Government—came down and went to stay with Mr. Reid, who lives in that district, and who owns a large quantity of property through which this line passes. Sir John Hall stayed with Mr. Reid for a few days, and then he proposed this line should be gone on with at once. The working-men had only to vote for Mr. John Reid at the coming elections, and the line would have been an accomplished fact in a very short time. Mr. Reid was to become the representative of Waitaki in this House—that was the condition. Then I thought this: that if the Premier could come down in this way to get support for a candidate whom he wished to go into the House, there must be something radically wrong. I talked the matter over with the people there, and they came to the determination that somebody should oppose this gentleman. It was arranged that I should; and, of course, I was successful. That was the initiation of this line; because you will find that it first appeared in the schedule to the Three-million Loan Act of 1882. You will find it there, scheduled for £22,000. Now, I would like to know who put it into the schedule. Was it the member for Auckland East who put it into the Three-million Loan Act of 1882? Was it the honourable member for Akaroa? Was it not the honourable gentleman's Government that said that £22,000 was to be put down? I believe it was: not because I think that Government were not aware when I came up here I would not be a supporter of theirs. You will find that at the end of 1883 there were liabilities on account of that line to the extent of £5,000, whereas the expenditure upon that line up to date has been £34,000. I will go a little further with reference to the line. When it was first started it was strongly opposed by the members of the County Council, of which I was one at that time. We sent a remonstrance to the Government that before this line should be proceeded with a survey should be made of a different route altogether, together with a comparison of the two lines, and with a statement as to what country each line would serve locally, and therefore which would be best for the colony, and which would

cost the least. That remonstrance was ignored by the Government of the day, of which the honourable member for Geraldine was one, instead of consulting the local body and letting matters be inquired into, to see what was best; and, in spite of it, the outcome of the matter is that £34,000 is spent. And what have we got for it? Not a penny. Not one single mile of line is open for traffic at the present time, and further expenditure is necessary to make it available. Now, I would like the honourable member for Geraldine, when he gets up to attack anybody, to see that he has some solid grounds to go upon. I admire the honourable member in some ways, though I am speaking hard of him at this time; but I say that he should have more solid grounds to go upon than he has in this case, in condemning other people for his own blunders and wasteful expenditure.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—You are all wrong about it.

Mr. DUNCAN.—If I am wrong, I am wrong on the right side. The honourable gentleman can turn up the Loan Bill, or any other honourable member can do so, and he will see for himself that I am quite right. I am not quite so hard upon the honourable gentleman as I ought to be. He said that this was one of the lines that were least objectionable—that was the way he put it; and yet all the Government want to do is to make useful a line on which a good deal of money has been spent without any result. The line goes for the most part through the land of the gentleman who was expected to come up here to support the Government; and they actually gave him £10 per acre for the land required for the railway, when that land would not have brought £3 per acre in the market. I hope the honourable gentleman will correct me in this matter if he can; but I know that he cannot say anything different from what I am saying if he speaks what is true. I hope this line will in future occupy a different position in honourable members' minds. We endeavoured at the time I speak of to get the line started from Maheno, and to go up through the Kakanui Flat. That would have opened some good country, and would bring the line to this point just as well as this present line would do, and, being far distant from any other line, it would be of some service to the colony and the district; whereas there is very little chance of it being carried where it will open up the land by the present route. I think honourable members of the Opposition must be hard-pressed for a subject of attack on the Minister for Public Works when this is the only line in connection with which he is charged with wrong-doing. I have not spoken one word to the Minister about the line, but I hope that, if he speaks, he will tell the House what caused the contract to be let. I believe it was done because, unless that honourable member had let that contract, the whole line would have been useless, and because it would absorb some of the unemployed who were calling out for work. If this is a sample of what we hear in condemnation of Ministers, then we cannot but feel that the Opposition have but very little to say against them. Then, I have just a word to say in reference to the remark about the absence of party-lines at the present moment. The honourable member for Geraldine went on to say everything possible and impossible about the Colonial Treasurer, and called him everything that was vicious and bad, which I will not repeat; and also says there is one party represented by the Colonial Treasurer and another party by the Premier on those benches. Now, if I were called upon to class the honourable member for Geraldine, I should not class him with the Premier—I should be ashamed to do so; but I should class him with the Colonial Treasurer. You must recollect that the honourable member for Geraldine was at the head of affairs in Canterbury, and that he gridironed Canterbury, and enabled men to obtain enormous estates. That was the work of the honourable gentleman. Therefore, if he is to be classified with anybody, he must be classified with the Colonial Treasurer. He is certainly a Conservative, a land-monopolist, and has nothing in common with the Premier, but certainly he is a Conservative in this colony. The Premier I look upon as the representative of the Liberal party, and I am not ashamed to say that I am a member of that party. I have known the Premier for a very long time, and I have admired him for a very long time, and I hope that I shall be able to support him for years to come. I do not generally speak very much, but I thought it necessary to answer the honourable member for Geraldine to-night, because this is about the third time that he has dropped upon this line, and I want to set him right, and try to make him give this sort of thing up. I should like to say a word or two on the speech of the honourable member for Wairarapa South. The bulk of that honourable gentleman's speech was a sort of wail that the good old times had gone, and that he wanted a Government in office once more under which the Wairarapa and some other parts of the North Island would get what they desired. I do not wonder at this, for I remember that, a few short years ago, when the Roads and Bridges Construction Act was brought in, the two members for the Wairarapa and the then member for Manawatu (Mr. W. W. Johnston)—the Minister for Public Works—assisted in the passing of that Bill. It was well known when the Bill passed that there was about £200,000 put aside to meet applications made by Road Boards and County Councils for aid to the works carried on by them: that is to say, if a county found one-third of the money necessary, they could apply for the other two-thirds. As soon as the Bill passed, the three honourable gentlemen whom I have mentioned by some means or another managed to get, between the three counties, nearly one-third of the whole vote. I believe they secured amongst them about £35,000. That is what the honourable member for Wairarapa wants now, and that is why he is so anxious to see members from his side of the House on the Govern-

ment benches again. The real nature of the Act at that time was that applications were to be paid *pro ratâ* as they would come in that year, to the extent of one-third of what was applied for; so that it would be interesting to know what amount was applied for by the Wairarapa and Manawatu Counties, when they got such a large amount as they did. This was the effect of the Roads and Bridges Construction Act; and it was the action of these honourable gentlemen that roused the whole colony, so that even if the Act were mentioned anywhere south of Cook Strait it was enough to prevent the man who said a word in its favour from getting into this House. I shall vote against the amendment, although, if I saw that it went in the direction of saving further borrowing, it might have some effect upon me. As far as my district is concerned, as there is nothing new in this schedule for Waitaki, it is immaterial to me whether we borrow or not; but I should rather prefer that we did not borrow, except to carry on such works as are absolutely necessary. I know that the colony is so situated that we must have some borrowing to find employment for those amongst us who now cannot find any. I say again, as I have said before, that I abhor this system of what we call unemployed labour. In fact, I may say I abhor Government employing men in any sense of the term; because we find that when any contract is taken over from the contractor, or anything in this line has to be taken up, the Government do it, and the result is that it costs them double what it would cost any ordinary man. As a member of the Public Petitions Committee, I may say that there are very many contracts which come before the Committee from time to time. I shall not particularize any, but I wish to give my opinion to the Government regarding these contracts. We have had contracts brought under our notice that have been taken up at a certain time, and the contractor, through unforeseen circumstances, has not been able to carry them through. Then, after, perhaps, the contractor has paid 90 per cent. of the cost, the Government take the contract up at their own valuation, and in nearly every instance the contract costs them about 50 per cent. more than the first contract was taken for. The Government, therefore, have no right to undertake any business that they can let by contract or in some other way. Another thing I should like to refer to is the management of the railways; and what I wish to say is more in the nature of advice than anything else. It is not to find fault with the Minister for Public Works, because, in my opinion, he is as good a Minister as any we have yet had, if not better. I will, however, say this to him: that it is his place to go over these lines carefully, and talk to the people along them, and see what is wanted to be done, and not stop here in an office where he has a man who can do the work just as well as he can do it himself. He should be able to tell the House the prospects of all of these lines, as far as returns of revenue are concerned; and he might, for instance, go along the lines and see if something could not be done with the trucks lying idle in the slack time, and see also if engines could not be utilized. In the district I come from there are gravel-pits and coal-beds, and if he could see how the railways could be used for bringing them into use he would be doing good. If he would take my advice, and, instead of stopping in Wellington, would take the trouble of going to various places throughout the colony and seeing what could be done, I am sure he would make the railways in the South pay 1 per cent. more than they do at present. More than this, he would find out that on the main trunk line there are places where the express might very well stop where it does not stop now, and yet make up its time, for it is a very good road all the way from Dunedin to Christchurch. The Government should place themselves in the position of carriers, and try to accommodate the public as much as possible. Then they would find that the lines would pay very well. I will not detain the House any longer, but shall vote against the amendment, although, perhaps, when in Committee I may vote in a different direction.

Mr. BRUCE.—It has been said that in politics, as in Greek tragedy, it is the unexpected that happens. This is a case in point. Here we are unexpectedly launched into a no-confidence debate, and under existing conditions it is absolutely impossible to predict what may happen three days hence. These no-confidence debates are becoming every-day occurrences. When the honourable member for Mataura brought down his amendment the Premier immediately rose and took it as a vote of want of confidence in his Government. I do not blame him for so doing, but, at the same time, I do not take this, strictly considered, as a no-confidence debate. Were such the case, and if I considered that this was in reality a no-confidence motion, I should either give a vote with the Government or take no part in the division—probably the latter, and for this reason: I recognize this as a fact: that any vote of want of confidence ought to be brought down by one of the leaders of a party. It has been alleged during the course of the debate that this is "a scuffle for office." These, I believe, were the words of the honourable member for Hokonui. Now, as far as I understand the feeling of the Opposition, of which I am a member, I absolutely deny the accuracy of this statement. I do not believe that the rank and file wish to see the Government turned off those benches, and I do not believe that those honourable gentlemen who occupy the Opposition benches, and whose government for five years was a record of valuable public service, wish for a moment, as far as I know their views, to return to office. They are probably well aware that the country is not yet ripe for a change. Not being an extreme party man I am perhaps not in their confidence; but such is my opinion. The Opposition has been very much blamed in the country, and, to some extent, in this House, for not showing a firm front to the Government; but what is the reason of this?

Can any unprejudiced man who has watched the course of events during the last session deny the fact that the policy of the present Government is mainly the policy of the Opposition? They give us no point of attack: that is the reason why the Opposition has not shown a firm front to the Government. I do not wish to speak at any great length, or to introduce those personalities which, in my opinion, have marred this debate. I shall content myself with criticising a few of the statements made by previous speakers. So in this way I can give expression to some views of my own on some of the large subjects introduced into the debate. I wish, first, to take notice of the statement of the Premier last night in reference to the discussion on land. The honourable gentleman said that in the future, under certain possible conditions, the taxation on land will be largely increased. Does the honourable member know really what he was saying?

Sir R. STOUT.—I said on large landowners.

Mr. BRUCE.—The honourable member did not make that distinction.

Sir R. STOUT.—I did, certainly.

Mr. BRUCE.—I accept the honourable gentleman's statement, of course; but there are some honourable members in this House, I grieve to say, who look upon the holding of land as something in the form of a crime. I repeat the statement, although the Premier laughs. I say this in reference to this question: that land is already heavily taxed. Some members appear to forget that the property-tax is a land-tax, and at present land is taxed as heavily as it can bear. It is staggering under its burdens, and further taxation on it will react upon every member of the community, either directly or indirectly. The Premier also made references to the Manawatu Gorge line which I do not think altogether ingenuous. The honourable gentleman wished to make it appear that the construction of the Manawatu Gorge line would in reality be playing into the hands of a private company. He rather advocated the other route, by the Wairarapa. But the fact is that, when the two lines are constructed, the produce of the southern part of the Hawke's Bay Province will certainly roll in to Wellington by the Manawatu Gorge line. He wished to make it appear that he had been moving in the direction of economy, and that he had not met with general support from this House or a number of members in it. He especially alluded to the introduction of some of the clauses in those local measures, which would throw the burden of the erection of school-buildings on the school districts. Now, I have come here as an advocate of economy, and I have voted in that direction with tolerable consistency. It appears to me, however, that it would have been false economy to vote for these clauses; for the expenses connected with education would thereby be thrown on outlying districts, and it would most certainly, as I have already pointed out in this House, be a hindrance to the colonization of the country. What are the facts? The very worst or poorest of teachers are kept in the outlying districts, for one thing. If a teacher of excellence is found he or she is immediately packed off to a centre of population. I do not say this is wrong; but the fact remains that the country population suffers in that respect. The honourable gentleman also alluded to honourable members voting against him in reference to the resolution brought down by the honourable member for Ashley. Here, again, I voted with that honourable gentleman. I do not recognize in the Premier's position anything travelling in the direction of economy. I voted for that resolution because it affirmed a great principle, from my point of view. It affirms the principle that all wealth should contribute to charitable aid as it should to everything else. The principle is recognized in the property-tax. The honourable gentleman also spoke of borrowing. I should like to say a few words on this question. The question has been debated at some length during this debate. I am not going to enter into the intricacies of the question; but, at the same time, I am not one of those who are prepared to say that our borrowing policy has been a failure. It is a very large subject. I believe that a colony—a nation—is as much justified in borrowing to develop its resources as a company is, for instance, justified in borrowing to develop the the resources of a mine. But, in the one case, the case of the colony, we know that a very large portion of the money is misspent, and absolutely wasted. Now I wish to glance at the other side of the picture in reference to borrowing. I wish to say something against borrowing. It appears to me, with my comparatively-limited experience of this colony, that, whatever may be said in favour of the policy itself, it had a most demoralizing effect on the colony, and also on the floor of this House. It is for this reason that I should, if I could only see my way—which I cannot—endeavour to taper off borrowing. Will any honourable member in this House deny that in too many instances a representative is measured in his constituency not so much by his ability, by his integrity, and by his general capacity for the office, as by his ability to procure funds from the Colonial Exchequer for expenditure in the district? And it is my opinion that members who are most successful in this respect are not the best specimens of politicians. Then, the Premier made what appeared to me a most remarkable statement. He said that in two or three years we should have to cease to borrow. I wish I could believe that were possible. I believe that, under existing conditions, it is absolutely impossible. We have committed ourselves to works which will require ten millions to complete. I say it is absolutely impossible that, as the Premier has told us, in two or three years we can cease to borrow. I came down here as an advocate of a borrowing policy—a moderate borrowing policy, because I recognized the fact that the more we have borrowed the more we have wasted. I am quite prepared to support a Government that

will borrow a million a year and spend it judiciously in reproductive works. As the Premier pointed out to the House last night, it is absolutely necessary that we should borrow for the construction of railways. How, otherwise, are we to compete in the markets of the world with nations which are already provided with railways, if we do not provide these highways of commerce to run our produce to the seaboard? I am prepared to support any moderate borrowing policy for that purpose. I wish now to glance at another remark of the Premier's. He made a pathetic appeal to the honourable member for Egmont to tell him where the money was to come from for the purchase of Native lands, if it was not taken from the North Island Trunk Railway Loan. I would suggest to him that, if in Committee, as I hope will be the case, some of these railways are struck out, the money so saved might be applied to that purpose. I contend that we have no such things at present as party lines in this House. Where do they exist? If anywhere, only in the region of abstract principles. What is there to prevent the honourable member for Egmont and the Premier sitting in the same Cabinet? Nothing whatever.

Mr. FERGUS.—Land-tax.

Mr. BRUCE.—I say these are in the region of abstract principles, and I hope that his views on the land-tax will remain in the same region also. There is another question to which I wish to make a passing allusion. Several honourable members have alluded to the expenditure on the Wanganui River, also, in reality, taken out of the North Island Trunk Loan. I am quite willing to give the Government credit for any good I may see in them; but I say that this is one of the faults which mar them: that they favour too much their political supporters. I may be wrong——

An Hon. MEMBER.—Read the report.

Mr. BRUCE.—If I have not read the report I have read the Financial Statement, and I have seen those works of art, which are, I suppose, the excuse for that expenditure. I wish to protest against the abstraction of any money from the North Island Trunk Loan, because I believe, if this practice is allowed to continue, the railway will be hung up indefinitely, and the Government will have to come down to this House for another million loan, and it is questionable whether it will be granted. The Colonial Treasurer told us that this railway would be finished in three years. Two of these years have already gone, and very little headway has been made with the undertaking at all. The Premier says we prevented him from carrying it on; and I admit that we did so to the extent of £48,000.

Sir R. STOUT.—The motion of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay.

Mr. BRUCE.—That only affected it to the extent of £48,000. I now wish to allude to some remarks which have been made in reference to the Native policy of the honourable member for Waitotara during the time he was a member of the late Government. That policy has been stigmatized in this House, perhaps not in these words exactly, but at any rate in the spirit of them, as one of tyranny, one of harshness, one absolutely wanting in sympathy with the Native race. I hold an entirely different opinion. In my opinion that policy was one of strength and of wisdom, and, I believe, also one of generosity to the Native race; because I recognize this: that a policy which showed the Native race the absolute futility of armed rebellion was in reality, to them, a generous policy. It has been said by one honourable member—I think the honourable member for Auckland West—and perhaps also by the Colonial Treasurer, that the merits of the one-policeman policy now prevail. But that one-policeman policy is the natural sequence of the blow which the then Native Minister struck at Parihaka.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. BRUCE.—The honourable member says, "No." Well, I can tell him this is the opinion of those who know more of these matters than either he or I. The Colonial Treasurer also asked this question, or put it in this way to the House: "Look how easily these arrests were made the other day!" Well, we know that had it not been for the firm policy of the honourable member for Waitotara those arrests would have been impossible in the way in which they have been made. The honourable member for Waitotara saved this colony from armed rebellion.

Sir R. STOUT.—How many hundreds were arrested before that took place?

Mr. BRUCE.—Now, Sir, this question is one which evidently stirs up considerable feeling. I do not wish to rouse that feeling. I have kindly personal feelings towards every member in this House; but I wish to say this—and I speak in no uncertain tones in reference to this question, for it is probably the last time I shall refer to it: I say that, at some future time, when the history of the colony comes to be written, when the passions and prejudices of the hour have passed away and been forgotten—when that time arrives I venture to say that the policy which is identified with the name of the honourable member for Waitotara will be treated and considered as one carried out in the interests of justice and in the interests of humanity, and in the best and highest interests of a noble race, which we would fain wish to preserve, but which is, I fear, rapidly passing away. Exception was also taken during the present debate to the remarks made by the honourable member for Waitotara regarding the price of wool, our national product. He was alluded to as "a croaker." Well, I am no croaker. I have faith in the future of this colony. I do not believe that honourable members like the member for Waitotara make sufficient allowance for the enormous expansive powers of this colony. But I wish to say that that honourable gentleman was perfectly right in giving expression to his views in reference to that matter in the way in which he did. I believe that, nationally as well as individu-

ally, we should base our calculations upon our probable rather than upon our possible income. And that was, in reality, what the honourable member for Waitotara was doing in this instance. I am not going to speak at any great length, for we know the House is tired of this debate; but I just wish to say one more word in reference to what fell from the Premier last night. With that eloquence so peculiarly his own, in a speech every tone of which rung with sincerity, the honourable member indicated to this House and to this country what his policy would be; and he also told us—perhaps not in these words, but that was the purport of his remarks—that he valued his seat on those benches only for the opportunity it gave him of doing good to this country. I believe every word the honourable member uttered. I do not believe there is one member of this House who has the welfare of the colony more at heart than the Premier. We are all proud of our Premier. I speak for myself: I am proud of him, although not his political follower. I am proud of him as a fellow-countryman and as a fellow-colonist; and I would appeal to him, as one who has a great many admirers in this House and in the country, to "nail his colours to the mast" and to be true to the speech that he uttered last night. He has a great future before him—unquestionably so; he has everything—or, perhaps, almost everything—which makes a leader of men. He has broad human sympathies, as well as unquestionable ability; and I hope he will be true to that speech, and, whether he values a seat on those benches or not—I do not, myself, believe that he does value the seat there, but—it is the surest way to retain a seat on those benches to give expression to that policy which he enunciated last night. Now I have only one or two words to say in conclusion. I shall vote for this amendment. I have already said that I do not look upon it as a vote of want of confidence, or I should not vote for it. There are very few in this House who would like to see this Government go off those benches, and no one in this House expects that, in the division about to take place, the Government will be defeated. I merely wish to say that I shall vote for this amendment because it appears to me to travel in the right direction—in the direction of finishing lines already in course of formation, and of refusing to proceed with the construction of others which are not warranted in the present condition of this colony.

Mr. GORE.—Sir, I should like to answer some arguments brought forward by members in this debate, which has now been five days before the House; but I think I shall be consulting the interests of honourable members by not delaying the House. I only rise now to give my reasons for the vote I intend to give. This amendment is, apparently, one not to begin new works until our present railways are at all events brought to paying points. That I quite agree with. I believe if that principle were carried out it would be in the best interests of the colony, and save a very large sum—over £40,000 a year, I believe—of interest on money at present paid for railways under construction. It also, Sir, proposes to add £60,000 to the amount set down in the schedule for the Otago Central Railway; and that is a great inducement for any Otago member to vote for it: but I do not intend to vote for it. If this amendment were a sincere one, I think the proper time for it to have been brought forward would have been when the Bill had been committed, and when the schedule was under consideration in Committee. I think that is the proper time to bring such proposals forward, and I shall reserve my own right then to vote, when the schedule is brought before the Committee, against any new works; but at the present time I intend to vote against the amendment.

Mr. BEETHAM.—Sir, I shall follow the example of the honourable member who has last spoken, and make my remarks as brief as possible. I have waited for some time to make a few remarks on the Bill before the House, and I do not really like to see the motion passed without explaining the reason for my vote; and I may have something to say also with regard to what fell from the honourable member for Waitotara. I am not going through the whole of the financial part of this debate, because that has been, no doubt, thoroughly threshed out, and we know now what we have to expect in the year we shall soon enter upon. We know that we can have hardly any money for future appropriations; and we must act accordingly. I have myself always supported a borrowing policy; but, at the same time, I have always considered it the duty of this House to guard very zealously and very carefully against any unjust or unwarranted expenditure on unproductive works. This, I know, is the sort of statement that we very often hear in this House, and yet at the same time we find people rushing in for works they know cannot be reproductive immediately afterwards. But I maintain that, so far as I am concerned, I have never done so; and I shall not do so when it will be my privilege to vote for the extension of the railway from Mauriceville to Ekatahuna; and in a few days, when, I hope, I shall have the pleasure of voting for a sum for that line, I shall feel that I am doing my duty and voting for what will be a really reproductive work, and one in the best interests of the colony. I am glad to find that the Premier and the Ministry under him have lately become converts to the same opinion, and I think, to a certain extent, this is caused by certain visits that those honourable gentlemen have recently paid to the district which I represent. They could there see facts that were well known to me and to others who knew the district—that a very large area of country requires settlement, and that the railway works soon to be in progress would be an important factor in facilitating that settlement. It is only necessary that I should mention what has been done during a short period of time, and what can be done, in the Wairarapa East County, to show how settlement would be opened up by this railway.

The land to be offered for sale this month, in that county, will be 32,000 acres, and most of it cut up into small sections and available for small settlements. During the last two years 27,300 acres have been sold, and within the last twelve months 52,200 acres have been taken up by special settlers, and not one section is larger than 150 acres. Nearly the whole of it is bush land. That makes a total of 101,500 acres; and I think that was quite sufficient to justify me in giving the vote I shall give in cordially supporting the undertaking, and assisting in making the line as far as Eketahuna. Of course there is still another sum which I hope hereafter will be devoted to pushing on the line still farther, because it will have the effect of opening up the country still more than what I have already mentioned. The Premier called attention, the other night, to the fact that the railway from Napier to Palmerston would benefit the Wellington-Manawatu Railway—a line that is in the hands of a private company. But, although to a certain extent I go with him, and should much have preferred that the line from Wellington to Napier had been carried through the Forty-mile Bush, and that that had been the main trunk line, I must admit that there are many reasons for pushing on the Gorge line. I think the Premier should have mentioned, when using the arguments he did against the construction of the Gorge line, that this should be taken into consideration: that the traffic which will pass through that Gorge from Napier will, to a very large extent, assist the Government line. The railway to the north of Palmerston and towards Taranaki at the present time, unfortunately, is paying badly—I think only about 14s. per cent.—and the construction of the Gorge line will materially assist the traffic receipts of that part. We must bear this in mind also: that the work that has been undertaken by the Manawatu Railway Company will also assist to some extent, and, although the company will undoubtedly receive great benefit from the construction of the Government line, that the line they are now constructing will to a very great extent assist the reproductive character of the lines both to Taranaki and Napier, and eventually to Wairarapa. Well, as I have mentioned, I shall support that vote. I must also state that I am not in favour of a railway policy in contradistinction from that of making roads. If it had been in my power, at any time before the construction of the line from Masterton onwards had been fixed, to have insured that the money that has been expended on that line, and that will be expended to continue it to Woodville, would be available for roads all over the areas of Wairarapa East and West, I am convinced that much more good would have been done to the colony by the money being expended in that way than by the construction of the railway. As has been pointed out by my honourable friend and colleague the member for Wairarapa South, bush country is almost useless without roads. It is a different thing when you have to deal with plains like those of Canterbury, or in settling country like that in the Otago districts—you can there pass over many miles without making roads, though, I admit, with very great inconvenience; but bush-country, without roads, is incapable of profitable occupation. Roads must precede profitable settlement; and I think that view has always been held very strongly by the present Minister of Lands; and there is no doubt my honourable friend the member for Geraldine also held that view, and did his best to give effect to his view. A great deal has been said about the Roads and Bridges Construction Act. I may say that, as far as the present estimates are concerned, all the money that the Wairarapa will receive for road-making outside the Crown Lands Department will be £280 for the whole year; and that is given by way of assistance for keeping the road open through the Forty-mile Bush. It is possible, and more than probable, that the County of Wairarapa East will have to make a demand on the Minister for Public Works to repair damages caused by the construction of railway works through the bush, and I hope that the Minister will extend to that claim, when made, the consideration that it deserves. The honourable member for Waitaki said that the Counties of Wairarapa East and Wairarapa West obtained one-third of the £200,000 expended—alluding to the expenditure under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act. Now, these are the figures: Wairarapa East has received up to the present time—for main roads, £9,743; for Highway Board district roads, £10,590: total, £20,333. Wairarapa West has received—for main roads, £4,620; for district roads, £1,651: total for Wairarapa West, £5,671. I find, on analysing this account, that £10,590 would be returned to the Government from Wairarapa East County, and £1,651 from Wairarapa West County, and also one-fourth of the amount that had been paid in to the credit of the Main Roads Account for these two counties. The result would be that, out of the £26,004 that the Counties of Wairarapa East and West received under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act, £15,681 would approximately be repaid into the colonial chest. Total amount applied for under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act, £640,906; granted, £177,398. District roads: Total applied for, £61,995; granted, £53,967. The honourable gentleman has several times brought this matter up, and I thank him for drawing attention to it, because it certainly proves that myself and my colleague the member for Wairarapa South had the interests of our constituents at heart, and that, having the advantage of understanding the provisions of the Act, we used it to the advantage of our district. I think that we should not be blamed for having done so. The largest sum paid over to any one county was the grant paid to the Southland County. I do not say that it should not have got it, for it is the largest county in New Zealand. Following out the same idea, I might tell the honourable member that the County of Wairarapa East has an

enormous area of unsettled land, and that the Councillors and Road Board Wardens felt it was necessary that they should supplement and assist the Government in opening up this Crown land, and so assist settlement. They did that to the utmost of their ability, and large liabilities have been undertaken in consequence. As far as I am concerned, I glory in my share of the transactions, and if I had the same opportunity at my disposal again I would do the same thing. A good deal has been said about the purchase of Native lands. I speak with some knowledge of the matter when I say that the Government land-purchasers in the centre of this Island ought to have been instructed to proceed with the greatest care. I have been over a large portion of the land myself, and I know that much of the land, although much valued by many people who do not understand its qualities, is almost worthless, and I very much fear that a large portion of the land we are now purchasing will prove almost valueless to the colony.

Sir R. STOUT.—Where?

Mr. BEETHAM. — I speak of the district round Ruapehu. I notice that in the maps placed before us the area of agricultural land is certainly put down at a very small figure: that is as it should be; but large areas are put down as good pastoral land. Now, I went over the whole base of Ruapehu, and overlooked the country from its highest peaks, and I know the country well. A person passing over it and making a cursory observation might consider that the land there was good; but if he got off his horse and examined it, and pulled the grass that he would find growing there luxuriantly, he would find that it comes out without offering any resistance. That proves conclusively that the land will not stand grazing: it would work out in a very short time, and will not carry English grass. I do not want to depreciate the land, but I want to show that great care should be exercised in purchasing these Native lands. I will just allude to a subject which has been mentioned several times—that is, the question of snagging and improving the Wanganui River. I had the pleasure of journeying up that river in a small steamer with several legal luminaries of Wellington City. We went up fourteen miles, and there stuck on a rock in the middle of the river, and these legal luminaries had to land and pull "like grim death" for an hour and a half. We got over this difficulty, certainly, after a time, and travelled another four or five miles up the river; but, from my knowledge of that river, I should say that no traffic will ever take place which will repay the expenditure now being undertaken. It is a river with many steep cliffs and a number of tributaries; and, whenever there are floods, boulders will fill up the river again, and the snagging and removing of rocks will be an endless proceeding, and almost useless, unless at a prohibitive expense. I think it has been already pointed out that up to the present time the bulk of the freight for the railway-works has been brought from Te Awamutu; and I think that is the best way. I think it is certain these snagging operations should be discontinued as soon as possible. There is one point, which has been alluded to by the honourable member for Waitaki, that I should also like to dwell upon. Great difficulties have arisen out of a small contract in the Wairarapa District owing to the fact that the Public Works Department makes it a rule to accept the lowest tender. The result has been very serious indeed in the district near Masterton. A contract was let in that neighbourhood for £14,793 that the Engineer estimated would cost £17,000. The result has been that that contract has cost £14,000 more than the Engineer's estimate.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—No.

Mr. BEETHAM.—Well, £4,694 may be considered new works, to a certain extent.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—There is a great deal more.

Mr. BEETHAM.—That is the amount mentioned in the return laid on the table of the House.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON. — I stated at the time that it could not be separated.

Mr. BEETHAM.—If that is the case, and the original contractor had been in a position to continue the work, how would these additional works have been performed? Would they have been considered as extras in the contract? If that is the case, it appears to me that the contract must have been very loosely arranged in the first instance. I do not wish to find fault with the Public Works Department, as I am aware that there are a great many worthy men in that department; but, in many cases, I do not think they exercise proper judgment in their engineering surveys and in letting contracts. The Waipoua Bridge has been mentioned. The Engineers were requested to reconsider their plans for that bridge before any work was done. They were told that they were under-estimating the amount of water and the danger from floods in that river; but, naturally, they adhered to their own plans. The result has been very heavy expenditure for reconstructing the bridge carried away by flood. At the present time that contract has resulted in three petitions this session and two last session, asking for compensation for losses sustained under the contract I refer to. I trust that the Minister for Public Works will, in future, if it is in his power, see that contracts are let to men who understand well what they are doing, and that when the Engineer's estimate is considerably over the lowest tender, the lowest tender should not, without further consideration, be accepted. The result, in the case I have referred to, is that the tradesmen, workmen, and minor contractors have lost seriously, and in many cases they have lost their all. I shall certainly vote for the amendment: not with the view of turning out the Government, but because I believe it is quite right that we should vote money only for those railway-lines already commenced, so that we can carry them to points where they will be reproductive.

Mr. BARRON.—The honourable member for

Wairarapa North has said that the policy of those with whom he is allied favoured roads and bridges, while the policy of the Government, as put before the country through its Premier, discouraged large votes for roads and bridges. But the honourable member need be under no misgiving that the Premier was in earnest. Why, the Public Works Statement makes a very much larger provision for loan expenditure upon roads and bridges than was ever made before. We are told that there is £800,000 available to be voted as the House pleases on works other than railways; Bills have been passed for loans to local bodies; and we are now only asked to borrow one and a half millions to be spent according to the schedule of the Loan Bill. There are many purposes to which parts of that loan are to be applied which are probably not even such good purposes as the expenditure of borrowed money on roads and bridges would be, objectionable as that is. Many of those works in the schedule cannot be defended as being in any sense even such reproductive works. I feel that it is almost necessary that honourable members should expect one to make some apology for attempting to prolong this very protracted debate; but I offer no apology. It is a debate upon the great question of the day, the key to the policy of this Government, and to the policy of past Governments, the question of adding to our public debt and annual burdens by borrowing money—and not by borrowing money because we have first determined that certain works are reproductive works, and that the money can profitably be expended upon them. No. The first question, unfortunately, is, Shall we or shall we not borrow so many millions? By-and-by we can consider how these millions can be allocated, or, as one honourable member has said, how they can be used to consolidate votes—to give works for districts, whether those works can be defended or not, so as to enable the Administration to retain their places. We have, during this debate, had many remarkable speeches, and I am sure honourable members will agree with me that the Premier's speech last night was the most remarkable in the debate, and was one of the finest efforts he ever made in any debate. I could not help thinking, when the honourable gentleman was speaking in impassioned and reproachful tones about the manner in which honourable members, urged by their constituents, pressed on the Government for works that were not really required, and as the honourable gentleman referred to the policy he would like to give effect to and contrasted it with the policy that he was forced to give effect to, reminding us of his past utterances and his present conduct, as he referred to his colleagues—I could not help thinking that the special training of the honourable gentleman showed very much in that speech. Sir, if it was ever my ill-fortune to get into serious trouble, and if I knew that I was guilty, I could desire no better advocate than the honourable gentleman; but if I was conscious of innocence I should have no worse advocate, because his advocacy would so overshadow every other consideration that my acquittal would only impress upon men's minds the fact that it was the advocacy that secured the acquittal, and not the innocence of the person defended. The honourable gentleman's long training and the bent of his mind enable him to find good and sufficient reasons and to quote arguments for any position on any side of a question—for any case that may be put in his hands to defend he will make an eloquent defence and adduce apparently good arguments. I have no doubt he could even find arguments to show that loyal and consistent service to both God and Mammon is not at all the impossible thing that old writings would lead us to believe, or that human experience has proved to us that it is. And, Sir, what was the honourable gentleman's speech, as it was delivered, and apart altogether from the consideration that it was a piece of special pleading? It was a complaint that the House persistently refused to give effect to the policy which he considers to be the best for the welfare of the colony, and that he is forced, against his will, to give effect to a policy which his opinions made him condemn.

Sir R. STOUT.—Nothing of the kind.

Mr. BARRON.—I submit that that is a fair summary of the speech which the honourable gentleman delivered. The honourable gentleman told us that the time was coming when borrowing must be stopped and all expenditure met out of direct and indirect taxation; but he complained that honourable members would not face that—that they would have no burdens put on the people; that land must not be touched. Sir, what a confession to make! In effect, the honourable gentleman says, "These are my opinions; but I will give effect to yours, although they are opposed to mine, because otherwise I cannot retain office." That is the logical deduction from the honourable member's speech. His talents and energies are always concentrated on winning his case, good or bad. I should not care to presume on the patience of honourable gentlemen by taking up many of the points that have been raised in the debate, because many honourable members who have spoken have referred to those points, though I contend that it is a desirable thing, when some points are discovered that require emphasis, that they should be referred to once again, and perhaps frequently; because it is only by iteration and reiteration that we can hope to impress on the minds of the people the fact that the whole of our policy is going in a wrong direction. The Premier's condemnation of Railway Boards struck me as being one point that, although previously referred to by the honourable member for Wakatipu, merited another reference again. The Premier told us that if we were to part with our functions to such Boards it would mean a confession that democracy has been a failure, and that representative institutions have been found altogether unsuitable for the purposes for which they were devised. In that I agree

with him. He told us that, in Melbourne, the matter was brought under public notice, and he felt so strongly on it that he wrote a letter to the papers giving his own views—which, I am happy to say, are my views—on the pernicious principle being brought to bear upon the representative institutions of the country; and when I heard him say so I remembered what the honourable member for Wakatipu had said, and I also remembered what had been said in the Public Works Statement in former times. The Minister for Public Works regretted, in 1884, that, owing to the late period of the session, the Government had come to the conclusion that a Bill to establish Boards of Management for the railways could not be carried through that session; and he added,—

"Did I not feel convinced that the Government and the House were determined to take this course [that is, carry the Bill] at the earliest date possible, I should not have consented to take office. . . . I feel bound to state these opinions, because I should otherwise accept a false position."

And there he sits. The Premier reminds me that this is the second time we have heard this. I say, for the sake of the independence of public men, it cannot be heard too often; because any honourable gentleman who is content to accept the humiliating position into which the Minister for Public Works has so often been brought through such admissions, cannot have what he has said pointed out to him too frequently. Then, we had a speech from the Treasurer, which contained one or two points to which I should like to refer. The honourable gentleman spoke of the leader of the Opposition as being blameworthy for trying to draw him out as to his future borrowing policy, saying that the honourable member for Egmont well knew that any statement in that direction would affect the negotiation of future loans. Is that consistent with the Premier's statement? And, even if it is consistent, is it right? Is it honest and straightforward conduct for those who are intrusted with the interests of the colony to follow? We are now going on the London market to raise another loan; and, by implication, we are almost misleading those who are going to lend us the money by hiding from them the fact that it is absolutely necessary, if we are to give effect to the works schedule in this Loan Bill, that we should borrow a great deal more than we are proposing to borrow now. Then, the honourable gentleman said that any one in power would be obliged to ask for loans to carry on the works of the colony. Yes, any member in power, if being "in power" means the sacrifice of all principle to office. Then, we had one of the Treasurer's characteristic and enthusiastic references; and I will just take occasion to say that, while the honourable gentleman has many estimable personal qualities which I like, he has invited criticism, which, although it may possibly be a very disagreeable thing for any member of this House to bring to bear, still, in the interests of the country, it is right that we should bring it to bear upon any honourable gentleman who occupies the position he does. He told us of the great quantity of gold in the Clutha River, and how, by diverting the current of the river, we might get unbounded wealth. Once it was the South Sea Islands trade that was to give us unbounded wealth. He once spoke as hopefully of a trade with the Arafura Sea. Then, we were to get enormous wealth out of beetroot sugar. The Fisheries Act was passed to foster an industry that we were told was peculiarly suitable to us, and that was to bring about great prosperity. Each of these things was to bring about prosperity very similar to the prosperity he predicted would follow from turning the Clutha River. Then, throughout the colony he preached Protection as the one panacea for all our evils. Then, there was the Meiggs proposal, by which the colony was to be saddled with a charge of £97,000 a year; and that was defended by the Treasurer and insisted upon as being necessary for the prosperity of the colony. It has been stated as an objection to the Treasurer that he is not a permanent resident—not a colonist. I will, however, do the honourable gentleman the justice to assume that, so long as we retain him in the position that he now occupies, or in some similar position, he will, apparently, be quite willing to be a permanent resident in the colony: but we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that when he was connected with the affairs of the colony before he did not remain in the colony and identify himself with it as many of us have done. His home was not here; the whole of his interests and aspirations were centered elsewhere; and when he occupied an official position in connection with the colony in England the knowledge of the amount of attention which he gave to his personal interests and to the status his position gave him is not at all consistent with the complaint that he now makes, that had he devoted the twenty-five years which he says he has spent in public life to furthering his own affairs it would have been better for him. I know it is very disagreeable to say these things, but in the interests of the colony it is necessary that this should be said—in the interests of the reputation of our public men it is necessary that it should be said. Besides, as we have seen, the honourable gentlemen has invited criticism of this kind. While the honourable gentleman was occupying a position of trust and emolument as Agent-General he was actively engaged also in furthering the interests of the New Zealand Agricultural Company, and he had a very large pecuniary interest in that company. Is that at all consistent with what the honourable gentleman has told us as to the amount of his self-sacrifice in public affairs, and the neglect of his own affairs? Is his statement consistent with the knowledge we have of the number of ventures in joint-stock companies and other commercial ventures with which he has been associated, and which, I am sorry to say, numerous as they are, have rarely been a success? I think I am not going

too far when I say that none of these ventures has been a success. The honourable gentleman has preferred a claim for some £6,000 or £8,000 against the colony for services rendered to the colony in connection with the disposal of loans while he was in the position of Agent-General. When I said there was nothing in which the honourable gentleman could be said to have succeeded, I forgot this fact: He has succeeded in retaining office long after he has lost the confidence of the majority. I did not think that it was altogether consistent with what we well know has characterized his public career that he should claim for himself and his Administration the closest and keenest interest in the welfare of the masses of the people. He said his thoughts flowed in the direction of discovering what is most beneficial to human labour—the broad features of the Government policy all ran in that direction. I shall not further refer to that statement. Once, many might have believed it; but now, who so credulous? The Bill before us and the amendment might have emanated the one from the Colonial Treasurer and the other from the Premier. In all the speeches which the Premier delivered during the recess, and, in fact, during the whole of his political career, he has advocated the moderate policy which is shadowed forth in this amendment. The amendment is not perfect. There is very little of it, indeed, which commends itself to my mind, because I think it might have stopped short at reallocating the moneys which it intends to disturb in the schedule. But there is one part of the amendment which commends itself to me, and for which I should vote, even if coupled with more objectionable features than those which surround it, and that is that we agree to provide for completing or carrying to working points unfinished railways before new lines are commenced. That should have been, but it is not, indicated in the Bill. The Bill would not require any amendment of this kind had it been framed in accordance with the speeches of the Premier in the House and in the country, and there would have been no possibility for any honourable member finding an opportunity of so attacking the Loan Bill and this schedule. Are the purposes for which we are asked to borrow this money, and the terms on which the loan is to be raised, such as prudent men could sanction? And, Sir—even assuming that the purposes are such as we could sanction—can we trust the Government to keep faith with Parliament, and strictly to follow the course they now lead us to believe they will take? I have referred to the £800,000 which, we are told, is to be voted as the House pleases; and, as an illustration of the manner in which the Government says one thing one day and another day says another thing and frequently gets into difficulties in many things, I would like to refer to this matter again. This mythical £800,000 which is to be voted as the House pleases is treated in an extraordinary way in the Public Works Statement. Some words of the Colonial Treasurer in the House in November, 1884, will best illustrate my meaning. Referring to a financial operation of his predecessor, he said, "The way in which these peas were put under the thimbles, those trust funds and loans from Public Works Fund, was startling in its intricacy." Let honourable members refer to page 17 of the Public Works Statement and study the manipulations there disclosed, and say whether this jugglery, performed without any real pea at all, is not a greater feat of artful manipulation than the feat of the honourable member for Egmont when he was Treasurer, and which feat so challenged the admiration of the present Treasurer. Turning to the schedule of the Loan Bill, I find, and would like to take time to indicate, a few more similar feats; but I am afraid if I attempted to do so I should probably encroach on the patience of the House. As to the railways named in the Bill, I will only refer to one line—the Blenheim-Tophouse—and I select that just to give an illustration of what I mean in connection with the schedule to the Loan Bill—that is, that it contains many works not reproductive, which are not in the meantime necessary, and which could very well wait for some years. This line from Blenheim to Tophouse is part of the system which is to connect the South Island with Cook Strait—that is to say, is to connect the whole railway system of the South with Cook Strait; which, of course, is to connect by sea with Wellington: but this connection cannot possibly be made until the East and West Coast Railway has been finished, and I leave it to the Government to say whether it is at all likely that that line will be made for some years. I submit that to put such a line as that on the Loan Bill is altogether premature; and it is not necessary to ask the House to sanction borrowing money for that purpose for some years to come. I only refer to that as one of the many allocations which I could refer to; but I do not wish to weary the House. What would be the cost of completing the whole of the railways in this schedule? I am sure that, close as has been the attention which honourable members have given to this subject, none of them could give the House even an approximate estimate of how much this Loan Bill is committing the colony to. In the absence of information such as the Government should have placed before us—information which would have shown us completely the proposals which they are now beginning to commit the colony to—I submit that, even if honourable members had made up their minds that borrowing for reproductive works was desirable and proper—and I will not say that borrowing for reproductive works is an undesirable thing—but even so, we should not be justified, with the information before us now, in committing the colony to an indefinite expenditure in a manner such as this Bill indicates. The Government should, in the discharge of its duty to the House and the country, have brought down a complete and authoritative statement of the probable cost of the whole of these works when completed. We know how these railways got into

this schedule. They were placed there, as one honourable member said, to "consolidate votes." The schedule is there not because these railways are such as it is most desirable for the colony to undertake and to construct at once—the schedule is as it is because honourable members from all parts of the colony have each had to be consulted, not as to what railways would pay, but as to what public works they would like provided for in the Loan Bill. And it seems to be necessary to consult all parts of the colony, because otherwise I presume that if any particular individual work, separated from others, was brought before the House on its merits and considered on its merits it would, unless a really desirable and profitable line, have no chance of going through with as much ease as various works tied together are passed through now. There is another consequence which seems to threaten us in connection with this Loan Bill, and that is, that it seems to be utterly inadequate even for its own purposes—namely, for the plans disclosed in the Public Works Statement. I would like to ask the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government if he will be so good as to tell us, before we proceed to pass this Bill, whether any further Loan Bill will be introduced before the 31st March, 1888. I do not mean that a loan will not be raised, because that would not be all that I would like him to say, but that no Loan Bill shall be introduced; because we might pass a Loan Bill without any intention of raising a loan before the 31st March, 1888, but that would enable the Government to raise a large sum on debentures in anticipation of the loan. Will the honourable gentleman allow me to ask him this question pointedly and distinctly? I pause for a reply. Well, Sir, Ministers are silent. They know that they are probably misleading the House in this, as they are frequently under the necessity of doing in other matters, when they say the present loan is to cover all requirements for two years. I am reminded that this Government have been persistently trying to place their opponents in an embarrassing position with their constituents in opposing their loans, and that they are always appealing to districts, to the districts of honourable members, and that they are always trying to adjust expenditure so as to get them that amount of solid support which every Government, I am sorry to say, appreciates so much, but which this Government seems to appreciate more thoroughly than any other I have had experience of. Now, I should like, before going further, to bring under the notice of the House this fact: that the moneys that we have borrowed and spent on railways, compared with the moneys that have been borrowed and spent on railways in other colonies, have not been so well spent—that, as a fact, our railway system does not pay that proportion of interest on the public debt which the railways constructed in other colonies do. In Victoria the railways paid in 1884 all the interest on the debt of the colony except £292,856.

Sir R. STOUT.—How many miles?

Mr. BARRON.—It is not a question of miles but a question of profit that is yielded by the railways in proportion to the interest on the debt of the colony.

Sir R. STOUT.—The population and number of miles must have something to do with it.

Mr. BARRON.—That, of course, is a matter of calculation for the honourable gentleman. If he finds that these figures are not warranted he will be able to make a discovery that I have not been able to make. I was careful, before my statement as to the figures, to see that they were warranted, and how far they were valuable for the purpose of comparing the burden of debt on this colony, and the interest received from reproductive works, with the burden of debt on other colonies, and the amount received from railways towards paying interest on the debt. In New South Wales in 1884 the railways paid all the interest on the debt except £220,541. In Queensland they paid all the interest on the debt except £444,837. In New Zealand they only contributed £406,140 in 1884, leaving £1,293,624 of interest on the public debt to be paid out of the general taxation of the colony; and, Sir, last year, according to his own Public Works Statement—page 9—our own contribution was, from railways, only £355,000. This year they yielded from a greater mileage only £357,000 as their contribution towards paying interest on our public debt, which debt has largely increased since 1884.

Sir R. STOUT. — The debt is not only for railways.

Mr. BARRON.—I am sorry to say it is not; but a great deal of our public debt is for railways, and a great deal has been incurred, as it is now the purpose to incur more debt, for railways and other purposes that will never contribute anything towards relieving us of the burden of taxation. Now I will look at the Otago Central. I know very well that I am open to the objection that I am beginning to go away from the general question to a particular one, which concerns my own district; but I take the case of this line because it affords a good illustration of what might be done with colonial works if they were treated in a proper way and pushed on towards paying points. This railway was authorized in 1878. If honourable members will turn up the public works proposals for that year they will find that it was to be completed to Wanaka Lake in 1884. It is, unfortunately, the case that one Government after another neglected to give effect to what was undoubtedly the will of the House, as specified by resolution and by Act of Parliament, until we came to the present Government; and they promised that all these wrongs should be remedied, and, as we had the Premier and other members from our provincial district in the Ministry, we thought that probably, at last, we should be able to find that justice done to our locality which we were entitled to expect. This railway was to be pushed on vigorously, according to the Statement of 1884; but the vigorous pushing-on has been only in words. The Otago members had to meet

together to urge the Government to redeem their promises, in order to get it pushed on even with apparent vigour. The line has not been pushed on even since then, although the Government promised that it should be taken in hand with that vigour that we had a right to expect; and this session we had to bring the matter under the notice of the Government again, and again the Premier acknowledged that it was a work which, even as a colonial work, had considerable claims upon the department; and he promised—well, Sir, he promised much more than is likely to be performed under the schedule to this Loan Bill. I will put it as mildly as that. And this is a reproductive work—a work which will not only pay directly by traffic, but it will pay the colony to construct it if for no other reason than that it will give largely-increased value to the Crown land that it will affect. We have got there a large area of Crown land, and it is a very moderate computation to say that it will be doubled or trebled in value by the construction of that line. The increased value will more than recoup to the Treasury the amount which will be expended upon it in order to construct it in accordance with the original proposals affecting it. Then, Sir, we were told in 1884—I am sorry to have to go back so frequently to 1884; but I really find that the strongest position that we can take up in the way of showing that the promises of the Government have not been fulfilled is to confront them with those promises, and inquire how they have been carried out—I say we were told in 1884, in the Governor's Speech, that works in progress were to be proceeded with more vigorously, it not being economical to construct works in a manner so slow and fragmentary as to postpone indefinitely any return for the money expended. The lines already in course of construction were to be completed to paying points before any new works were undertaken. That line of policy was not quite clearly indicated in the Governor's Speech; but it was clearly indicated in subsequent statements made by the Government. Here I would just refer shortly to some of the general promises made to us by the Government, to show how far they have been fulfilled. In 1884 we were told that the present expenditure for departmental and other expenses might be considerably contracted, and would be. The public works staff was said to be much larger than was necessary for the supervision of the work which the colony had in hand, and reductions were promised. But, Sir, in the recess speeches the Colonial Treasurer characterized this cry for retrenchment in the public service as "a sham." Now, a return was laid on the table of the House during the present session which shows that that expenditure is increasing at a most alarming rate, and that it has been particularly and especially increased under the administration of these honourable gentlemen. The Premier says that this expenditure has been materially contracted, in accordance with the promises given; but I refer him to that statement. I should like to see how he can explain the figures furnished by the Treasury and show that the expenditure has been decreased.

Sir R. STOUT.—You took the quinquennial periods.

Mr. BARRON.—The quinquennial periods were taken because that formed a most complete way of enabling us to tell how the expenditure was growing. When the motion was proposed for this return it was opposed by the Government as being altogether unnecessary and one which would be exceedingly expensive. The quinquennial periods were put in to render it more easy to furnish, less expensive, and more easily understood by honourable members. We were told that the property-tax was to be repealed, and a moderate land-tax substituted, deducting improvements; and the proceeds of that tax were to be localized. The statement was made on the 19th August, 188 and twelve days later we were told that change in the incidence of taxation must be left over until next session. Then, again, on the 16th September we were told that the property-tax was to be reduced one-half, and that the remainder was only temporarily needed to meet the cost of charitable relief and hospitals and we were further told that but for an understanding not to press the question that session, the total abolition of the property-tax would have been proposed, as it had a crushing effect on the progress of the colony.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Hear, hear.

Mr. BARRON.—No doubt it has; but why do not the honourable gentlemen give effect to the promises which were very clearly and very frequently made when they took——

Sir R. STOUT.—Look at last year's Bill.

Mr. BARRON.—Is it any reply to me to say that the House would not give effect to the proposals which the honourable gentleman would have liked to give effect to? His position is most peculiar. No—I will not say "peculiar," because no doubt he has a precedent for it; but his position is not a right one. The policy of a Government ought to be given effect to; and, if the House will not give effect to it, then it is the duty of the Government to give place to those whose principles are in accordance with the predominant opinion of the House. Then, we were asked to assent to the abolition of the Sinking Fund. The yearly amount of this Sinking Fund released, it was said, would be £[illegible], upon which we could borrow, without further annual charges "than at present," an additional seven and a half millions for public works. Besides, we were told large masses of accrued Sinking Fund were to be set free during the process of conversion, to be available for public works without further borrowing. I would ask honourable members to pay particular attention to the words "without further annual charges than at present," then used by the Colonial Treasurer, because, although the promised benefits we were to receive by the abolition of the Sinking Fund have gone to swell the long list of broken promises, our annual charges have been very materially increased since then. Then, on the second read-

ing of the Consolidated Stock Bill a few weeks subsequently, the Colonial Treasurer said,—

"It enables us to do, first, without extra taxation, which we should have had to resort to: it enables us to get rid of half the property-tax, which has been so very largely the means of depressing the industries of the colony, and the confidence of those who have large interests in the colony."

How foolishly we seem to have been led, and how rapidly, from bad to worse! The property-tax was not long after doubled, and the only indication of any attempt to get quit of it is the proposed reduction this year by the large amount of one-sixteenth of a penny. Then, when the Government, in the year I have named, asked the consent of the House to a Bill to enable them to raise a loan of £1,500,000, the House was told that it was, first of all, to be applied towards replacing the amount abstracted—mark the word, "abstracted"—from the Three-million Loan, and the balance was, of course, to be available for public works. And this amount was in addition to the quarter of a million to be obtained under the Inscribed Stock Act. We find, however, that, by a little manipulation, to which I have already referred, the amount which had been abstracted from the Three-million Loan, and which was to be replaced by borrowing a million and a half, has not yet been replaced, although the million and a half has been borrowed and spent: indeed, the amount to be replaced seems to have grown—we know not why, but, at all events, it has grown in proportion from that day to this. Then, here is something which, I find, was almost prophetic: We are told that charging interest on capital during the construction of a railway was, although legitimate, not necessary, and that that was one means of relieving taxation at present left unused. The Treasurer now, evidently, means to lay hands upon and deprive us of that means of relieving taxation also, if we are to judge by the correspondence which has been laid before us, and which at that time had been entered into in connection with this question of charging interest on loan during construction. I hope the House will never permit this colony to adopt such a pernicious principle as charging interest on loan. It may be defended, possibly it would be defended, as a mere matter of account: but it is not a matter of account; it is a question of common honesty. Then, we were told that further borrowing was to be guided by increased power to meet the annual charges. "Depend on it, we have the right to look each year for large natural increases in the revenue," said the Treasurer. And then, with a just estimate of those whom he addressed, he promised that under a reinstated finance and diminished expenditure the colony was to rouse itself from apathy "and spring forward with leaps and bounds of progress." If we find these large annual increases in revenue which were then predicted, and in which we have been so grievously disappointed since, have not taken place, then what becomes of this proposal to borrow in proportion to our ability to bear the burden of borrowing? We are told the railways must be carried on. So we were then, in words to which no one could take objection: "Railway works must be carried on with some regard to obtaining early returns as the work progresses, in the interests of economy, prudence, and common-sense." I invite honourable members to contrast the theory with the practice of the Government. I should like to dwell a little upon the thoughts which these promises and predictions bring to my mind. We have had many periods of depression, but, I believe, none so deep as that in which the colony now is. Steadily we have had the depression increasing and intensifying since the day on which these memorable words were uttered. They were uttered by one who has a sanguine and hopeful disposition—who, constitutionally, takes a hopeful view of things as they might be, rather than as they are; and therefore he is all the more unsafe to be trusted with the guidance of the policy of a country like this. I fear honourable members may think that I am speaking too long, but I am of opinion that this is probably one of the most important subjects we can express our views upon. I have long ceased to hope that the action of any honourable gentleman in this House may be affected by debate. I have had nine sessions' experience in the House, and have never yet known a speech affect a single vote. Votes depend upon other considerations than arguments, unfortunately. But *Hansard* is the means by which the opinions of members can reach the country; and there I hope—and there we are all entitled to hope—that we may affect opinions. Through that means we reach ears that are impartial and are open to receive such arguments as we present to them; people who have no keen and intense party ties, or feelings, or interests, or trammels, and are able to judge of us, and to come to a proper conclusion upon the arguments we use. Population and public works have not gone on together. This indiscriminate borrowing, in the face of the fact that the country is not increasing as it ought to do in population, is a wrong policy. The last census shows that our population has not increased as we had a right to expect it would do; and we should not forget that fact, especially as increased burdens tend to drive population away. This borrowing for works which are not reproductive, this borrowing of money for the sake of consolidating votes, this borrowing of money because it has been found a necessary adjunct of party government, should be stopped, and the colony should rather be eased of the burdens which it has to bear than be called upon to take upon itself additional burdens. If the colony were willing to bear further burdens, and we were increasing our revenue by the judicious expenditure of borrowed money, it would be another thing; but I say that we should all combine together and try to devise some means for lightening the burdens of the people, so that, if need be, we may be able to go into the older countries of the world and say to the people there, "We can

offer you a home here; we can hold out to you attractions which no other country can offer; you can come here and live and work under conditions most favourable to life; and here you shall escape the burdens of taxation which press so heavily on older communities." That, I say, would be the policy which would indeed bring about progress in this colony. On the other hand, the policy of indiscriminate borrowing and further increasing the burdens of the people can only result in plunging us deeper and deeper into the depths into which we have already sunk too far. I have probably said enough to show honourable members that I, at all events, would prefer to vote for the amendment to the Bill. I would just like to add that to me it appears that the members of the Government have often proved since they took office, as well as in the course of this debate, that they are not of the foolish kind of persons who, in days gone by, would cheerfully have gone to the stake for the sake of principle.

Mr. FULTON.—It must have been very unpleasant indeed to the Government sitting on those benches to listen to the speech of my honourable friend opposite. It is right that he should repeat over and over again the shortcomings of the Government, and bring back to their recollection the promises they made in the past; it will therefore be unnecessary that I should follow him in that line. I feel, like many others, that they have abandoned every shred of the policy with which they came into office. The Colonial Treasurer has charged my honourable friend the member for Egmont with adopting a "wait and lie down" policy; but I would ask, what policy has his Government adopted? A "wait and be kicked" policy. Nobody else could have borne the degradation —I can call it by no other term—which those honourable gentlemen endured last session over and over again, when their proposals were kicked out time after time. And, then, when they addressed the country during the recess, what do we find? Nothing but a wail — shall I call it a whine? — complaining of the resolution which the honourable member for Hawke's Bay carried last session when he moved for a reduction in the public works estimates. There was nothing else but, "We should have been very happy to do" this or that "if only the House had allowed us to carry our estimates as we brought them down; but it insisted on reducing them, and so we cannot do it." But there was not one of them who stated the reason why they still continued, notwithstanding their defeats, to sit on those benches. I might almost quote the saying "they were infamous but contented." My friend the member for Moeraki has said that the only difference between the two parties has been that these gentlemen now on the Opposition benches are not on the Government benches. It has been said by many speakers before him that the reason why they are not on those benches is that the gentlemen now occupying them have been quite willing to accept every proposal that came from this side of the House so long as they occupied the Treasury seats. Well, I am glad to hear that at last we have the Premier setting forth what is really to be the policy of the Government. I would just remind the House of the extraordinary scene we witnessed last year when these same proposals of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay came before the House, when it was impossible for my honourable friends on the left to know which was the Government—when the Minister for Public Works was saying one thing and the Premier was saying another, and we did not know whom to accept as the mouthpiece of the Government. But, if they were disunited then, surely they might have gathered their forces together during the recess, and have become a little more united. Did they do so? No. They went about the country, Sir, saying first one thing and then another; and afterwards one gentleman would have to explain what the other meant and what he said. One honourable gentleman has compared the two Native administrations, and the difference between them; but the honourable member for Rangitikei has exactly put before the House what, I feel, is the real position of things—that had it not been for the firm stand taken up by the honourable member for Waitotara it would never have been possible for the honourable member for Wanganui to have carried out his present Native policy. I fear he is reverting to that pernicious practice which was so common of old, of making promises to the Natives, which will lead him into difficulties, and promising things, moreover, which, I believe, he will not very easily be able to perform. Notice was taken by the Premier and others about the question raised by my honourable friend in regard to buying Native lands to a large amount by commission. I did notice that clever advocate, how cleverly he avoided the gravamen of the charge made by the honourable member for Waitotara, which was that that method of land-purchasing was entirely illegal—contrary to law. Well, we have now got from the Premier a statement of what the policy of the Government is to be, and I was glad to hear the leader of the Opposition saying plainly, "If he will only stick to those principles the Government will have the following of two-thirds of the House." But will he have the following of the Treasurer? I am afraid not. I am glad he has at last realized what the country is wanting, what members have been asking for. They were willing to take "Vogel with the brake on" at one time; but the Premier has never taken the position which is demanded of him; and I hope the ability of the Colonial Treasurer will not be too much for him yet, and so prevent him from putting on that brake as he ought to do; or that the views held in common with the Treasurer by other members of the Ministry will not induce the Premier to carry out principles which he does not believe in, and refuse to carry out principles which he does believe in, simply for the purpose of keeping those gentlemen in office. We had one speech from an honour-

ble member who referred to ten years ago, and who gave us what the member for Waitoara thought of the Treasurer then. He might have remembered that my friend has had ten years' bitter experience, and has had good reason, like a wise man, to change his mind. I think I may say, not only for him, but for many other members in this House, whatever their hopes were at that time as to the extraordinary promises made by that honourable gentleman, they, too, will have felt disappointed, and they, too, will have changed their minds already, and are prepared to change their votes. I do not feel it is right at this time of the night to continue speaking; but I am not one who cares to speak to the gallery: yet I could not allow the debate to pass without saying a word or two as to my reasons for voting in the way I intend to do. I believe it is essential that the proposal to carry railways to a paying point should be confirmed. I quite expect that we shall be defeated, even though this motion is one confirming a Government proposal; because it is nothing new to find the present Government voting against proposals they have made in the past. I confess I should like to see something further done than reduction in the amount to be voted. I admit that, in the interests of the colony, it would be quite impossible to stop further borrowing at once; but my constituents thought, when they begged of me to see that no further burdens were placed on them, that no more borrowing would be indulged in. But when I look round upon Ministers, and also upon this House, and see the people who talk so easily and freely about borrowing and undertaking this expenditure and that, I wonder whether the gentlemen here, living in comfort and drawing their salaries regularly, know anything about the load of debt and taxation under which the people down South are staggering, under the present unfavourable circumstances of the colony as to the prices of produce. I only refer to this for the purpose of accentuating what I have to say in regard to my opinions as to borrowing. The member for Moeraki accused me of having, as one of a Commission appointed some years ago, sent in a milk-and-water report with regard to the proposal to construct a railway along the East Coast to Blenheim. That report, carefully compiled, as it was, with a great deal of information supplied to us by gentlemen in the Public Works Department, showed that to have carried any railway there would only be competing with steamer traffic at a loss, and could not be done satisfactorily. That report meant economy. My vote will still be in the same direction, and my opinions are unchanged from what they were then. I should like to see the Premier, if he still remains in that position, or whoever takes his place, adhere to the proposal he made yesterday, and say that within two or three, or at any rate a few years, we must "edge off" our borrowing, if not cease it altogether, because I believe we cannot go on much longer without imposing such taxation on the colony and putting such burdens on the people that we shall not only prevent others from coming here, but we shall drive those who are here away. That is a thing which, I believe, we have begun to do already. I admit that the honourable gentlemen on those benches have had a hard time to deal with—a period of depression which is perhaps unexampled in the history of the colony; but they should not make so many promises, and have to break every one of them. Will the Premier stand to what he said last night? Let him say that he will insist upon it that we shall not have this extravagance which we have had in the past, and it does not matter to me who sit on those benches, so long as the colony progresses satisfactorily, and does not go so fast ahead as to come to serious loss and trouble. My vote will be given in favour of the amendment, and in Committee I shall endeavour to go further and have some of the items reduced.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Before you put the question, Sir, I wish to say half a dozen words. I simply wish to protest against that which has been repeated by one speaker after the other, that if the statement in the Financial Statement had been adhered to there would have been no occasion for this amendment—namely, that paying lines only should be proceeded with. I maintain that the Tophouse–Blenheim line is a piece of the main trunk line of the South Island. We have been told over and over again that honourable members would oppose all new works, and that no more borrowing should take place, and that only works in hand should be finished. I maintain that I should not be doing right to those who sent me here if I were not to raise my voice against that. When the public works policy was initiated in 1870 these words were used, and on these the whole policy is based:—

"A colonizing scheme to aid which the credit of the whole colony was pledged would be looked upon as a gross injustice if it did not provide for the due consideration of every province. That is why we must pledge ourselves to a large scheme if we wish to do justice to all."

We have been told over and over again that the Otago Central should be finished. That is a work which was commenced long after the main trunk line was decided upon, long after that portion from Picton to Blenheim had been commenced—which is the only commencement of the main trunk line at that end of the Island. We are told that no lines should be made but those that will pay. But the question of what will pay is one that lies in the future. I would only refer to that line to which I referred the other day—I think it is called the Newmarket–Helensville Railway—which it was said would never pay for grease for its axles; and yet it is one of the best-paying lines in the colony. The Otago Central line, it is said, will pay; but if we take the report of the Commission for it, that tells us it will not pay; and if we look at the plans in the lobby we must conclude that there is very little chance of its paying, because it appears that the coun-

try is entirely destroyed by rabbits. But I simply want to protest against what has been said by so many—that we ought only to proceed with the Otago Central line and the North Island Trunk line. The honourable member for Caversham said that they had urged and urged to have their line pushed on, and that even now they had not got what they ought to have. What does that mean? It means that they brought pressure upon the Government to have that line begun; and, having by illegitimate pressure got the line begun, they now urge that it should be finished, and that those lines that were included in the public works scheme should not even be commenced. That line was not included in the policy of 1870. That policy was for a main trunk line of railway from Invercargill to Cook Strait; but, through illegitimate pressure, that line has been begun, and the honourable member for Caversham now says we ought not to borrow more or lay fresh burdens upon the colony for new works. My honourable friend seems to agree with that. If he does agree with it, I trust he will abstain from following out the course he has threatened to adopt of voting only for increased supplies for the Otago Central, and taking away legitimate expenditure from that portion of the main line which is not completed. The part of the colony from which I come has received, during the ten years of the public works policy, only twenty miles of railway; and are we now to be left out in the cold simply that lines may be completed that were not in the original scheme? That is all I have to say. Many remarks have been made by various speakers on the other side which are open to criticism, which were ungenerous, and which could easily be combated; but at this late hour of the morning I do not intend to answer any of them. But I will add this: that the late Government have done the very thing which they accuse this Government of intending to do—namely, to seize the money for other works than those named in the schedule. The late Government expressed themselves as quite willing to misappropriate the money borrowed in 1882. That Government informed the Canterbury members, by letter, that they were quite willing to use the £150,000 borrowed and scheduled for the continuation of the main trunk line northwards to any purpose Parliament might decide, although the then Premier, the honourable member for Egmont, had stated to me, as well as publicly, that the Government would on no account consent to such diversion. Sir, out of that loan, money was scheduled for the Nelson District, but it was spent elsewhere. In this loan nothing is set down for Nelson. What does that mean? It means that my constituents are to be taxed that other districts may prosper. The honourable member stated here to-night that Nelson is too weak—they need not mind her. Sir, I will vote against this Bill, and my constituents will agree with my doing so. They will agree with me that it is unjust and unfair to raise loan after loan, which is to be spent in other parts of the colony, and to compel them to be heavily taxed, while they do not in any degree participate in the advantages that are to be derived from such expenditure.

The House divided on the question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the question."

AYES, 30.

Cadman	Levestam	Stout
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Fitzherbert	McMillan	Thompson, T.
Fraser	Reese	Tole
Gore	Reid	Turnbull
Guinness	Richardson, E.	Vogel
Hatch	Ross	Walker.
Holmes	Samuel	*Tellers.*
Ivess	Seddon	Bevan
Lance	Smith	O'Callaghan.
Larnach		

NOES, 17.

Atkinson	Hamlin	Newman
Bruce	Hirst, H.	Rolleston
Buchanan	Hobbs	Trimble.
Buckland, W. F.	Lake	*Tellers.*
Conolly	Macarthur	Richardson, G.
Fulton	Montgomery	Wilson.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Allwright	Fisher
Ballance	Peacock
B.-Bradshaw	Mitchelson
Brown	Hislop
Coster	Hurst, W. J.
Cowan	Ormond
Dargaville	Dodson
Garrick	Thomson, J. W.
Grace	Whyte
Hursthouse	Bryce
Joyce	Pyke
Locke	Grey
Macandrew	Johnston
Menteath	Barron
O'Conor	Moss
Parata	Mackenzie, M.
Pearson	Fergus
Pere	Buckland, J. C.
Reid	Beetham
Steward, W. J.	Moat
Stewart, W. D.	Wakefield.

Majority for, 13.

Amendment lost, and Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at two o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 28th July, 1886.

Second Reading—Electric Light in Trains—Local Bodies' Loans Bill—Salmon and Trout Bill—Sheep Bill—Mining Bill—Settled Land Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READING.

Waimate Racecourse Trustees Empowering Bill.

ELECTRIC LIGHT IN TRAINS.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES asked the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, If the Government will take into consideration the propriety of lighting railway trains which run at night over considerable distances with the electric light, in substitution of the present unsatisfactory mode of lighting railway carriages, and in conformity with the practice on some English railways? He desired to explain that he made this inquiry in consequence of having observed in a recent publication a report on this subject from a certain civil engineer. It was a fact that the practice of lighting railway carriages by means of electricity was gaining ground at Home. For some years past the carriages on some of the English lines had been lighted by electricity produced by a gas-engine. This method had been found to be both expensive and troublesome; and recently the electric engineer on the Brighton Railway, with the assistance of another engineer, had devised means for utilizing the motive-power which propelled the train to furnish the electric light. Honourable gentlemen who were accustomed to travel in railway carriages in this colony need not be reminded of the defective character of the lights used, which, indeed, were injurious to the eyesight. He wished to know if the attention of the Government had been drawn to the discovery in question; and, if so, whether they would take steps with a view to its application to the railway carriages in this country.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said his honourable friend had been good enough to call his attention to the subject yesterday, and he therefore at once spoke to the Manager of Railways, so that no time should be lost in obtaining the required information. The Manager informed him that it was a matter of great expense. He believed the machines required would weigh at least two tons. But, seeing the importance of the matter, he was making further inquiries, with the view of obtaining a cheaper and lighter machine. He had no doubt that the matter was receiving the best attention of the department.

LOCAL BODIES' LOANS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—In proposing the motion standing in my name, I wish to say that, with the exception of the nomination of one of the proposed new Managers, the course recommended is, in my opinion, a perfectly constitutional one. I mention the name of the Hon. Mr. Bonar, who, if I mistake not, was one of those who voted with the minority; therefore it will be necessary to appoint some one in his place. However, I will leave that to my honourable friend Mr. Reynolds.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Sir, it is quite usual, if the Managers disagree on the first Conference, to appoint a second, and even a third. I think it would be a great pity to lose this very important Bill, and I am anxious to see if some compromise cannot be come to between the two Houses. With regard to the Hon. Mr. Bonar, I was under the impression that he was one of those who voted with the majority. If he voted for the clause as it originally stood, then it will be incompetent for him to be one of the Managers. I think there will be no objection to this motion being agreed to.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That a second Free Conference be requested with the House of Representatives upon the Local Bodies' Loans Bill with regard to the amendment of this Council in clause 38, with which the House of Representatives have disagreed; and that the Hon. Mr. Bonar, the Hon. Mr. Miller, and the Hon. Mr. Wilson be the Managers of such Conference on behalf of this Council; and that the Conference meet on Thursday, the 29th day of July, at twelve o'clock noon, in the Joint Committee room."—(*Hon. Mr. Wilson.*)

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—I desire to move an amendment. The course that has now been proposed to be taken may be quite constitutional, as has been said; but I think it is one that the Council ought to reflect seriously upon before adopting. In the present case the majority, I believe, supporting the opinions drawn up by the Managers of the first Conference was 26 to 10, and it does not seem to be a logical course now to ask the Council to appoint fresh Managers. The reasons drawn up by the first Managers were, to my mind, quite conclusive, and could not have been drawn up better. I do not think that the course now recommended to the Council has been frequently adopted, and I do not think it ought to be resorted to except in the very rarest cases. The result of such a course, it appears to me, would be to make the Managers appointed by the Council in future remiss and negligent in carrying out the duties assigned to them, because, if the practice obtained of appointing fresh Managers merely because a difference existed between the Houses, the first Managers might not care very much what they did; and I cannot help thinking, to a certain extent, that it is an ungracious thing that the gentlemen who have taken a great deal of trouble, and who represent the mind of the Council, in this matter should be supplanted by others who could not do better than, and most likely not so well as, they did. Under these circumstances, I move, That the names of the former Managers be inserted in place of those specified in the motion—namely, the names of the Hon. Dr. Pollen, the Hon. Mr. Stevens, and the Hon. Mr. Holmes.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—I quite agree with what has fallen from my honourable friend. The only reason I can see for appointing fresh Managers is for the purpose of their agreeing with the other House—there can be no other argument in favour of changing the Managers but that one. My honourable friend Mr. Reynolds must have been very much astray when he included the Hon. Mr. Bonar in the new Managers, as he voted on this subject in quite a different way from that which would entitle him to be included.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I wish to say that, in making this motion, there is no inten-

tion on the part of any honorable gentleman to cast any reflection on the former Managers or indeed on any one else. It was represented to us that a fair compromise could be arrived at, and, as this was a Bill of very great importance, we thought it was a pity that this should not be allowed to be done, so that the Bill might become law. It is a common practice, where two Managers do not agree, to appoint other Managers; and I am sure we could not have better more gentlemen in whom the Council has more confidence than in those we have named. There was no intention, if anything, but to meet fairly the requirements of the case, with a view of coming to a reasonable and fair compromise for the purpose of carrying out a Bill of very great importance. I do not, therefore, think there is any honorable member who should stand in the way of this matter being carried. There can be no hostility whatever on the part of the Council in arriving at this.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—It appears to me that whenever there may be a proposal of this kind, it is a very unusual proceeding indeed. It is hardly fair for a House to do so. I apprehend that this will be agreed to by the other House. We have sent the Managers, and they have gone to the room. If we send the Managers and ask the other House for a Conference, it means that we have reversed our opinion. I was under the impression that they were asked for a Conference, and that there was some feeling in the House that we might not be great authorities, because we have not adhered to our opinion. I should have said as much if the Conference had been asked for by the other House, that we should appoint other Managers, if they had done the same. That will appear to be the right course. But I do not see why we should ask for another Conference—we are not in a position to do it. I am not aware that there is any precedent for such a course as that now proposed. Amendments it has been said there is. There may be, but I am not aware of it. You, Sir, are well informed in these subjects. But even if there were a precedent, it does not appear to me a very fair proceeding, and it would be wrong to act on the precedent, even if it were already in existence. If the other Managers, as it is said they have appointed other Managers for another Conference, it will be for us to consider whether we shall appoint new Managers or not.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—Sir, I should like to ask you whether as the Bill is in the Council it is not our part to ask for a second Conference.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—If the Council will permit me, I think this is a question of much more importance than appears on the face of it. First of all, the Bill is with us, and I believe it is for us to ask for a Conference. No matter for that part of it. With regard to the precedents looking at last session, I find several of these for our guidance. On the School Committees Election Bill, the same action took place as that here proposed. There was a first Conference, and the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker, the Hon. Dr. Pollen, and the Hon. Mr. Holmes were appointed Managers. There was then a second Conference, and this Council appointed different Managers—the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker, the Hon. Mr. Fenton, and the Hon. Mr. Reynolds. One at least of these, if not two, held different opinions from those formed by the first Managers. That is to say, last year, in connection with the School Committees Election Bill, we did proceed in the very manner in which it is now proposed to proceed. I will say this to the Council. Of course it implies, I will not say a change of opinion, but a disposition to meet the other House who have different opinions. There is nothing unconstitutional in it, but in future proceedings there is a door open of a very convenient which will be left for honourable members coming here and agreeing on some uniform rule in regard to particular questions that may arise. It is for the Council ultimately to say whether it will follow such a precedent. It may be of great advantage to arrive at an agreement that such a course should be taken.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I dissent altogether from the opinion of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary that it is a common thing to appoint different Managers at a second Conference. You, Sir, have given an instance of a course that was taken during last session; but I think it will be found that not in several sessions have so many alterations been made in the personnel of a Conference as was the case last session. The point at issue is really this: Has the Council any desire to alter the personnel of the Conference, without some change of opinion having taken place in the Council? I apprehend that the alteration will imply that some change of opinion had taken place in the Council, and that it desired to come to a compromise with the other House in regard to the question at issue. I am quite certain that in regard to this question there is no such desire; and the conclusion that was arrived at by a large majority, was arrived at after deliberate consideration; and no reason has been given why the Council should change its mind on the subject. The Council has had an opportunity of seeing the Bill as it has taken by the other branch of the Legislature, and it is not said that these arguments are sufficient to lead the Council to a change of opinion on the subject. In the remarks of the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker he drew the attention of the Council to the fact that we were not responding to a message from the other House, but were taking spontaneous action in this matter on our own account. This would seem to indicate that we had changed our mind. I think that until such an alteration does take place in the mind of the Council in relation to the question, we should hesitate before going out of our way to ask for a second Conference—at all events, until we see a disposition on the part of the other House to concur in the opinions at which

we have arrived. I naturally anticipated that the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker would have concluded his remarks by adopting the time-honoured method of waiving a question—namely, moving "the previous question;" but, as he has not done so, I will move "the previous question," which, I think, will be the most satisfactory way of disposing of this difficulty.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—Sir, it has been stated that the Bill is in this Council, and that, consequently, it is for us to ask for a Conference. I think, myself, the Bill ought to be in the other House.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—The meaning of this resolution is simply this: The amendment which was made in the Local Bodies' Loans Bill was carried in opposition to the Government, and was sustained by a large majority of the Legislative Council. A Conference was appointed, and the Managers were instructed to maintain the views of the Council before that Conference, and, doing so, they were unable to come to any agreement with the Managers for the other House. We are now asked by the Government to agree to this resolution. To agree to it would simply be to admit that the Council wavered in the views it had held upon the question upon which the Conference was held, and that there was a possibility of a change of opinion taking place. There is no corresponding echo—there is no desire on the part of the other House for a second Conference; therefore it is for the Council to say whether a second Conference should be appointed. I can only express my hope that the Council will maintain the position that it has taken up on the Bill. Probably no measure of greater consequence than this Local Bodies' Loans Bill has been brought forward in this Assembly. There is another Bill which has to be read with this, the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill—the one depends on the other—and of the two the one which is now in question is, unquestionably, of more importance than the other. The question is not a question of to-day or to-morrow, but of loans extending over long periods of years. The question of using trust funds for the purpose of satisfying these loans is one which ought not to be regarded lightly. The principle that has guided us in the past is that the majority shall rule: it is a just principle and a democratic principle, and on what grounds that principle is to be forsaken I cannot see. Seeing that the views of the Government and the views of a majority of the Council are in conflict, I ask whether any active proceedings should now be taken.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—In answer to the question asked by the Hon. Mr. Robinson, I beg leave to assure the Council that I have made further inquiries since this question was mooted. I informed the Council that this Bill was with us, and, in consequence of further inquiries, I am corroborated in the statement that the Bill is with us—that it was not in any way sent to us, and, according to the usages between the two Houses, this Bill is now with us. That is not only on the authority of the Clerk of this Council, but also on the authority of the Clerk of the House of Representatives. I think, therefore, the Council may be quite satisfied on that point.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—In reference to what I have already said I wish to make a short explanation. I am satisfied with your explanation, Sir, as to where the Bill is; but what I endeavoured to impress upon the Council was that, simply, before we should appoint another Conference, we ought to show that we have made up our minds to make an alteration. I will read what May says on this point. [Extract read.] What I desired was to impress on the Council that, if we were to ask for a second Conference, we ought to be prepared to make a concession, and the Council will have to consider that.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I should like to ask that the reasons prepared by the Managers for this Council be read, before the Council comes to any decision on the point.

The ACTING CLERK read the reasons, which were as follow:—

"The object of the clause 38 of the Local Bodies' Loans Bill is to obtain the real opinion of the ratepayers, so far as that can be made evident by a majority, more or less pronounced, of exercisable votes. As the burden of taxation necessarily imposed, if loans be raised, must be borne for a long time—and not always, or even generally, by those at whose instance the debt is incurred—it is but right that there should be reasonable precaution against recklessness and improvidence. In practice no serious difficulty has been found in eliciting the 'real opinion' of ratepayers by this method. The polls taken under 'The Napier Harbour Board Empowering Act, 1884,' may be cited in evidence. In each of those cases in which a majority of the whole was required a vote of the ratepayers of a very extensive district, which was almost unanimous, was obtained.

"The words 'votes which can be exercised' have no other meaning than the total number of votes on the roll. As the rolls are periodically corrected and made up, the 'non-existent' votes must be at any time a minute quantity; the non-residence of a voter, as it does not absolve him from taxation, ought not to deprive him of his franchise. In practice the words 'which can be exercised,' or their equivalent, have not been found to present any ambiguity.

"The clause 38, as passed by the House of Representatives, did not, as is asserted, provide ample safeguard against undue borrowing, it being possible under its provisions so to operate as that a small interested, and therefore active, minority could impose serious permanent burdens upon a district.

"The principle affirmed by the clause 38, as amended by the Legislative Council, has been previously recognized by the General Assembly, and, in practice, has been found beneficial."

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I should now like to express the opinion that the removal of the difference between the two branches of the Legislature rests on the acceptance of the particular views of the majority of the other Cham-

ber in their entirety. It appears to me that, without a very large surrender of opinion on the part of this Council, the difference must be irreconcilable. The question is, Is a majority of this Council so convinced that they were wrong on that occasion that they think a radical change of opinion on that point should be assented to by them? I would, further, say that any new Managers, or the old ones, will be placed in a position of very considerable difficulty if they are expected to give way on this point, unless they know beforehand that there is a change of opinion on the part of the Council in this respect—that is, if they are expected to give way. Of course, if they are not expected to give way, the position is as clear as it was before.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—It has been stated that the Council has not expressed any desire to alter its mind on this subject. That may be all very true; but, then, it is possible that the other branch of the Legislature may be willing to compromise, and it would be of no use to appoint the same Managers in both Houses, because they have already reported that they cannot agree. The only thing to do is to appoint new Managers, which has been the practice hitherto.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Last session it was done three times—namely, in regard to the Goldfields Bill, the Waste Lands Bill, and the School Committees Election Bill. I know that the old Managers are what would be called in Scotland "firm," but in England would be called "obstinate." I think three more firm gentlemen could hardly be found in either branch of the Legislature. Seeing, however, that there is a desire on the part of the other branch of the Legislature for a compromise, it would be as well to appoint new Managers, and then the terms of the compromise might be suggested. There are three Bills in the same position to-day—namely, the Local Bodies' Loans Bill, the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill, and the Counties Bill. If the Council reject one, the other two must follow suit. I hope the Council will not take upon itself to reject this Bill without making every effort to come to some arrangement. I do not think that the new Managers will be placed in any very great difficulty either, because it will be for them to see if they cannot persuade the Managers of the other House to be reasonable and, if not comply exactly with the wishes of the Council, yet submit something which the Council might ultimately agree upon. There is one thing that has to be borne in mind: The Council has taken upon itself to alter the law as it stands, and it is only for the other branch of the Legislature to drop this Bill and the law remains as at present. The law requires a majority of three-fifths for the sanction of a loan; therefore it would be advantageous to appoint another Conference, to see if the present law could not be modified. As the other branch of the Legislature have a decided objection to the amendment as passed, I think the Council should waive their objection to the appointment of new Managers, who might endeavour to come to a satisfactory conclusion, and allow the Bill to become law.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I should like to call the attention of the Council to the fact that the Local Bodies' Loans Bill is a new Bill, and the initiation of a new departure altogether in local government. It is absurd to talk about what the law is in these things—this is a new Bill and a new law.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—The Hon. Mr. Reynolds can never see any difficulty about anything he wishes to be done; but I can assure him that this is a more important matter than he seems to think. It deals with the taxation of the colony for the next twenty-six years, and therefore it becomes the Council to be very chary in giving way on a matter of such importance. It has been said that it is a principle of democracy that the majority shall rule: we only ask that a majority shall rule in regard to sanctioning these loans. Three-fifths of the ratepayers who voted might mean only a small number, so that, in that case, a few would have the power to decide the taxation of the community for the following twenty-six years. Supposing the people took a great interest in borrowing: they would make a point of being present, and there would be no difficulty at all in getting a majority such as the Council wishes to provide. I have no hesitation in saying that we have public opinion with us on this subject.

The Hon. Captain FRASER.—The question before the Council is the appointment of new Managers for a second Conference, and I should like to ask the Hon. Mr. Reynolds whether the other Chamber has appointed new Managers.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—The other Chamber has not appointed new Managers, but the moment we appoint new Managers they will do so. The object is to have a compromise, and that can only be done by the appointment of new Managers.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—I think it is a very important thing that in every precedent for a second Conference new Managers were invariably appointed. The object of a second Conference is that possibly some new arguments may be used, and some concessions may be made. I think we should follow precedent. It would be showing a slight to the other Chamber if we did not take the ordinary course.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—I venture to recall to the minds of honourable members what was the custom in these matters formerly. Many years ago we had very important Bills before us, and this kind of difficulty arose over and over again. The custom that obtained was this: When the delegates appointed by the Council disagreed in every particular with the Committee appointed by the House of Representatives, then, if the Council wished to make an exhibition of extended courtesy to the other House by affording them an additional opportunity of considering the subject, some member of the first-appointed Conference got up in the Council and proposed that fresh Managers

should be elected to represent the Council in a fresh Conference; but these were invariably elected from the majority. I think, in the present instance, we ought to vote for "the previous question;" and, if the Council come to the conclusion that a second Conference should be given, then some honourable member should propose it, and afford fresh members an opportunity of explaining its views in new language, in order to impress more forcibly on the House of Representatives the opinion of the Council. I think the Council should vote for "the previous question." It will be a question whether, under the particular circumstances, it is necessary to take any further steps in this matter. But I cannot leave the subject without saying that, as a question of principle and a matter of fact, the Council is absolutely useless if it gives way on this and similar points.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—Sir, I should like to say a word of explanation in reference to what the Hon. Mr. Wilson said. I had not the slightest idea of casting any slight on the other Chamber. My amendment was simply with the object of emphasizing the view taken by the majority of the members of the Council.

The Council divided on the question, "That the names proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 15.

Baillie	Kenny	Reynolds
Barnicoat	Lahmann	Scotland
Bonar	Martin	Shrimski
Buckley	Peacock	Swanson
Dignan	Reeves	Walker.

NOES, 21.

Acland	Johnson, G. R.	Robinson
Brandon	Johnston, J.	Shephard
Brett	Mantell	Stevens
Chamberlin	Menzies	Whitaker
Fraser	Miller	Wigley
Grace	Peter	Williams
Holmes	Pollen	Williamson.

Majority against, 6.

Names struck out, and those of Managers of first Conference inserted.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I now beg to move "the previous question." The remark that has fallen from honourable members, that it has been the custom of this Council to appoint different members of the Council to act in a second Conference, does not accord with my recollection. Perhaps my memory is becoming feeble; but, so far as it serves me, I think the Council, where it continues to hold the same opinion, has usually reappointed the members of the Council who were originally appointed on the Conference. If honourable members look back they will see that wherever there has been a change in the Managers it has been in cases of a change of opinion on the part of the Council.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—In reference to indicating a change of opinion, it seems to me that the division now taken shows a slight tendency in that direction, and the second Conference is moved for with a view to coming to a compromise on this important question. We shall be placed in a very awkward position if we vote for this "previous question."

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I hope the Council will refuse to allow the question to be put. That will be the proper method of disposing of the subject. I do not agree with the Hon. the Colonial Secretary that the division which has just taken place shows any difference of opinion in regard to the main question. The division had reference only to the *personnel* of the Managers of the Conference. The Council having, by a majority, maintained the same Managers, I hope they will decline to proceed further with this question now.

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN.—I should like to know what benefit can be derived from appointing the same gentlemen again. How can we expect they will change their opinions? It is possible that fresh Managers might propose something different from what the former Managers had proposed. They might propose, for instance, that the majority should be two-thirds instead of three-fifths. Is it likely that members who were appointed before will abate one iota from the opinions they have already expressed?

The hour of four o'clock having arrived, the Council proceeded to the Orders of the Day.

SALMON AND TROUT BILL.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES, in moving the second reading of the Salmon and Trout Bill, said the principal object of it was to authorize fishermen to place stake-nets in the lakes of Waipori and Waihola, to enable them to catch fish. These places had been fishing-places for many years, and the Natives had a reserve of five miles on the river under the Treaty of Waitangi. Large quantities of fish, such as mullet and flounders, were caught there, and this formed part of the Natives' food. His own impression was that no harm would be done by passing this Bill. Recently the Otago Acclimatization Society advertised in the *Bruce Herald* that stake-nets should not be used. This resulted in a petition, signed by one hundred and eighty-five persons, being sent to the Government asking that there might be continued the facilities for fishing that had been enjoyed for many years without question. This petition was also forwarded to the Otago Acclimatization Society. The society then said that they had no objection to the employment of these nets, as they would not interfere with the salmon-trout. The Bill before the Council was to authorize the stake-nets to be used. There was also a clause in the Bill which provided that they should not be placed within two hundred yards of the entrance to the river, so that the salmon-trout approaching the nets would have space to evade them. The Otago Acclimatization Society were very active in anything that concerned the salmon-trout, and they had a ranger to insure that the conditions were complied with. He thought, therefore, that the Council would see that no harm could be done by allowing stake-nets to be used.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES said he thought very serious injury might be done to salmon and trout and their further propagation and multiplication if the Council passed this Bill, and therefore he opposed it. Honourable members would remember that on several different occasions the Council had expressed its determination not to allow the employment of fixed engines of any kind for fishing. It might be interesting if he referred to what had been done in bygone times in reference to this mode of fishing. The question was not a new one. It had been the subject of legislation for nearly seven hundred years. They found that in the old statutes fixed engines were prohibited. They found that, as early as 1200 A.D., "cruives" and "yairs"—the names given to the fixed engines known at that time—were prohibited by the Scots Acts, and in successive reigns afterwards they found a succession of Acts in the same direction. Now, to show the Council that he was not talking at random, he would quote from the work of one of the highest authorities on this question, to show that the erection for a time of these fixed engines in any of the rivers had been followed by a serious diminution in the quantity of fish caught and the value of the fish. Towards the last century some persons found that the old laws prohibiting these engines had become obsolete; and some stake-nets were erected in the Firth of Tay. They were erected, first, in 1799, and within two or three years the effect was so serious a diminution of the quantity of fish caught that litigation was begun, and resulted in these nets being swept away in 1812. Mr. Russell, the authority to whom he alluded, pointed out how the quantity of salmon seriously diminished during the time the nets were in operation, and how they recovered after these had been removed. It might be satisfactory if he quoted what Mr. Russell said on this subject:—

"Up to the middle of the fifteenth century it would appear that fixed engines, of which the only species then known were cruives and yairs, were legal everywhere."—This statement was not quite accurate.—"They were then suppressed in estuaries and 'within flude-marke of the sea,' a cruive working in the full run of the fresh river under certain regulations being regarded as less mischievous. The prohibitions were imposed at first only for a specified term of years, but afterwards in perpetuity; and the Acts expressly included in their prohibitions even those engines for which the Crown had granted special permission—that is, permission not only to fish, but to fish by that particular mode. Thus, in an Act of James I. (1424), it is 'ordanyit that all crufis and yaris set in fresche watteris, quhar the see fillis and ebbis, the quhilke destroyis the fry of all fisches, be destroyit and put away for thre yeris to cum, notgaynstandand ony privileges or fredom geifyn in the contrare.' In the same reign another Act (1477 or 1478) runs thus: 'It is statute and ordained that the Acte made of before be King James the First anent the cruves sett in waters be observed and keipt,' &c.; and that 'all cruves' 'be put away and destroyed for ever mair,' &c. Ten years afterwards it was 'statut and ordand that all cruffis' 'be destroyit and put down,' 'as well those belongis to our Soveraine Lord as uthers through all the Realme.' Here we see the modes of fishing which had been prosecuted from time immemorial, and prosecuted under Crown rights for the exercise of those modes, were suppressed by statute—the suppression including the fisheries not only of private persons, but also the fisheries retained and worked by the Crown itself. Those Acts were dealing with the only kind of fixtures then known, and they made no scruple of suppressing them in all positions where they were considered hurtful to the breed of fish and 'the common weill.' . . . . The chief aim of legislation on the subject, both in England and Scotland, from Magna Charta downwards, has been to prevent the raising of 'standing gear' in 'the run of the fish;' but this prohibition did not extend to the sea-coast, partly, perhaps, because that was not then known to be 'the run of the fish,' and partly because no sort of engine had at that time been invented capable of standing and acting effectively in the open sea. It has since, however, been discovered—and most diligently has the discovery been put to use—that the sea-coast is almost as much the course of the fish as is the channel of the river or estuary. The salmon, returning to the fresh water, does not lie off in mid-ocean and then, as with a needle and compass, steer right into the river's mouth. It feels, or, as Sir Humphrey Davy expressed it to the Committee of 1824, scents its way along the shore for many miles. The distance from the river of which they are in search, or from any river, at which salmon begin, in nautical phrase, 'to hug the shore' is greater than seems generally believed, even by those who have paid some attention to the subject.' . . . In proving the destructiveness of fixed nets we shall confine ourselves chiefly to two pieces of evidence, differing, as will be seen, in their character, but both leading clearly to conviction. . . . Fixed nets were erected in the Firth of Tay in 1799, and, after much litigation, were finally declared illegal in 1812. The following figures, being an abstract of returns for two fisheries forming in value a half of the whole Tay, and situated immediately above the highest of the fixed-net fisheries, tell their own story very forcibly:—

"*Total of Fish taken in Ten Years.*

	Salmon.	Grilse.
From 1788 to 1797, before stake-nets were erected	108,747	22,167
From 1801 to 1810, during time ...	69,990	24,300
From 1815 to 1824, after stake-nets were abolished	113,168	112,204

These facts speak for themselves. . . .

"It may be said that these were stake-nets in an illegal position, and therefore not furnishing a fair criterion. Without leaving the same river we can adduce other facts not open to this cavil. After the suppression of the nets in the estuary of the Tay in 1812 they began to be erected on the sea-coast of Forfarshire, about 1821, and were in effective numbers about 1825.

With what result? On the two extensive fisheries which we have been using for data the take fell nearly half in the ten years following, sinking to very little more than the amount to which it had been reduced during the operation of the stake-nets in the river. The number of salmon taken annually at one of those two fisheries had never been less than ten thousand for four years previous to the erection of fixed nets on the coast; it never once reached that number in the thirty years that followed. . . .

"The same story has to be told of the effect of stake- and bag-nets in England and Ireland. In Ireland the effects were so rapid and visible as to produce both popular tumults and ultimately something approaching to legislative prohibition. . . . The reports of the English Inspectors of Salmon-fisheries are full of statements of the mischief wrought by these devices."

"There are plenty of proofs to the same effect since the erection of fixed engines on the coasts of Aberdeen and Kincardine. The annual value of the produce of the Rivers Dee and Don has sunk by £18,000; and, under the operation of similar causes in the Moray Firth the produce of the Beauly has sunk two-thirds, and of the Ness three-fourths. The first stake-net on the Solway was erected at Newby, near the mouth of the Annan. The rent had before been £16, whilst the rents of the fisheries further up the Firth amounted to several hundreds of pounds. In a few years the rent of the Newby fishery, formerly £16, was £2,000!—whilst its upper neighbours sank to a mere fraction of their former value. Here was a great transfer of property, and then came a great destruction of property. The Newby example was copied; the Firth was over-fished; the rent of Newby is now little more than a tenth of what it was; and its neighbours, though they did not share its prosperity, have shared its decay: for instance, a fishery which used to yield the Corporation of Carlisle a rent of £722, when salmon sold at 2d. a pound, now yields a rent of only £55, when salmon sells at as many shillings (2s.) a pound. In a word, the improved engines have not only reduced the total produce of the Firth and its rivers, but have reduced the total money value far below the amount at which it stood when ten tons of the produce brought no more money than one ton brings now.

"The evidence from all parts of England laid before the English Commissioners of Inquiry (1860) was so strong that they reported: 'We are prepared, after a full consideration of the case, to recommend the total suppression by law of all fixed engines;' and, in the same year, a Committee of the House of Lords, appointed in the interest and on the instigation of the owners of fixed engines, also reported in favour of abolition."

If these nets were to be allowed to be erected in the present instance, they would be erected in others, and the certain result would be to destroy the fisheries. These fisheries, when they flourished, not only produced food of a very choice character, but they also provided employment to a large number of people; and the Council ought to take that into consideration before allowing a measure of this kind to be passed. Mr. Russell said, in regard to this:—

"From the report of the Irish Commissioners we learn that in 1862, apparently an ordinary year, three Irish railways conveyed 400 tons, or about 900,000lb., of salmon, being equal in weight, and treble in value, to 15,000 sheep. In Scotland, the Tay alone furnishes about 800,000lb., being equal in weight, and treble in value, to 18,000 sheep. . . . . And in making comparison between the supplies of fish and flesh, it must be kept in mind that salmon cost nothing for their keep. . . .

"The salmon-nets employ, on the Tay, about 700 men, receiving in wages about £9,000 a year; and on the Tweed about 350 men, receiving about £4,500."

Nor had the Legislature been neglectful on this point on former occasions. The Fisheries Bill had been before the Council on several different occasions; it was last before them in 1883; and he would read to the Council the clauses contained in that Bill, which were the result of careful consideration on their part, and also of the Joint Committee of the two Houses, by which the Bill was considered. Section 14 of the Fisheries Bill, passed by the Council in 1883, provided that,—

"If any person shall erect or use any fixed engine in any waters, river, creek, or stream for the purpose of catching fish, he shall, for every such offence, be liable to a penalty not exceeding twenty pounds."

The following was section 16:—

"Any collector or any officer appointed under this Act may destroy any fixed engine, and the materials of which any such fixed engine shall be made shall be forfeited."

Another clause compelled offenders to give their names and places of residence, under penalty for refusal; and the interpretation clause gave a comprehensive definition of the term "fixed engine." The Council had thus already recognized that fixed engines were destructive to an industry which they desired to promote, and therefore their erection should be prohibited. Now, what had they been doing for a number of years back? For the last sixteen or seventeen years they had been using every effort to plant salmon and trout in their rivers. So far as regarded trout, the attempt had been eminently successful, and these were now found in almost every stream—if not in every stream, then in every part of the country. They grew very slowly at Home; but here it was found that they grew with great rapidity —within five years after being hatched they grew up to 8lb. or 9lb. With regard to the Atlantic salmon, there was no evidence yet that they had been successful. They were first introduced some fifteen years ago, but the earlier experiments were conducted with less knowledge than had since been acquired, and the failures were very marked. Latterly they had been more successful, and eight years ago from three to four thousand fry were planted

in one river—the Aparima. But the experiment made last year of bringing out the ova of Atlantic salmon had been far more successful than any that had yet been made. A very large number of fry had been liberated from the supply brought out from Britain under the care of Mr. Farr. He thought they had been most successful with the Californian salmon. There was some doubt about what particular name that salmon ought to get. The American Commissioners declared that it was a salmon, and it had the characteristics of salmon, but it appeared there was some doubt about the correct name. There was no doubt, however, that it was a most choice article of diet, and afforded plenty of sport.

The Hon. Captain FRASER.—They will not take any lure.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES said the honourable member had had no experience in New Zealand of that; and in California when the right man came he readily caught salmon with the rod. Mr. Seth Green found that the salmon would take the fly freely enough. The ova that came to this colony had been very carefully picked, and the colony owed a debt of gratitude to the American Commissioner for the care that he had exercised. Something like 80 per cent. of the ova received had hatched out. They were very successful in Southland, and the curator there was able to plant about seventy thousand fry in one river and its affluents, and that river swarmed with them now. A smaller river was also planted, and he found that in it there were young salmon, which led to the inevitable conclusion that they bred there. He had endeavoured to show that in the case of salmon rivers the erection of fixed engines and nets would be destructive of the fisheries. If they allowed them to be started under any plea or pretext they would not be able to resist the precedent, and the practice would extend. It might be that in this particular water the amount of damage to be done to the salmon and trout would not be so serious. They knew, however, that salmon went about skirting the coast, skirting estuaries and river-channels, and did not confine themselves to direct routes. The facts stated in the work from which he had quoted showed that these stake-nets were very injurious to fisheries at Home, and no doubt that would be the case here. He could not say, from his own knowledge, that the fish had bred in the rivers referred to in the Bill; but, judging from the fact that the fish had been breeding in other rivers in the district, he thought it possible that they had also bred in these waters. He would object to any such measure as this Bill, which would permit unscrupulous persons to acquire vested interests. The effect of the measure would also be to nip in the bud a rising industry, and prevent salmon being naturalized. It would result in great profit to some individuals for a short time, but would result in loss to the community by the deterioration of the fishing grounds. This was clearly shown to have happened at Home.

The Hon. Captain FRASER said an author was writing the history of an island, and one of the chapters was headed, "On the Snakes in this Island," and all the chapter contained was, "There are no snakes." In the same way, there were no salmon in the Taieri River. He did not think a salmon had ever come back from the sea. Professor Huxley had given his opinion that the food of the salmon was not in these waters. No evidence had been adduced which would satisfy a jury that the true salmon had ever been caught in this colony or in Tasmania. The fish which had been caught was the salmon-trout—a much hardier fish. There used to be great numbers of salmon-trout in the Dunedin estuary; but, owing to the denudation of the forests, the Water of Leith stream became small, and when the fish came up they were caught. He did not think any of these fish were there now. He had fished in Wales, Ireland, France, and the North of Spain; and he might be considered to know something of fishing. The words "salmon and trout" should never have appeared in this Bill. The intention was to allow indigenous fish to be caught—fish which came up in large quantities during the flow of the tide, and went down again with the ebb. In Dunedin and the surrounding district the people would be glad to obtain these fish. Under the Treaty of Waitangi the Maoris had a right to fish where their forefathers fished. The Maoris could not be prevented fishing in the Taieri or Lower Waihola; and not only that, but they could employ European settlers. This right of the Maoris was guaranteed to them by an Act passed by the Legislature some sessions ago. He saw no reason why the Council should refuse the people the right to catch the splendid fish which came up the Taieri and many other rivers. He trusted the Bill would pass.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK said he had taken considerable interest in the acclimatization of salmon. The honourable gentleman who had just sat down might have fished a great deal and yet know very little indeed upon the subject then under discussion. This reminded him of another fisherman who had a greater history in this line than had the honourable gentleman. A fish had been caught, which was supposed to be a Californian salmon, and he had asked this gentleman, who was said to be an authority on fishing matters, if he could identify the fish. That gentleman said he had been a fisherman all his life, but he could not say whether the fish was a salmon or not. The question before the Council was a large one, and the public should have had time to consider the matter before a Bill was rushed into Parliament. The colony had large interests in the acclimatization of salmon. A great deal of money had been spent in the endeavour to acclimatize the fish. He was surprised that the Government had not, in all our years, taken steps to prevent this Bill passing. He was informed that there was a large supply of indigenous fish in these rivers, as stated by the Hon. Captain Fraser.

He was informed that for some time past people in the neighbourhood of these waters had been stake-netting trout. For the sake of the hotelkeepers in the neighbourhood making an advertisement of the fishing, he thought it would be a pity to pass a Bill like the present. If a privilege was granted in one case applications for similar privileges would be made hereafter. If certain people had been illegally enjoying a privilege for a great many years past he did not think the Council should legalize for the future depredations on these fish. He thought it had been distinctly proved that Californian salmon had returned to the rivers. Certain fish caught in the district from which he came had been declared by a good authority to be Californian salmon. He moved, That the Bill be read a second time that day six months.

The Hon. Mr. WIGLEY said it appeared to him that no members of the Council desired to see such an injurious Bill as the one under consideration passed. They were told by the gentleman in charge of the Bill that poaching had been going on for many years past. The Council was now asked to pass an Act to legalize that practice. It was a great matter of complaint that it was impossible to prevent the Maoris fishing, and to this was attributed the fact that the salmon had not been thoroughly acclimatized in the rivers of the colony. The public had had no opportunity of expressing their opinion on the merits of the Bill. It was proposed to pass the Bill as a local Bill, and yet it had not passed the Standing Orders Committee. He considered that the river affected by the Bill was one of the finest rivers for salmon in New Zealand. If there was any river in the colony in which salmon would thrive it was this river. It was asked that stake-nets be allowed to be put in near the stream, two or three hundred yards away. It had been said that, on account of the river being sometimes muddy, river fish would not go there; but any one who understood anything about fish must know that when a river was in a state of flood was the very time the fish would travel, and small fish going up river would keep near the shore and the places where the Council was asked to allow the nets to be placed. It had been said that nets did not destroy the fish in the River Taieri. He wished to read a few extracts from a book by Mr. Francis, who was an authority on fish-culture. Mr. Francis said,—

"The decrease of salmon is not a matter of yesterday, but may be traced back during a period of more than a quarter of a century, though the decrease has of late years progressed with alarming rapidity. For example, some twenty years ago, the Irish fisheries, by poaching, &c., were in a very reduced state. Laws were passed, and the rivers put under the management of officers appointed to see to them. In a very few years the fisheries improved wonderfully; but as they began to improve, and the style of fishing began to pay well, fixed nets, hitherto but little known on the Irish coasts, began to make their appearance. The more the fisheries improved the more these nets increased, and to such a degree that the rivers are beginning to suffer very severely. The system is manifestly ruinous, unfair, and illegal.

"Fixed nets and stake-weirs have been declared illegal by three Judges, two concurring with Baron Pennefather in that judgment."

"Salmon run up at all periods of the year: even in December clean fish are often found running into unobstructed rivers."

"Every salmon in the sea would enter some river or other if not prevented."

"Lastly, we have those most destructive engines of all called stake- and bag-nets."

"It is not too much to say that fixed nets have been the chief cause of the damage to our salmon-fisheries, and it is impossible thoroughly to regenerate those fisheries while they are permitted to exist."

The Legislature was asked to legalize these nets, and it was shown that in Ireland fishing was nearly destroyed owing to the use of the nets. It was said that the Maoris had a right to fish wherever their forefathers did. Could that statement be reconciled with the fact that land had been let on the shores of the Wakatipu and Wanaka Lakes? If such a Bill as the one under consideration were passed, why should its application be made local? If it were passed, other districts would ask that they should have the same rights. He would support the amendment.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY understood that the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill had been detained owing to an accident: it would only be a gracious thing, in that case, if the debate were adjourned. He begged to move the adjournment of the debate.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK considered that the convenience of honourable members should also be studied. He must oppose the proposed adjournment.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON thought it would be a pity to adjourn the debate, after the long and interesting discussion that had taken place.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR hoped the Council would not refuse the courtesy that had been asked for by the Hon. the Colonial Secretary. The Hon. Mr. Holmes had stated that he intended to be present in the Council that night, and something must have occurred to prevent him from carrying out his intention. He thought the honourable gentleman had the right to a reply.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON thought the Hon. Mr. Holmes had had his opportunity to reply; but he was not there, and was no doubt fulfilling an engagement of a festive nature, and enjoying himself at the expense of the convenience of the members of the Council.

The Council divided on the question, "That the debate be adjourned."

AYES, 15.

Barnicoat	Dignan	Mantell
Bonar	Fraser	Martin
Buckley	Grace	Monzies

Miller	Shephard	Williams
Reynolds	Stevens	Williamson.

NOES, 17.

Acland	Peter	Taiaroa
Baillie	Pollen	Walker
Brandon	Reeves	Whitaker
Brett	Robinson	Wigley
Chamberlin	Shrimski	Wilson.
Peacock	Swanson	

Majority against, 2.

Motion negatived.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT said the Committee to whom the Bill had been referred had recommended that it should be read and construed with "The Salmon and Trout Act, 1867," and "The Fisheries Conservation Act, 1884;" so that its provisions would be subject to the same restrictions as were laid down in those Acts. It was also proposed to add that the Bill should not come into operation except by Proclamation of the Governor in Council. This would give time for the mature consideration of the measure, and might fairly justify honourable members in allowing the Bill to be read a second time, for the Governor in Council would not proclaim the Act unless he saw very good reason for doing so. The Hon. Mr. Wigley had said that the Taieri was the best river he knew of in which to catch salmon; but, on the other hand, he (Mr. Barnicoat) understood the Hon. Captain Fraser to say that there were no salmon there at all. The Bill before them was only intended to permit the capture of indigenous fish.

The Hon. Mr. ACLAND said the honourable gentleman who had just sat down had stated that the Bill was not intended to apply to salmon, but only to indigenous fish—that was to say, that any fish caught in the river affected by the Bill which had the appearance of salmon was, for the purposes of this Bill, to be deemed not to be salmon. How the salmon were to be so knowing as not to get into the nets was more than he could understand. This was the thin end of the wedge, and the Council ought to discountenance it at once. If this concession were granted in one case it would have to be granted in others, and their chance of establishing salmon in this country would be very much diminished and retarded.

Bill ordered to be read a second time that day six months.

SHEEP BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said, in moving the second reading of the Sheep Bill, he might explain that it had been introduced at the instance of several honourable members, and, more especially, on the recommendation of the Joint Sheep and Rabbit Nuisance Committee which had recently sat. It had been found that great hardship and inconvenience arose through the stringency of the existing Act on this subject when it was enforced from time to time, and now that the necessity for such stringency had disappeared it was desirable to relax those provisions to some extent. Where sheep were being carried for the purpose of slaughter, a discretion was given to the Inspectors which they did not possess under the existing Act, and which it was desirable they should have. An important clause in the Bill was that relating to the removal of sheep from a clean district through an unclean one, and there was also a clause respecting sheep affected with lice. He understood there were several amendments to be proposed by honourable members, which he should have liked to have received in time to be embodied in the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. WIGLEY would like to draw the attention of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary to clause 6. Power was given to a Sheep Inspector, if sheep were not clean, and the owner refused to clean them after receiving notice to do so, to take possession of them and clean them. How was he to do that? There was no public dip. He would suggest that every one holding a certain number of sheep should be compelled to erect a dip on his premises. He threw this suggestion out to the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, in order that he might have the provision amended in this direction if he chose to do so.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON took it for granted that this Bill had nothing to do with relaxing the provisions of the present Sheep Bill with regard to scab, and that it would simply offer relief to those whose flocks were afflicted with lice. He would not oppose the second reading, particularly as they had been told once or twice that before long the whole colony would be free from scab; but in Committee he would have to see that there was nothing in it which would relax the present regulations with regard to scab.

Bill read a second time.

MINING BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY, in moving the second reading of the Mining Bill, said it was chiefly a consolidation Bill, but there were some new provisions introducing improvements of a departmental character. The Bill repealed fourteen or fifteen Acts, and embodied them in the measure itself. He would call the attention of the Council to the present curious position of the mining law. In the first place, any one wanting to know the provisions of that law had to wade through a great number of mining and other Acts, the first of which was entitled "The Shortland Beach Act, 1869," which, from its title, would be about the last measure that any one would look into for provisions respecting mining. These would be all repealed. Another curious fact was that gold-mining in the North Island was carried on under the Gold-mining Districts Act of 1873, while that in the South Island was carried on under the Mines Act of 1877. This was owing to the circumstances in the two Islands being so different; but it was hoped in this Bill to make provisions which would meet all circumstances. A new feature in the Bill was that the miner's right fee was reduced from £1 to 5s., and another was giving the right to mine on private

property. The Government at present had the right to resume land for mining purposes; but it was not always convenient to do that, as it was first necessary to ascertain whether the lands were auriferous or not. These were the only new features which it was necessary to explain.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR thought the Bill would be a very valuable one if it did all that the Colonial Secretary described, particularly as it would put the whole of the mining law, which was now spread over fourteen or fifteen Acts, into one. Up to the present time two systems of mining had been carried on in the colony—one in Auckland under the Goldmining Districts Act, and the other in the South Island under the Mines Act. He trusted they would find that the provisions of this Bill would harmonize with the decisions which had been given in the Courts under the old Acts, which were now thoroughly understood by the miners. He would not at present express any positive opinion on the different parts of the Bill. He noticed that there were many restrictions proposed on mining which did not exist now: but this part of the Bill he would carefully examine in Committee.

Bill read a second time.

SETTLED LAND BILL.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—This Bill—the Settled Land Bill—has been brought forward by the Government; but, as I had had a great deal to do with the subject in former years, it was requested that I should take charge of it, and I agreed to do so. A good deal of complaint has been made by honourable members as to delay in proceeding with this measure. There has been very considerable delay; but I am not responsible for it. In connection with that, I wish to mention one point which has caused some of the delay, and I mention it because the subject of it is one on which you may, Sir, give us your opinion. The Bill, as it was originally asked to be introduced, was intituled "The Settled Land Act, 1886;" but, in the course of passing through the press—by whom it was inserted I do not know—it became intituled "The Alienation of Settled Land Act, 1886," and it so came here, and for two or three days the Clerk — whether rightly or wrongly — it appeared took upon himself not to distribute the Bill, but he kept it back. Now, I think that was wrong; that the Clerk exceeded his functions and his duty in interfering with a member's Bill and keeping back its distribution. It would have been quite proper to have brought the subject under your notice, Sir; and that, I take it, should have been done under the circumstances, but I think honourable members should not be subject to have their Bills kept back from distribution by the Clerk. I have no more to say on that subject, but I have thought it right to mention it, and there I leave it. The Bill I hold in my hand is part of a Bill brought into the Assembly in 1883 in the name of Mr. Conolly. It was a Bill which I had had prepared for that session of the Assembly, and in bringing it in on the present occasion a good deal has been omitted; but that does not impair the principle of the measure, nor does it impair the operation of its operative clauses. The portion which has been omitted is that which refers to leases, for which due provision has been made in the Act of 1865, and amended, I think, in 1879. It was not necessary that that should be introduced, because we have a sufficient provision with reference to leases, though, on the whole, I should have thought it better to have the whole law upon this subject consolidated. The Bill which I ask the Council to read a second time to-night is introduced for the purpose of removing some difficulties and some evils that exist in reference to settled land. First of all, let us consider, shortly, what the evils are it is intended to remedy by this Bill. Honourable members are no doubt aware that it is quite competent at the present day to tie up property for a very great length of time. A few years ago—fifty or sixty years ago—it was perfectly competent to tie it up much farther than you can now, and that power was found to be so injurious that provision was made by an Act called Thellusson's Act, because that was the name of a rich man who tied up property in such a way and for such a length of time that in the number of years before it became distributable it might have exceeded in amount the National Debt. To get rid of that evil it was provided that property should not be tied up for a longer time than a life or lives in being and twenty-one years afterwards. But even that provision allowed property to be kept back from being utilized for seventy, eighty, or even possibly a hundred years; and the consequence was that many estates have been tied up very much to the detriment of those who were to receive a life-interest in them, often not to the advantage of those who came afterwards, and certainly injuriously to the public interest. I would ask honourable gentlemen to consider what it is to tie up lands in this country; because it is, I think, a question of a very much more serious character here than it is even in England. In England a Bill of this character has been passed, and the Bill that I hold in my hand to-night is the law of England at the present time. The whole system, at the present day, runs in the direction of making the land, as any other property, disposable of at any time. I would ask honourable members to take the different descriptions of property and see the effect of tying that property up for a long period. Take, for instance, town land. A man is possessed of an acre of land in the middle of an important town: it is not built upon, and is letable only at a very small rent. Well, now, if that property is tied up, what is to be done with it? The person who is entitled to a life-interest in the property is not in a position to spend money upon it, because he would be sinking capital upon it, and it goes away, possibly, at the end of his life, in a direction that he, at any rate, does not desire. We find that there are numerous

instances in which land of that description is tied up. We find, also, in suburban land the same difficulty arising: it is tied up and cannot be utilized to an extent which would benefit those particularly interested, nor does it benefit the public. Then, with regard to country lands the evil is still a great deal worse, for you get a considerable estate of unimproved land that cannot be improved. It belongs to a person having only a life-estate in it, and, supposing he has money, he may not be disposed to spend it on the land; and, probably, it may belong to a person who has no money at all to improve it, and it remains idle for a very long time. Nothing beneficial can be done with the land, and no good can come from it; and I think that is a serious matter, both as regards the person entitled to the occupation and use of it for his life, and for those who will come after him. It would be very much better for all that this property should be allowed to come into the market and be sold, and the money invested for the benefit of those who have the life-estate, because they would be benefited by getting an income from the money in the shape of interest, and the property itself would probably fall into the hands of some one who would improve it, with benefit to the community generally. During my experience I have met with several instances of the evils which have arisen in consequence of this tying-up of land. Not many years ago I was engaged in a case before the Court at Auckland, in which a gentleman had left his estate of £70,000 or £80,000, meaning to tie it up for as long as was possible. He had a number of children, and the children got a very small income from the property. Some of it was uncultivated land, producing nothing at all, and the children were, in fact—I will not say starving, but perhaps not very much better: they had barely enough to live upon—and this property was to accumulate for eighty years probably. I ask if that is a state of things that we should encourage, or a state of things that we can think right. It so happened in that instance that the gentleman who made the will overshot the mark: he attempted to tie it up for a little longer than the law allowed, and, when the matter came to be looked into and was brought before the Court, it was found that he had exceeded the statute, and the whole settlement was void, except one portion of it which enabled the property to be distributed amongst the parties at the end of five years; and the consequence was that the parties who were entitled to the property had comfortable incomes which they are at present enjoying. I have no doubt that honourable gentlemen will, if they think of it, find that there are many instances of that kind throughout the colony. I know, myself, of three or four of a similar character, where property has been tied up so that the tenant for life has received hardly any or very moderate interest, and the property is tied up in order to benefit persons at a future time, probably forty or fifty years from the present time. I say that it is not well that property should be tied up in this way, and therefore I think we should deal with this question, and deal with it speedily. I wish honourable members to understand that this is no question of making provision for families. There will still be no difficulty in the way of making such provision; for property may be left. The only question is, Is it essential that the property should remain in the shape of land? If the land is sold the money is invested, and the parties who are life-tenants, and, after them, those who are intended to be benefited, will also get the money. I cannot understand why men should, probably for the sake of those whom they have never seen, who may hereafter be born, desire to so deal with their property that they will be benefited at the expense of those who are more nearly allied to them. That is a peculiarity in tying up land of that description which I have never been able to understand. In England the matter has been found to be of so serious a nature that an Act was passed four or five years ago, and has been operating advantageously ever since. Now, when we look at Ireland, what do we see there? One great evil that has existed there, which has contributed more than anything else to bring about the present state of things, has been the landed question. Large properties are tied up; the tenants for life cannot improve them; nothing can be done advantageously for those enjoying the present possession or for those who come hereafter. During the last few years Land Courts have been established in Ireland for the purpose of untying those settlements. So far as that has gone it has been found to be very beneficial. We have not got into that state here at present; but if we go on as we are going we shall get there in the end; and it is very much better now that we should prevent it than attempt to cure it hereafter. I have always been desirous that some legislation should take place on this subject, and in 1881 I introduced a Bill of a much more sweeping character than the present one. It went to a Committee of the Council, who thought it was premature, and it was put off on the ground that it would be better to pass it in a future session, because the public would then know something about it. I have known of no instance in which the public have taken any interest in such a Bill that has been so postponed. In 1881 it was said that the public should know all about a Bill of this character, and it has been before the Legislature nearly every year since; and I want to know how far the public have taken any interest in it. In 1883, in order to get rid of a great many of the objections made to the original Bill—which I believe was a better one than the present measure, and which will yet be adopted—I reduced it to that which is now before the Council. This Bill has been drawn on the model of the Act in force in England at the present time. The latter was brought in by Lord Cairns, and, when one is accused of being Ultra-liberal and Radical in bringing in measures of this kind, I would point out that there was no more eminent Conservative for many years than

Lord Cairns, and he might well be trusted not to deal unreasonably with landed property in any shape whatever. A still stronger recommendation is that all that was expected from the Bill is being realized now. I say that we ought willingly to follow the example that has been set us; and I am sorry that example was not set twenty or thirty years ago, and we should not experience the opposition that is now offered to this reform. I would ask the Council to fairly consider the question, and turn over in their minds the instances which I am sure many of them can remember of the difficulties in which many families are placed by strict settlement of land. This is an evil absolutely essential to be dealt with speedily. The important provisions are contained in the 2nd, 3rd, and 7th clauses. The 2nd clause provides what shall be the definition of "settlement" and "tenant for life." "Tenant for life" simply means a person in whom an estate is vested for his lifetime, with remainders to his children, or some other person, or to children's children after them. That is the description of document we have to deal with—a document which ties up property as far as possible. In my practice I am frequently asked to tie up properties to the fullest extent. You can never tell exactly the number of years, as it may vary from fifty up to even a hundred years. The mode by which it is proposed to remedy the evil will be seen in section 3, which provides—"A tenant for life may sell the settled land, or any part thereof, or any easement, right, or privilege of any kind over or in relation to the same." That gives power to the tenant for life to dispose of the land. Would not that be advantageous to a great deal of the property which we know to be tied up at the present time? There are properties tied up that are yielding comparatively little or nothing, but which, if sold, would produce a large and valuable income, which would benefit those intended to be benefited, instead of obliging them to look at a dreary piece of waste land that cannot be made to produce revenue. Every precaution is taken as to how the proceeds are to be dealt with afterwards. The same evil with regard to land does not exist with regard to money. Money cannot be tied up for more than lives in being and twenty-one years afterwards; but it may be tied up for that length of time, and surely that is conceding enough to gentlemen who wish to make provision for their families. The money can be tied up for a reasonable length of time if they think fit. It is not proposed in this Bill to affect settlements of money invested in the funds or in other ways. It is not proposed to interfere with anything but land, and, of course, that is totally different in its nature from money, because money invested in that way simply brings in its income, while landed property has often to be dealt with in some way or another to produce income. We know instances at the present time in which landed property tied up in the manner I have described is allowed by the tenant for life to go out of repair, either because he has no money to spend on it, or because he is not disposed to spend money upon it for some reason or another. This state of affairs is detrimental to the life-estate, and it is detrimental to the public interest; and, if such property could be dealt with under a Bill of this kind, the property could be sold, to the advantage of those entitled to an income, to the advantage of the public, and not to the detriment of any one. It might be to a certain extent disadvantageous to some distant person in whose interest property might be tied up to accumulate; but I apprehend that it is the policy of the present day to discourage tying up property in that way. Of course, it would be an unusual thing to do this if we did not make full, sufficient, and proper provision for dealing with the money when it is realized; and therefore the Bill goes on to provide, in clause 7, that the capital is not to be paid to the tenant for life. He has no right to touch it. But he is the person who has the greatest interest in realizing to the best advantage, because the interest he is enjoying is that of present income; therefore it is left to him to make the best he can of it' but, at the same time, he is not allowed in any way to get the capital. In the majority of cases all estates are tied up through trustees, but, on the other hand, there are life estates where there are no trustees, where simply a life-interest is given with the remainder to other persons afterwards, and the property is tied up as regards these particular persons. Then, the tenant for life being the person who is most interested of all —for, though there may be trustees, very probably the trustees have not the same interest in realizing, not the same interest in dealing with the property to the best advantage as the tenant for life—it would be better, under all circumstances, for the tenant for life to have the management of the sale if it is to be sold. But of course it would be improper that the money should be at his disposal. Therefore provision is made for this: If there are trustees —it is clearly stated that there must be more trustees than one, and, if there are not more than one, then another must be appointed — the money must be invested by those trustees. If there are no trustees at all, then it must be paid entire into Court, and it is invested under the direction of the Court. I think reasonable precaution is thus taken to guard the interests of those who are deriving benefit from the estate—that is to say, the tenant for life—by giving him the charge and management of the sale; and sufficient care is also taken that the money shall be well invested for the benefit of those who are to come after him. It appears to me that that is a most reasonable way of dealing with a subject of this kind. Those are the principles on which the Bill proceeds. There is a great deal of detail in the Bill, because there are a great many contingencies to be provided for; but all the details go in the same direction of providing for the disposal of the land, and for tying up the money in perfect safety. It does appear to me, under all the circumstances that exist here at the

present time, that there is good reason for passing some such law as this; and I do hope that this Bill will be allowed to pass by the Council, and that it will also be accepted by the other branch of the Legislature. There was, I am aware, a considerable feeling among the lawyers in the other branch of the Legislature when I introduced a similar Bill in 1881. They were very much, many of them, opposed to it. I do not say that they had any personal interest in it; but lawyers, so far as their profession is concerned, are conservative in character. There is no doubt that this Bill is an innovation, but it is not an innovation so far as concerns the countries we come from—England and Ireland. The principle is admitted there and acted upon every day, and I think that the sooner we follow their example the better. I will not go through all the provisions of the Bill, because when we go into Committee—if I am allowed to get into Committee with the Bill—I shall be prepared to explain all these clauses; but I think I have explained that the object of the Bill is to allow the person entitled to a life-estate to make the best he can of his property; and also to take care that the money, when an estate is sold, shall be tied up in the best possible way that can be devised in the interest of those who come after. I hope that the Council will read the Bill a second time, and that we shall pass a measure which will be of great advantage to the present tenants for life, to those who come after them, and to the public at large.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—I trust the honourable gentleman in charge of this Bill will pardon me if I point out some difficulties which present themselves to me. It is true that the Bill presents many complexities to the layman; and, while I understand it better now than I did, still I admit that I am somewhat in a maze as to the security of the machinery provided for carrying out the provisions of the measure. I entirely agree with the principle; but it appears to me that there are two dangers likely to arise. The first is that it is quite possible for the tenant for life to accept a lump sum of money to sell in a low market, so that the estate may be obtained to the advantage of the buyer; and he can put that lump sum into his pocket, no one being the wiser, in compensation for his diminished life-interest in the capital when invested afresh. Then, there is this other difficulty: I see the Bill lays down clearly that there must be two trustees appointed, with the object of protecting the capital when realized by sale; yet in clause 15 it is provided that, for all practical purposes, the responsibility of the trustees shall not be such as usually recommends itself to the public in similar cases. Here is the clause:—

"Each person who is for the time being trustee of a settlement is answerable for what he actually receives only (notwithstanding his signing any receipt for conformity), and in respect of his own acts, receipts, and defaults only, and is not answerable in respect of those of any other trustee, or of any banker, broker, or other person, or for the insufficiency or deficiency of any securities, or for any loss not happening through his own wilful default."

I do not object to his not being answerable for bankers, brokers, and others; but I think, when he gives a receipt *pro formâ*, he is guilty of wilful neglect, and going very far towards doing away with the advantage of two trustees. I presume the clause is intended to do away with the difficulty of getting two trustees owing to the necessity of getting the assent of each to every detail and each particular transaction. If the necessity exist for clothing trustees with power to act independently, that is a matter which should be very carefully considered by the Council. Again, clause 17 gives power to trustees to reimburse themselves out of the trust property all expenses properly incurred by them. I admit that is a clause which, probably, I have no right to take exception to: still, it is not unfitting to draw the attention of honourable members to the conflict which exists between the principles involved, tending to the dissipation of the capital in transit. The first principle is the realization of landed property at any time in the interest of the estate—to which I subscribe; and the next is that for the protection of the capital there shall be two trustees, and yet we are proceeding to establish machinery by which the responsibility of these two trustees is reduced to the responsibility of one, and providing easy machinery for the remuneration of both.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—I feel great diffidence in addressing any observations to the Council on such an important measure as this; but, inasmuch as I am quite free from any prejudice in relation to the Bill, I think I may fairly do so. The object of the honourable gentleman who has introduced the Bill is to prevent the locking-up of land as at present. If land is now left to an individual for his life he might possibly receive nothing from it; but the passing of this Bill would relieve him of that disability. He could sell the land and invest the capital in some other way that might be more remunerative. So far as that goes, I am at one with the honourable gentleman; but, still, I have some doubts about the matter, because the honourable gentleman, in moving the second reading, did not set forth the provisions in so clear a manner as he generally does. He gave us to understand that this is a copy of the English Act: but it is not so. There are sixty-five clauses in the English Act of 1882, and there are only thirty-four clauses in this. What, then, has become of the remaining thirty-one clauses? None of these clauses comprises two clauses of the English Act; and, what is worse, the clauses of this Bill are not in the same words as the corresponding clauses of the English Act, while there is no part of the amending Act of 1884 in this Bill. It must have been observed, when the honourable gentleman was moving the second reading, that the tone of his speech throughout was that of a person who anticipated a great deal of opposition to his measure, for every now and then he answered objections which he appeared to ex-

pect would be raised. I do not object to the principle of the Bill at all. What I object to is trying to pass it so hurriedly. I am afraid that the Bill is clipped from the English Act in such a way that it will probably fall short of carrying out the intention of my honourable friend, or it may go too far, and either of these would be a great mistake. In the English Act many things are provided for which are not provided for here. The English Act provides for exchange and partition. It may happen that there is a difference between the value of the land taken and that of the land parted with, and in that case it provides for the mortgage of the land by the tenant for life to pay the difference between the two values. It may be that there are other purposes for which he might mortgage. But all these things are cut out from this Bill, and the tenant for life is left with a general power to mortgage, while the special limitation of that power provided by the English Act is omitted. He has power to mortgage his life-interest in the estate at the present time. Then, if all the special purposes for which the power to mortgage is given by the English Act are left out, I ask, what reason is there for including in this Bill a power to mortgage? When introducing the Bill to our notice the honourable gentleman cited the position of land in England and Ireland, and said it was a pity that this measure had not been introduced some time ago, and the sooner it was passed now the better, for if it were put off there might be a great deal of opposition to it. He tried to show that it would be a great benefit to the tenant for life; and in that I agree with him. He said it would be a great benefit to the public at large,—and I do not know that I differ from him on that point; but I ask him, where is this opposition to come from, if everybody is to benefit by the Bill? Consequently, what occasion is there to hurry it? The honourable gentleman has cited one case in this colony which would have been in a better position if this measure had been in operation, but he has not mentioned any others. I cannot see any sense in subsection (4) of clause 10 of the Bill. I ask the Council to pause before it passes a measure of this kind. It is a measure of very great importance. I think a great many mistakes will be found in it, and I hope the honourable gentleman will not push it to a second reading this evening. Let us discuss the measure, and then adjourn, in order to allow those honourable gentlemen who are not here an opportunity of speaking on a question of such magnitude.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—Having had some experience in the practical operation of the Leases and Sales of Settled Estates Act—the Act on the lines of which this Bill is framed—I am in a position to say that that Act has been the means of affording great relief. The Bill was brought in by Lord Cairns in 1877, and the Act was amended in 1882. It is worth special remark that if the English *Hansard* is searched it will be found that no debate took place in either House in 1877 or 1882. The fact of the matter is, it was well known that the Act was an absolute necessity. The evils which had grown up were of such magnitude and so numerous that an Act of that kind was absolutely necessary. I do not see any reason why we should delay the passage of a measure which, as I say from my own personal experience, has been found to be of such great benefit at Home. The Hon. Mr. Robinson, who has evidently carefully studied this Bill, has put his finger on some of the objections which he considers should be urged against it. I wish to see the Bill passed, because I believe it is a very good measure. A man may do a thing which at the time is a wise and judicious act; but, owing to rapid change of circumstances, in the course of a few years it may prove not only not a benefit to himself and his family, but an injury. Therefore there should be some such Act as this on the Statute Book. If I were asked what I consider the principal difference between the Leases and Sales of Settled Estates Act and this Bill, I should say that, under the English Act, where a person wishes to get rid of a trust he has to go to the Court of Chancery and adduce good and sufficient grounds for the course he wishes to take. If the Court approves of those reasons it takes the whole matter into its hands, and disposes of the estate—it appoints auctioneers, and receives and invests the moneys. The tenant for life has no more to do with it than any outsider, except that he receives the interest of the money so invested. I apprehend that this Bill is similar, except that it gives the tenant for life a little more power: it does not compel him to show good reasons why the course he wishes to take should be allowed. That is a provision I would not object to see introduced into this Bill; but I am perfectly certain that the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker is right in saying that, if we do not pass the Bill now, there will be a cry for it very soon. I cannot see any reason for delay. The Act has proved beneficial at Home, and I think it would prove beneficial here. Cases will, no doubt, arise here where persons who have had property tied up by the wills of relatives who wished to do them a benefit, so far from receiving a benefit will receive an absolute injury unless the law as to settlement is changed, and then you will find there will be a great necessity for such a Bill as this. I think there has really been no objection made to the principle of the Bill. Let the Bill be read a second time, and then the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker and other lawyers can explain the various details. The principle is as simple as A B C, and I feel extremely glad that it is in my power to vote for the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES.—Not having had a legal education, and not having what is called a legal mind, naturally I approach a Bill of this kind with a great deal of diffidence: at the same time, I should not like to let the second reading pass without expressing my views on the question. A good deal has been said about the great advantage that Lord Cairns's Act of 1882 has been to the community in England, and it has been deduced from that

that this copy of Lord Cairns's Act must necessarily therefore be of as great advantage to this colony. I confess I do not see the necessary consequence. The honourable gentleman moved the second reading of the Bill in a very able speech. He referred to the great evils that have followed from the laws of settlement in England: and no doubt they are enormous. To those laws of settlement, and to the custom and laws of primogeniture, may be attributed the greater part of the enormous evils from which the landed interest of the Old Country suffers at the present moment. We see there the landlords steeped to the lips in debt, their tenants struggling under the greatest difficulties, scarcely able to pay the rents which are demanded from them; and we see the labouring agricultural population of England in a state of semi-pauperism and entirely dissociated from the land. I do not know that any greater evils could be summed up than those, as the result, undoubtedly, in the main, of the laws of settlement and the laws and custom of primogeniture. I consider that this Bill is an effort to make the law of settlement easy, and to get rid of some of the difficulties which stand in the way in this country. We have, undoubtedly, a few instances already where those who are acquainted with the circumstances begin to feel the evil results of putting the laws of settlement into force in this colony. I doubt the expediency of bringing in a Bill to remedy in a partial degree these evils. I think it would be far better for the community, perhaps, if these evils were allowed to grow to a head, because I am perfectly certain of this: that when they have once been realized by the public in this colony they will sweep away completely the laws of the settlement of land—that they will not allow any man, either by act during his life or by will, to settle land hereafter. The whole idea of following out the example of the Old Country and carrying out the practice of the settlement of land in these colonies seems to me to be simply absurd. It is entirely contrary to the democratic spirit of these colonies, and will never be submitted to in the future. And I think it will be far better to let things go on as they are and grow to a head instead of attempting to partially remedy them. I look forward to the time when the public will awake to the evils of the settlement of land, and will put a stop to those evils; and I look forward to the time when the laws of the disposal of land as they are now in France, or as the French laws might be improved upon, will become the laws of this country. Though I have little sympathy with this Bill, I shall not oppose the second reading.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—Having given this Bill as much attention as I could give to it, I came into this Council to-night with a determination to vote against the second reading, because I did not understand it, on account of its extremely technical character. My honourable friend, referring to the Bill which he introduced himself in 1861—the Alienation of Land Bill—said he thought it was a better measure than this one. In that sentiment I entirely agree with him. It was set forth in that Bill, in distinct and intelligible terms, that the policy of this country in the future ought to be to remove entirely every restriction on the alienation of land. I have listened with interest to the debate on this subject this evening, and, as I now generally approve of the principle of the Bill, I have altered my determination, and mean to vote for the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. WILLIAMSON.—That the principle contained in this Bill is one to be approved must be evident to every honourable member who has read the Bill with attention. I have read the Bill, and I very strongly approve the principle. In fact, I have not heard any member who has spoken to-night who has not approved the principle. To postpone the Bill would simply mean to shelve it for the present session, and, so far as we have heard to-night, members are so unanimous in the opinion that the principle of the Bill is right that I think it would be desirable to accord it a second reading; and any improvements that may be desired could be effected in Committee; and by reading it a second time we shall have done something towards getting it made law during the present session. I have always held that land has its duties as well as its privileges. I think the necessity for such a measure is even greater here than it is in England. Lands there are improved and worth a rent, which rent can be taken by the party having the life-interest; but in the majority of cases here, or, at all events, in many cases, the land is in a state of nature, and would make no return to the life-tenant; and if some provision of this kind is not made in the law of the country the people in existence would enjoy no benefit from their life-tenancy, and, as has been remarked by the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker, would not be in a position, even if they had the disposition, to improve the property and make it return something either for their own benefit or for that of those who follow them. For these reasons I shall vote for the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I support the opinion that the principle of the Bill is one that should be accepted; and I cannot agree with my honourable friend Mr. Reeves that it is either necessary or desirable to wait until public endurance in relation to this subject is exhausted. It appears to me that it would be far better to begin now in a reasonable way, and settle the matter as quickly as possible. I agree with the honourable gentleman who has just spoken, that the necessity for this Bill will be greater in this country than in one of older character, and particularly do I think so because of the great relative difference between the leasing-value and the selling-value, especially in the case of suburban property, which must be familiar to the minds of most honourable gentlemen. Having had much experience for many years in connection with land, I must say that that experience leads me distinctly to that conclusion, and on all grounds

with which I am acquainted I think the Bill is one that should be accepted. There were several objections raised to the Bill which I do not propose to answer, because they will be very much more effectively answered by the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker, as they relate to technical questions; but I have compared this Bill carefully with the English Act, and, if the English Act is acceptable to the honourable gentlemen who took exception, I think they may, with safety, accept the provisions of this Bill. While, however, I like this Bill generally, I must say there were provisions in the Bill of 1881 of the honourable gentleman which appeared to me to be very much more satisfactory. I have the Bill here. One material difference that I can see between the present Bill and that of 1881 is that the latter was not retrospective in its character; and therefore we have to start with this difference: that the Bill of 1881 did not propose to affect any settlements or interests arising from the settlement of land prior to its being introduced. The present Bill, I understand, is retrospective in its character: that is to say, it authorizes the sale by the tenant for life of properties which are already in settlement. I do not wish to occupy the time of the Council further than to say that I think this question will be very much better discussed if we go into Committee. My impression, from having gone over the Bill carefully, is that the honourable gentleman in charge of it will be able to effectually dispose of the whole of the points which have been raised or are likely to be raised if we discuss the clauses one by one. There is one point to which I should like to call attention. I wish to refer to section 63 of Lord Cairns's Act. I find that, by the Act of 1884, the powers, as I understand it, conferred by section 63 of the Act of 1882 can only be exercised by the will of the Court. I think it necessary to mention that to my honourable friend, in order that when we go into Committee he may be able to tell us whether the present Bill covers the same ground as the Act of 1884. With these few remarks, I hope the Bill will be allowed to go into Committee, and eventually be passed.

The Hon. Mr. ACLAND.—I am glad this Bill has come before us in the shape it has, especially as it is a copy of the English Act, which I know has been found of very great advantage in the Old Country. Of course, in olden times the law of entail and the settlement of property may have been of use in England, but it is quite unsuitable to the new country in which we are living. Therefore I am glad that this Bill will prevent land being tied up, to the loss of all parties concerned. There is only one matter of detail to which I should like to draw the attention of the honourable gentleman in charge, and that is the case of an infant being a tenant for life. In that case the trustees have full power to sell immediately. I think it ought to be in the power of the infant himself to apply to the Court, because, supposing the trustee is not on friendly terms with him, it would be very hard for a young man of eighteen, who would come into property in the course of three years, to be perfectly powerless, and to see the estate which would come to him sold, and that he should receive a sum of money or interest instead. I hope that alteration will be made. I shall vote for the second reading.

Debate adjourned.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I wish to explain to the Council the circumstances attending the non-distribution of a Bill with another title. This Bill appeared, in the first instance, on our Order Paper with the same title as it has now, "The Settled Land Act." It was introduced by the Colonial Secretary, and a transfer of the management of the Bill was made to the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker. Then there was a Bill which was sent for distribution with a different title, "The Alienation of Land Act;" and the Hon. Mr. Robinson, who took a great interest in the subject, appealed to the Speaker, and asked if this was a new Bill. Seeing, therefore, that it struck the honourable member, as, I think, it would strike anybody, that it was a different Bill, and this Bill having been entered in the Journals under the title under which the authority of the Council was given to introduce it, and a new Bill, so far as the title was concerned, having been substituted, the Clerk declined to distribute it, feeling it beyond his power in any way to be a party to distributing a Bill which purported, on the face of it, to be different from the one for the introduction of which the authority of the Council had been given. He did that without any reference to me; but shortly afterwards he referred the question to me. I approved of what he had done, and I have no doubt he did it in a proper way. I would remark that I believe it to be the duty of the Clerk, and also of the Speaker, to be exceedingly particular with regard to being no parties to the distribution of Bills with any alteration, unless the alteration has been made with the express authority of the Council. I do think that the more honourable members look at the question the more important it will appear that nothing that might be regarded as tampering and misleading the Council with regard to the identity of Bills introduced should occur. Nothing ought to be more carefully guarded. It might be suggested that the alteration did not amount to much, and could have been made by the Clerk defacing with his pen certain words, and substituting for them the name of the Bill that had been authorized to be introduced, and that it should have been so distributed: but I think that would be a very dangerous power to permit the Clerk of the Council to exercise. In this case it might have made no difference, but, as a precedent, I think it would be exceedingly dangerous. I would say to the Council, inasmuch as the the question of delay has been raised this evening, that, in fact, the Bill as altered was distributed last Thursday; so that, in reality, the Council, in that respect, cannot consider that time has been wasted owing to the non-distribution of the Bill without further inquiry. The Council has had this Bill, which is now

being discussed, in its possession for perusal for six days.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—It did not require that any words should be substituted. This Bill was introduced without the word "Alienation" in the title of it, and all that was required was that that word should be struck out. It required no other alteration whatever; and my complaint, to a certain extent, was that it was not communicated to me, so that I could have struck that word out, as was done subsequently, and that it might have been distributed. I lost two or three days because I did not know what had taken place; and I think I should, at all events, have been informed that there was a difficulty in the way of distributing the Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—If there has been any delay in communicating with the honourable member in charge of the Bill, that is a difficulty which ought not to have occurred; and care should be taken, and ought always to be taken, that the member in charge of a Bill is the first to be informed of the occurrence of any such difficulty.

The Council adjourned at a quarter to eleven o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 28th July, 1886.

First Readings—Third Reading—Order of Business—Dunedin Volunteers—Great South Road, Auckland—Auckland Rifle-range—Ophir-Tinker's Telephone—Gumfields—Stamp Composition by Banks—Telegraph Offices—Inspection of Machinery—Ohinemuri Goldfield—Hua Roads—Engine-drivers and Firemen—De Harven's Settlement—Mokau River—Kaikoura Post Office—Unemployed—Auckland Leaseholders—Impounding Act—New Zealand Agricultural Company—Blind Institution—Persons committed for Trial—New Zealand Loan Bill—North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Bill—New Zealand Loan Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Public Trust Office Bill, Government Life Insurance Bill, Property-tax Bill.

THIRD READING.

Gold Duty Reduction Bill.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Sir R. STOUT.—Sir, I move, with the leave of the House, That for the remainder of the session Government business have precedence on Thursdays.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I hope there will be some exceptions to the exclusion of private members' Bills. Will the Government make an exception of the Public Advances on Land Bill, which is a very important measure?

Sir R. STOUT.—If the business proceeds rapidly, I hope we shall be able to do as we did last session in the way of giving some time for private members' public Bills; but I do not think local Bills will have much opportunity of coming on.

Sir G. GREY.—I hope what is proposed will not be done. Throughout nearly all this session private members have had only one day in the week, the second being taken from them very early in the session. I do trust that justice will be done to private members' Bills, and that the House will support me in opposing the motion made by the Government.

The House divided.

AYES, 47.

Allwright	Hatch	Reese
Ballance	Hislop	Richardson, E.
Beetham	Hursthouse	Rolleston
Bevan	Ivess	Samuel
B.-Bradshaw	Johnston	Stewart, W. D.
Bruce	Kerr	Sutter
Bryce	Lake	Taylor
Buckland, J. C.	Lance	Tole
Buckland, W. F.	Larnach	Trimble
Cadman	Levestam	Turnbull
Conolly	Macarthur	Vogel
Dodson	McKenzie, J.	Walker
Garrick	Moat	Whyte.
Gore	Montgomery	*Tellers.*
Guinness	O'Callaghan	Cowan
Hamlin	O'Conor	Hirst, H.

NOES, 20.

Atkinson	Grey	Richardson, G.
Barron	Hakuene	Ross
Buchanan	Mitchelson	Thompson, T.
Dargaville	Newman	Thomson, J. W.
Duncan	Ormond	*Tellers.*
Fraser	Pearson	Moss
Fulton	Reid	Wilson.

Majority for, 27.

Motion agreed to.

DUNEDIN VOLUNTEERS.

Mr. W. D. STEWART asked the Minister of Defence, Whether the Government will provide the Volunteers in and around Dunedin with a suitable rifle-range? Owing to certain alterations that had taken place the Volunteers could not use the ranges which had formerly been available to them, and they were extremely anxious that some provision should be made whereby a new rifle-range could be secured to them. He understood that Tahuna Park would be available, and that terms could be come to with the trustees of that park to enable the Volunteers to have the use of it pretty well all the year round, except on show-days, and possibly a few others. He hoped the honourable gentleman would be able to give a favourable answer, saying that a proper rifle-range would be provided for the Volunteers in and about Dunedin.

Mr. BALLANCE said this question was occupying the attention of the department at the present time. Proposals had been received from the trustees of the Tahuna Park, and inquiries were being made with the object of acquiring a suitable range. It was necessary that the local community should pay a portion of the cost, the Government subsidizing the amount collected locally.

Mr. ROSS asked the Minister of Defence, Whether it is the intention of the Government to render such assistance to the Volunteers of Dunedin and suburbs as will enable them to acquire a rifle-range and parade-ground at Tahuna Park on the terms offered by the Otago Agricultural and Pastoral Association? He hoped the Minister of Defence would see his way, this session, to comply with the request made to him, to help the Volunteers of Dunedin to secure a rifle-range and parade-ground. He held in his hand a letter from fourteen officers of the various corps in Dunedin, in which they set forth the matter in these terms:

"It is a matter in which the Volunteers of Dunedin and suburbs are deeply interested. At present they suffer very much from the want of a suitable parade-ground; and, when the Harbour Board sections are built upon, they will be absolutely without a ground within a reasonable distance of the city upon which to hold battalion or brigade drill. Such a position would mean, if not the collapse of the Volunteer force so far as Dunedin is concerned, at all events that the Volunteers here would, in the matter of efficiency, fall very much behind the Volunteers in the other centres of the colony. Other places have their own parade-grounds given to them by the Government. It is true that the present Defence Minister has asked the Volunteers here to point out to him Government land which is suitable for their purpose, and the granting thereof would be taken into consideration. But, unfortunately, there is not either in or round about Dunedin any Government land which is at all suitable for their purpose, and the only way Dunedin can be put upon an equal footing with other places is by accepting such an offer as is now made by the Tahuna Park proprietors."

He thought he need say no more.

Mr. BALLANCE said he had to give the same answer to this question as he had given to the last.

GREAT SOUTH ROAD, AUCKLAND.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will cause an inquiry to be held into the present arrangements for the maintenance of the Great South Road, Auckland, with a view to putting the management of the same on a more satisfactory basis? He would like to explain to the Minister for Public Works that a certain allocation of responsibility in connection with the maintenance of this road by the local bodies had been gazetted. He understood that it had been gazetted on the recommendation of a meeting of the parties supposed to be interested; but the notice given in the district of that meeting was very insufficient, and the result was that a good many of the districts interested were not represented, and the allocation made was altogether unworkable and unfair. So much was this the case that the road was now utterly neglected; and it would continue to be so, unless some fresh arrangement were made. There were two counties and four boroughs interested; but the boroughs escaped altogether, and the allocation, as regarded those bodies, was most unjust. It was a matter which could only be settled by some arrangement being made between the Government and the local bodies. Such an arrangement had not been made up to the present time; and he would suggest that Mr. Percy Smith, the Assistant Surveyor-General, who knew all about the subject, should be instructed by the Government to look into the matter, and to recommend some more just arrangement than that which at present existed.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that last session the Government were practically directed to do away with tolls on this road, and to hand the road over to the local bodies; and that had been done by Order in Council, and the road placed in the hands of the various local bodies through whose territory the road ran.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—But it is a most unfair allocation.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said it was stated in the House last year that there would be no difficulty whatever about the local bodies maintaining the road, if the Government would only do away with the tolls. This had been done, the local bodies were informed of what was to be done, and they held a meeting to allocate their shares. The allocation agreed to at the meeting was gazetted, and that was the last he had heard of the matter until it was now brought forward by the honourable gentleman in the House. He did not see how the Government could be expected to interfere in the matter further, for surely the local bodies were capable of settling a matter of this kind without interference from the Government. They applied to have the road placed in their hands, and that was done; and he did not see what the Government had to do further with the matter.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND moved the adjournment of the House. He was astonished at the Minister for Public Works, who was simply trying to evade the question altogether. The point was this: that the Government had gazetted an allocation which was altogether unfair and unworkable; and at the time it was gazetted the Minister must have known that it was unfair and unworkable. What he asked was that there should be an amendment of that order, so that all the local bodies should be called upon to manage, and contribute to the cost of management of, the road in something like fair proportion. He did not ask the Government for a single penny; but what he objected to was this: that they had gazetted an order which gave some districts a couple of chains to keep in order, while other poor districts had seven or eight miles. It was absolutely wrong; and some districts had taken advantage of that order; and therefore it was the duty of the Government to repeal that order. What he asked was that they should get Mr. Percy Smith, the Assistant Surveyor-General of the colony, who was an able and clever man, and who understood the whole thing, to draw up an agreement which should

make all parties meet their liabilities fairly, and have that gazetted as an amendment to the Order in Council that had been published. This was a main arterial road; but, while there were two counties and four boroughs in it, the unfortunate fact was that only one of the counties was paying, while the other county and the four boroughs practically escaped paying anything. The difficulty which had occurred could only be met by united action. At the meeting which was held some of those bodies which were greatly interested were not represented, while districts forty miles away were represented. Under these circumstances an allocation was arrived at that was very unfair; and so long as that continued in existence the road would not be looked after in the slightest degree. It was therefore the duty of the Government to make a more just allocation than had been made. The City of Auckland was interested in this matter exceedingly; and it was not right that, when all the people used the road, and were interested in it, the cost of maintaining it should fall on one or two districts. In fact, they could not do it even if they were to levy double rates; and unless something were done the road would soon become impassable. Matters could easily be arranged if the Government would only get Mr. Percy Smith to make a report on the subject. That gentleman could not be so hardly worked that he could not do it; and, for that matter, he (Mr. Buckland) was quite sure that that gentleman, who knew all about the road, would make up a report in his spare time, if necessary. The people were not prepared to maintain the road under the present unworkable allocation.

Mr. HAMLIN was very much surprised at the remark of the Minister for Public Works when he stated that the local bodies interested in this road had been consulted. He happened to represent a great length of the district which included this road, and, so far as concerned the local bodies in the district which he had the honour to represent, they most certainly know nothing about the meeting of local bodies for the purpose of taking over this road. Had such a meeting been duly notified, he ventured to say that every local body in the electorate would have refused to take over the road altogether. He certainly remembered the occasion alluded to by the Minister for Public Works; but there was no motion on the subject. The House was in Committee at the time, and when a discussion arose on the subject the Minister seemed to jump at the conclusion that it was the will of the Parliament to have abolished the means by which this road had been kept in repair for many years, and he (Mr. Hamlin) had no opportunity of expressing his opinion in the interest of his electorate. If it were the intention of the Government that all main arterial roads should be maintained by the local bodies within whose boundaries they were situated a great deal of his objection to what had been done in connection with this matter would be at an end; but it did not appear that such was the intention of the Government, and particularly he was forced to that conclusion when he looked at the estimates of former years and also at those of this year, for he there found that the Government were continuing to maintain certain main roads at colonial expense. This was more than a main road. It was at one time the only road by which the Waikato country could be approached, and had it not been for the construction of that road at the time of the Waikato war, in 1863, the colonists could not have got into possession of Waikato. The road was made by the troops, and surely it was not too much to ask the House to see that the road was maintained, especially seeing that the vast population lying to the east of the Great South Road had no railway communication, and had had no accommodation afforded to them in any shape or way. He remembered presenting a petition, only last session, signed by some three hundred and odd farmers and settlers in that district, asking for some small consideration at the hands of the Government. How was that request treated? Why, it was treated in this way: "If we granted that, we should have to spend £5,000 somewhere else." That was only a subterfuge, an idle way of getting out of the duty of complying with the request of the hard-working, straightforward, honest, industrious settlers who had settled in this district. In that House, during the past few days, he had heard it stated that there was a scarcity of land in the colony to settle the people upon. But the fact was that the colony had large quantities of land, and what was really necessary was that more consideration should be given to those early colonists, independent, hard-working men, who had not been afraid to go out into the forests to carve out a home for themselves—men who had felled the forest, grassed the land, grown produce upon it. If the House would only enable these men to get their produce to market, there would be less of this cry about there being no land. It would be seen that there was plenty of land, but no efforts were made to give these people the facilities required for making the land useful. The colony had gone wild in the direction of rushing railways everywhere, in districts where they could never pay sufficient to find oil for the wheels of the carriages; and if the House would only pay more attention to those parts of the colony where there was settlement, and where there was land yet to be settled, more justice would be done, and it would be better in the interests of the colony as a whole. To throw the cost of maintaining this Great South Road on the persons resident in his electorate would be a great injustice; and he could say this: that, if intimation had been given to these people that it was intended to place this burden on their backs, the House would have heard a great deal more about the matter. There would have been petitions innumerable, to which he did not think the Government would have turned a deaf ear. If the agriculturists were to become the serfs of the colony, let them understand it at once. Let them know that they were to be slaves, let them know that they were to be

made to pay taxation to provide interest on loans spent elsewhere, and they would understand their position; and the sooner they came to that conclusion the better. He, for one, representing an agricultural district, wished to know whether that was the case—whether the settlers were to be looked upon as serfs and slaves, from whom the interest on loans was to be gathered, and were to be ground down with taxation, simply for the benefit of little peculiar localities—places from which a few ounces of gold had been taken. If they understood that that was to be really their position, then they could take steps to protect themselves. He had always believed that a man who made two blades of grass grow where one grew before had done a benefit to his country; but it did seem now that any one who followed that pursuit was looked upon as a mere serf, and as one who could be ground down to the dust for the benefit of certain localities. This system would not and could not last long, for people would resist taxation that simply benefited the cities of the colony or certain goldfields. They were tired of the system; and the sooner the House realized the position and dealt fairly by all parts of the colony the better. If that were not done, then they should stop borrowing—they should not borrow another penny, but let each district rest upon its own bottom, and then other districts could do as the people did in his own district—provide the means of communicating with the various centres of population. He ventured to say that those places which had been pampered by large votes of the House, given for no purpose whatever except for the purpose of inducing certain individuals to vote in certain directions——

Mr. GUINNESS wished to know if it was in order to say that votes of money were given simply for the purpose of inducing members to vote in a certain direction.

Mr. SPEAKER thought the honourable gentleman would see the propriety of withdrawing the remark, and not attributing unworthy motives to members.

Mr. HAMLIN would bow to the ruling of Mr. Speaker, and, if he had said anything that was improper, would withdraw it. He did not think the honourable gentleman who had interrupted him would be guilty of anything that was unfair. Far be it from him to think anything of the kind of that honourable gentleman. He thought the honourable gentleman would be the last to whom such a motive could be attributed; for that honourable gentleman would not condescend to lower his dignity and to sully the high position that he held in the House to do anything of the kind. But still, when one did look over the estimates, and saw certain items, it at any rate seemed possible that such a thing might be done: at least, having seen certain things, he could not help expressing his opinion about them. If it was to be as he had indicated, that the people who followed agricultural pursuits were to be ground down by taxation simply to bolster up a set of rotten institutions, and to make roads and railways for no purpose whatever, works from which no return could be received, he must altogether object to placing upon the electors he represented the maintenance of the Great South Road. It had been stated by the honourable member for Franklin North that this was an arterial road, and that, as such, its maintenance should devolve upon the Government. The people of the country seemed, however, to be left out in the cold, and the only thing they were looked to for was simply to get hard cash out of them to meet the interest upon the loans. When they felt that their life-blood was being crushed out of them it was not to be wondered at that they turned upon the districts which had received thousands and millions of money to be squandered simply to bolster them up. He objected to the maintenance of the Great South Road being placed upon his electorate, without the people having been consulted in any shape or form; and he trusted the Government would at once rescind any Order in Council which they might have carried out without the knowledge of the people; otherwise the correspondence about it would be renewed, and a good deal of trouble caused.

Mr. T. THOMPSON said the honourable gentlemen representing both the Franklin Districts had delivered to the House a very large amount of virtuous indignation concerning the action of the Government in this matter. Probably they had cause of complaint; but he wished to point out to the honourable member for Franklin North that, when that honourable gentleman moved in the matter of doing away with the toll-bar, he (Mr. Thompson) had told him he was doing a foolish thing without first having made arrangements for keeping the road in repair. It struck him that that was the first duty to attend to. He was not surprised that the honourable gentleman should have taken the opportunity as usual of having a slap at the city electorates, though he did not see what possible good could result from the adoption of such a course.

Mr. HOBBS said the question raised by the honourable member for Franklin North was a very important one, and he hoped the Government would accept the suggestion made as to referring the matter to Mr. Percy Smith or some other capable person for a report. He warned the honourable member for Franklin North last year that this would be the result of the motion for the abolition of the toll; and now they saw the effect of it. He wished, however, to remark that this road was in a similar position to the Christchurch–Hokitika Road: it was a colonial or arterial road, and he could not understand the principle on which the Government had shunted its maintenance on to the local bodies. It ought, he thought, to be remembered that this road led to one very important place, on which, they were assured by the honourable member for Franklin North, the destinies of the colony depended—to the Howick Wharf. It also led to the King-country, in the Waikato. He could bear testimony to the fact mentioned by the honourable member for Franklin South, that there was one poor district fronting on to this particular road for

distance of seven or eight miles, and that it was utterly impossible for the people in that district to keep the road in repair. It would be absolutely necessary, therefore, that some steps should be taken; and he thought if the Government were approached in a proper manner they would see the reasonableness of this case, and would instruct some competent person to report upon the matter. There should also be some effort made to equalize the contributions of the local bodies according to the rateable value—that was, if the Road Boards had to contribute for that purpose—and then the thing would be put on a more satisfactory basis.

Mr. MOSS could not agree with the honourable gentleman who had last spoken. The honourable gentleman held that the abolition of the toll-bars had caused this difficulty: but it was not the case. The abolition of the toll-bar was a proper and right thing, for it had imposed a most unfair tax upon people living in its neighbourhood. He knew one man who was taxed by that toll-bar to the extent of £30 a year, merely to supply his customers with bread; and butchers and others were all taxed enormously, merely to keep this South Road in order, while others who had property in contact by the road enjoyed that additional benefit merely by paying the same tolls. The toll-bar had been strongly objected to by the people of Newmarket, a rising town, and one which had not received any grants from the Government, and so did not come under the castigation of the honourable member for Franklin South. That town had suffered very much by the existence of this toll-bar. Toll-bars were relics of barbarism, and this one was about the only toll remaining in the colony, and it was quite time that it should have been swept away. The trouble was that the Government had rather hastily adopted the advice given to them as to the allocation of the cost of maintaining the road. He might say that he looked back with considerable pleasure to the vote he had given for the abolition of the toll-bar, and that he knew a great number of people were justly benefited by that vote.

Mr. KERR had a keen recollection of the debate on this subject last year. The honourable member for Parnell said it was a good thing this toll-bar was done away with; but he would add that it was perfectly understood at the time that, if the toll-bar was done away with, the districts would keep up the road. There was no doubt about that.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—Who said so?

Mr. KERR said the honourable member for Franklin North said that, and he had no doubt his remarks would be found in *Hansard*. The honourable member for Parnell said the toll was a barbarous tax; but that honourable gentleman always went to extremes and called nearly everything barbarous. He was satisfied of itself that if the toll-bar had been kept on the road would have been kept up. During the debate the honourable member for the Bay of Islands strongly objected to the toll-bar being done away with, and it was perfectly understood in the House that if the toll-bar was taken away the road would be maintained by the districts. It was all very well to say that could not understand why the subsidy should be taken away from there and the one for the Hokitika road retained; but he could tell the honourable member that there were scores of roads in the district he came from that were kept up by the people themselves—and districts more thinly populated than the one through which the Great South Road passed. They had no right to complain of this road in particular; but he would like to see the Government take over the whole of the main roads of the country—that would suit him uncommonly well. He hoped, if the Government did subsidize this road, they would also subsidize other main roads. He was sure that when the matter was discussed last year he told those in favour of the abolition of the toll that if they were abolished they would come the following year and ask to have the road maintained.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON did not wish to continue the discussion, but would repeat that, before any action was taken, notice was given to the local bodies, and, he believed, to all the local bodies. It occurred to him that the course those local bodies should have taken, if there was any difficulty in dealing with the matter, was to have met, and then stated their case to the Government, and to have asked how the difficulty could be got over. He believed that, so far as the law was concerned, those local bodies could not spend money outside their own districts without some fresh legislation. If the local bodies could not arrange the matter amongst themselves, and approached the Government, as local bodies in other parts of the country had done, then the Government might be able to suggest some means by which the expense of the maintenance of this road could be met. The Government had a considerable amount of information about this road, having kept it in repair for such a number of years, and their officers knew all about what was wanted. If it was referred to the Government officers a report could be prepared in a very short time. The vote taken last year was distinctly taken on the understanding that it would not be repeated this year, and that, the toll-bar being removed, grants towards the road would, in future years, not appear on the estimates.

Mr. O'CONOR thought the honourable member for Franklin South was not answering the purpose of the discussion or forwarding his own cause by comparing one part of the colony with another. It was a misfortune that he should have compared the agricultural with the gold-mining communities, for it was well known that the gold-mining communities contributed more to the Consolidated Fund than the agricultural communities did. On the goldfields they taxed to the very highest limit: six farthings in the pound was the general rate, and, besides that, they had to pay a special tax on gold. On the other hand, every facility was given to the agriculturists to obtain markets. There was no mistaking this: that there was a great deal less wealth in the possession of the mining

than in the possession of the agricultural community, and the miners had to bear far the greater share of taxation.

Mr W. F. BUCKLAND was very much obliged to the Minister for his suggestion. He would get the local bodies interested in the matter to approach the Minister as proposed. There was another road which would have to be considered at the same time, and that was the main road to Onehunga. With regard to the toll-bar, he was quite prepared to take the same action this year as he took last. The only way to deal with the matter was to get rid of the toll-bar first, and then decide the other question. The time was coming when the local bodies would have to maintain their roads, and he, for one, was quite prepared to make up his mind to that: the allocation was the only thing to grumble at. Just before the toll-bar was abolished Newmarket was declared a borough, and a toll-bar could not, therefore, be placed within a mile of the borough. The whole thing was a matter of great injustice. The Minister of Justice carefully got the toll-bars abolished in his district, so that the traffic went round that way. He (Mr. W. F. Buckland) thought the suggestion of the Minister for Public Works would meet the case.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said the Government could not enforce any allocation; they could only suggest.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND said that was all they wanted; they wanted some arbitrator to come in and settle the matter.

Motion negatived.

AUCKLAND RIFLE-RANGE.

Mr. T. THOMPSON asked the Minister of Defence, Whether the Government will take the necessary steps to provide a suitable rifle-range for the use of the Volunteers in and around Auckland? The rifle-range at present in use at Auckland was situated in a very populous neighbourhood, and the Volunteers did not know the moment there would be an agitation to have the range closed. It was within his own knowledge, as Chairman of the Mount Eden Domain Board—which domain was used as a recreation-ground by a large number of people almost daily—that that domain was positively dangerous in some parts owing to the proximity of the range. He hoped the Government would take almost immediate steps to provide a rifle-range in some suitable locality.

Mr. BALLANCE was quite aware that the Mount Eden rifle-range was not as safe as it ought to be—the Government were very desirous to provide a suitable range. He thought the Volunteers should take this matter up, and make some recommendation to the Government, which recommendation would, if possible, be given effect to.

OPHIR–TINKER'S TELEPHONE.

Mr. MOSS, for Mr. Pyke, asked the Postmaster-General, If the Government will extend the telephone to Tinker's from Ophir? He was requested by the honourable member for the Dunstan to say that there were only nine miles between the two places, and that there was a large population of farmers as well as miners in the neighbourhood of Tinker's. The only doctor in the neighbourhood lived at Ophir. The people lived in an isolated position, and had been promised the telephone very often. The only cost would be that of nine miles of telegraph wire.

Sir J. VOGEL said the cost would be such as the revenue would not at present justify. The Government could not, therefore, undertake the work; it would be a matter for future consideration.

GUMFIELDS.

Mr. HOBBS asked the Government, Whether they intend to relet by public auction the gumfields when the leases have expired, or do they intend to submit some proposal to this House this session for issuing licenses to gum-diggers, or charging a royalty on gum taken from Government lands? He would remind the Minister that this matter had now been standing over for some three years. Within the last few days he had received a letter in which the writer stated that large areas of land belonging to the Crown, and leased for other purposes, were being used for gum-digging; and that the whole matter was in a very unsatisfactory position. He was sure the Minister would see the importance of really now defining some policy with reference to these gumfields, and carrying out such policy.

Mr. BALLANCE said the question was one of very great importance, and also one of very great difficulty. There were great objections to either issuing licenses or imposing a royalty. He did not think a royalty could be imposed on Crown lands unless it was also made applicable to Native lands. If licenses were issued to individual gum-diggers a large staff of officers would have to be employed. The question of letting or reletting was in the hands of the Waste Lands Board. He was inclined to think that there could be no better system than leasing the land. However, the leases would not terminate for some time, and the matter would receive further consideration during the recess.

STAMP COMPOSITION BY BANKS.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Government,—(1.) If they will, during this session, amend the Stamp Act in the direction of increasing the stamp composition paid by the banks doing business in the colony for the privilege of issuing bank-notes from 2 per cent. to 4 per cent.? (2.) If no amendment can be made during this session, will the Government consider the question during the recess, with the object of introducing an amending Bill next session? The concession at present granted to banks was a very profitable one. The banking institutions of the colony paid 2 per cent. or, say, £20,000 a year, for the right of issuing about one million pounds' worth of paper money. Considering the large number of bank-notes lost and burned, the operation was a very valuable one to the banks. From inquiry, he learned that the annual

profit made by the banks out of the privileges granted to them amounted, at the lowest calculation, to about 10½ per cent. per annum. He thought it was not too much to ask them to pay at least 4 per cent. If nothing could be done during the present session, he hoped the Colonial Treasurer would, next year, when he was providing ways and means, not forget that there was a sum of £20,000 to be obtained as he had just indicated. The rich institutions referred to could well afford to pay the amount instead of the burden being cast on the masses of the community.

Sir J. VOGEL said the question would have the attention of the Government during the recess.

TELEGRAPH OFFICES.

Mr. MOAT asked the Postmaster-General, Whether it is his intention to close between seven and eight o'clock p.m. those telegraph offices in which little or no business is usually transacted during that hour? A great deal of sympathy was felt with the unfortunate officers who, after keeping the offices open until five o'clock, were obliged to keep lonely vigils from seven till eight o'clock, thereby being deprived of all social amusements or recreation. It was said that the receipts in many of these offices during that hour would not pay for lighting the office.

Sir J. VOGEL said that during the recess he intended to go through the list of offices and see which of them could be closed during these hours without injury to the public service.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked the Government, Whether they will amend the regulations relating to inspection of boilers and machinery, so that the fees charged for the same may be reduced? He had asked the Government for a return of the total amount received as fees by this department, and the total expenditure for inspecting the machinery. The return showed that the fees for inspection of land machinery and boilers was £2,506, and of steamers' boilers £1,157 7s. The total amount paid to the officers of the department was—for salaries, £1,000; travelling expenses, £810; and contingencies, £70: making a total of £2,781, leaving a balance to the credit of the department of £900. Various complaints had been made to him of the excessively-high charges for the inspection of land boilers. Take, for instance, a saw-mill with four detached boilers: for inspection of those boilers £10 a year was charged, and such a charge was a heavy impost on one of the best colonial industries. He hoped, therefore, the Minister in charge of the department would give his best attention to the subject, and would say that a reduction should be made in the fees. He was given to understand that a large amount of time was necessary in the inspection of marine boilers, and yet the fees charged for that inspection were very low as compared with those for land boilers. He also understood that, although the Manchester Steam-boiler Insurance Association granted insurances on boilers up to the extent of £500, their charges for inspection were only 25 per cent. in excess of those of the New Zealand department.

Mr. LARNACH replied that it was not the intention of the Government to reduce the charges made for this work. It was true that there was some difference between the charge for inspection of steamers' boilers and those made for the inspection of the boilers of land engines; but there were a great number of expenses connected with the inspection of the latter, such as travelling, which did not enter in connection with the inspection of steamers' boilers.

Mr. BUCHANAN would like to call the attention of the Minister to this fact: that the differential rate charged on boilers not connected by steam-pipes was considered unjust, and that the fees might very well be lowered.

Mr. LARNACH said the cost of inspection depended very much on the size and power of the boiler and engine. If the honourable gentleman would give notice of a question in regard to further information on the matter he now alluded to, he would give him all the particulars required.

OHINEMURI GOLDFIELD.

Colonel FRASER asked the Government, Whether they intend carrying out the recommendation of Mr. Percy Smith, Assistant Surveyor-General, with regard to the purchase of the freehold of leases on the Ohinemuri Goldfield by the agricultural settlers?

Mr. BALLANCE said it was not proposed to give effect to the recommendation of Mr. Percy Smith that the land should be given without payment. Provision was made in the Mines Act of last year for such cases as this. The land could be classified, and, as it was third-class land, it could be obtained for 5s. an acre. He thought the settlers should as far as possible come under that provision, which was specially passed to meet such cases.

HUNUA ROADS.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND asked the Government, Whether, taking into consideration the report of Mr. Percy Smith, Assistant Surveyor-General, they are prepared to grant assistance towards opening up a road to certain Government lands in the Hunua district; also whether they will place a portion of the said lands under the Homestead Act? This question had come up last session; and the land could never be peopled in any other way than that proposed, under which some of the sons of settlers and workmen in the district would be ready to take up land. Mr. Percy Smith had sent in a report in which he said that he was glad that he had gone to the district, for he had never known before what sort of land it was. An expenditure of £50 would open up a road to the district, and then there was no doubt that a large quantity of the land would be taken up under the homestead system. It was not possible to settle the land in any other way, as it was very broken, and was only third-class land.

Mr. BALLANCE said if the honourable

gentleman would look at the vote on the estimates he would see that £500 had been put down for opening up land in this particular district. Under the homestead system only three thousand acres could be set aside in any one year; and this claim would be considered with others.

ENGINE-DRIVERS AND FIREMEN.

Mr. HOBBS asked the Government, Whether they will, during the recess, take into consideration the low scale of pay and long hours ruling of the engine-drivers and firemen on the New Zealand railways as compared with the other colonies? He had before him a return of the rates of pay to these employés in Victoria and New South Wales, and in comparing them with those in this colony there was a very great difference, as there was also in the hours of work. He brought the matter under the notice of the Minister for Public Works, so that during the recess the Minister might take steps to arrange the rate of pay here in such a way that it should be equal to that given in other colonies.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that if the honourable gentleman would make inquiries he would find that the rates of pay here were quite as high as, and in some cases higher than, in the other colonies. Engine-drivers and other employés here were classified, and could rise to 13s. a day. He could hold out no hope of any increase beyond that.

DE HARVEN'S SETTLEMENT.

Colonel TRIMBLE asked the Minister of Lands, Whether the time given to M. de Harven for making a special settlement on the West Coast, North Island, has passed; and, if so, whether the block of land offered to him will be thrown open for settlement in the ordinary way, and soon? Some time ago a portion of land was set aside in the West Coast district for a Belgian settlement, as M. de Harven had undertaken to form a special settlement there; but the time for doing that was passed, and the land could now be opened for settlement in some other way. He had heard that some company had been formed, and that some proposals had been made to the Minister of Lands in order to induce him to hold over this portion of land for a further period. He would like to know whether that was true, or whether the Government intended to put the land into the market in the ordinary way. As a matter of fact, it was known in the district that the land would be taken up if it were put up under the deferred-payment system, or for cash.

Mr. BALLANCE replied that the agreement with M. de Harven had expired on the 1st of the present month. He was not aware of the existence of the company to which the honourable gentleman had referred; but an application had been made to have the land set aside for a special settlement. He did not know whether the applicant was prepared to go on, but it was the intention of the Government to put the land up under the ordinary settlement conditions at once.

Colonel TRIMBLE had to thank the honourable gentleman for his answer, which would be received with much pleasure in the district.

MOKAU RIVER.

Colonel TRIMBLE asked the Minister of Marine, Whether he will place a moderate sum upon the supplementary estimates towards further snagging in the Mokau River? The preceding Government had arranged for a survey of this river, and afterwards the Minister of Mines last year agreed to spend £500 on snagging the river. That work had proceeded, and, he believed, had been very well done, and had made a considerable change for the better in the navigation of the river. To carry the snagging up to the mines would probably cost more than the honourable gentleman would be prepared to give or than he (Colonel Trimble) would like to ask for; but it had been pointed out to him that the expenditure of another small sum would make the river navigable almost up to the mines. He hoped that in a short time it would be possible to constitute a Harbour Board for this river, who would look after it; but in the meantime he hoped the Government would extend a friendly hand to it.

Mr. LARNACH believed the honourable gentleman was correct in what he said as to the expenditure of the vote of last session for this work, which had been carried as far up the river as could possibly be done without a very much larger sum of money being devoted to it. Looking to the small trade which there was at present on the river, and to the fact that the land was held in the hands of the Natives, the Government did not consider it desirable at the present time to spend any large sum on the work; but, if the honourable gentleman would bring up such reliable information as would show that a very moderate sum would still further improve the river, so as to be of benefit to the settlers, the Government would take the matter into favourable consideration.

Colonel TRIMBLE thanked the honourable gentleman for his answer, and would see him on the subject.

KAIKOURA POST-OFFICE.

Mr. LANCE asked the Postmaster-General, Whether he will have proper post-office accommodation erected at Kaikoura, the present building being quite unfit for the purpose?

Sir J. VOGEL replied that it was quite true that the office at Kaikoura was of an obsolete type. They spent £80 upon it about a year ago, and he thought they might make the building last some time longer. When they were considering the question of erecting post-office buildings next year, the matter would have their consideration.

UNEMPLOYED.

Mr. MOSS asked the Government, If they will inform the House what steps they propose taking for the relief of the unemployed, as the number is assuming proportions with which

the limited means and power of the local authorities render it impossible for them to cope? He would like to say, with reference to what had fallen from honourable members on this subject, that he was perfectly sure that they were mistaken if they supposed that the greatest efforts were not being made by the local authorities to meet the distress which was increasing so rapidly in Auckland, and which he believed was felt in other parts of the country. From what he could learn they were making very great efforts indeed. Very large meetings of the unemployed had been held, at which several hundreds of orderly well-conducted persons were present. Processions, numbering as many as five hundred persons, marched through the town simply to give proof that they were really, as they said, without employment and wanted work. All this had been done in the most orderly manner. There was also the greatest interest taken in the matter by the people of Auckland. Auckland had been receiving large numbers of persons from the South who had been driven out by want of employment, and who were attracted to Auckland by the employment abundant there a year or two ago. Therefore Auckland had now, practically, to grapple with a difficulty from which other parts of the colony had thus been largely freed. He would like to make the House understand clearly what was meant by gum-digging, to which it was said the unemployed could resort. Gum-digging was not a pursuit in which people could get employment. Gum-digging was a speculative thing, and a man wishing to search for gum had to go to one of the gumfields which were leased out by the Government—he believed there were no Crown lands on which men could go freely. A man would have to make arrangements to go on the land, and he would have to provide himself with tools, which would be very expensive to a man without money. Then, he had to pay the cost of going there, as there was no railway. When there he was often away from all source of supply. He must provide himself with food in advance, and then he must begin digging on the chance of finding gum. How were men with families in Auckland to go on the gumfields and lead a life of that sort? It was a life only suitable for men without families, and numbers of these had gone into it. It was hard work, and was carried on in swamps or in the most inferior country. In the past it had been a great resource for the unemployed, and no doubt would be so still. But men who had to pay rent for the shelter of their families while they were away, and who had other expenses which could not be avoided and which civilization forced upon them, could not go gum-digging, because they would not have the means of providing for their families. As far as Government works were concerned, he heard yesterday that the Government were employing Natives at 6s. a day in making the North Island Trunk Railway. He had no doubt that was not altogether the policy of the Public Works Department, but that it was also to meet the Native policy. Still, the fact was stated that numbers of Natives were being paid 6s. a day.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—No.

Mr. MOSS was very glad he had given the Minister for Public Works an opportunity of setting that right, because what he had stated was commonly reported in Auckland. He was also informed that a correspondence had taken place between the Mayor of Auckland and the Government, and also between the chairman of the meeting of unemployed and the Government; and he thought if that correspondence were laid on the table it would show that there was very keen anxiety felt in regard to the question in Auckland, and a very earnest desire to help, to the best of their limited power, in meeting this serious difficulty.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON was very glad the honourable gentleman had given him an opportunity of contradicting the statement made yesterday—that the Government had a large number of Natives employed on day-work on the North Island Trunk Railway. It was new to him, and he telegraphed immediately to Auckland, and he was assured that such was not the case. They only had a Native here and there attached to a survey party. All the work was done by piece-work. As far as the Government were aware at present, they would be in a position to cope fairly with this question everywhere but in Auckland; and, with regard to Auckland, as the honourable member had said, they were in communication with the local authorities there, and he had also instructed the Government officers to endeavour to put some further works in hand. The matter was under serious consideration, and they hoped that shortly, when some other contracts were let, this question would also be satisfactorily solved in Auckland.

AUCKLAND LEASEHOLDERS.

Mr. MOSS asked the Government, If they will give effect to the prayer of the petition of certain leaseholders of Auckland City property, presented by him to this House, and protect them against any attempted retrospective legislation in favour of the Auckland City Council and to the prejudice of the said leaseholders? He presented a petition to the House some time ago from certain leaseholders in Auckland who had city property to which it was found the Corporation could not give them a thoroughly sound title. They had been disputing with the Corporation for some time about it, and they dreaded that, by some hasty legislation, the House might pass an Act or clause having a retrospective effect, and putting them suddenly in an unfair position with regard to the Corporation. There was a Public Bodies' Leaseholds Bill before the House, and they did not know what clauses might suddenly be proposed in it. In order to guard against such an event he asked this question.

Sir R. STOUT said he had no such intention. The Bill referred to only gave local bodies further powers, but it did not deal with leasing.

IMPOUNDING ACT.

Mr. FULTON asked the Government, Whether they will, next session, introduce an amendment to the Impounding Act, so as to enable pastoral lessees of the Crown to impound cattle in cases where the owner of the cattle cannot be found? The following extract from a letter would explain the question:—

"I now beg to call your attention to the fact that at the present time there are twenty head of cattle running here, and I can only see the brands of three. At this time of year it is impossible to see the brands of cattle unless they are yarded, and even then it is in many cases useless, owing to the roughness of their coats: still, in the present state of the Act, my only remedy is to take the brands and see the owners. It is often impossible to find the owner. In this district cattle are bought, sold, and exchanged amongst the diggers and settlers, and the brand is no proof of ownership. If it were made legal to impound off a run, a pastoral tenant would know what to do; but at present the Act seems to encourage trespass."

Mr. BALLANCE said this was a very important question, and had been very much discussed in the House when the Impounding Bill was under consideration. He did not see any reason for a change of the law at the present time, but he would consider the question during the recess.

NEW ZEALAND AGRICULTURAL COMPANY.

Sir G. GREY asked the Government, When the promised correspondence between Mr. W. H. Pearson and the Government relative to the valuation of lands which were purchased by the New Zealand Agricultural Company will be laid before this House?

Mr. BALLANCE replied that there was no correspondence on record in the Land Department at Wellington with regard to this subject, authorizing Mr. Pearson, the late Commissioner of Crown Lands, to value the land of the New Zealand Agricultural Company. The order of the House had been referred by the Land Department to the other departments, to find if any correspondence existed there.

Sir G. GREY supposed that the honourable gentleman was aware that Mr. Pearson did value the land, and that, from what was stated in the report of the company, this was done when the honourable gentleman was Minister of Lands.

Mr. BALLANCE was not aware that that was the case. He had not seen the report of the New Zealand Agricultural Company, and he had absolutely no knowledge of the subject.

BLIND INSTITUTION.

Sir G. GREY asked the Government, Whether they will place a sum on the supplementary estimates to provide for the commencement during the recess of an institution for the care and instruction of the blind in New Zealand?

Sir R. STOUT said this matter was considered by the Government during the last recess, and he had before him a great number of papers and letters bearing on the subject. He had communicated with some blind people who had been educated, and others, as to the starting of a school. The present position was this: There were only five children from this colony now being educated in the Melbourne school, two others being on the way back to the colony. Of those five, two were being partly paid for by their parents, and the cost of only three was wholly borne by the colony. A return showing these facts would be laid on the table. Until there were more blind in the colony it would be cheaper to continue to have them educated at Melbourne than to start a school in New Zealand. No doubt the time would come when this colony should have a separate establishment; but, after carefully considering the matter, he had come to the conclusion that the time had not yet come.

Sir G. GREY said there were more blind in the colony than the number indicated.

Sir R. STOUT was aware of that.

PERSONS COMMITTED FOR TRIAL.

Mr. MOSS asked the Government, If they are aware that since April, 1883, persons committed for trial have been and are subjected to the same restrictions and privations as convicted prisoners? This was a question about which there had been a little misunderstanding. He found it had been reported in the newspapers, and circulated among members, that he was asking this question because, happening to visit the gaol some little time ago, he found that the Maoris now there awaiting trial were not allowed to receive tobacco from their friends. It was certainly this visit that first drew his attention to the subject, because they felt it to be a very great privation. He was sorry this was a point on which the majority of members of the Government would not feel as much sympathy as himself. But he would appeal to the Colonial Treasurer and the Minister of Mines, and would ask them how they would like to be deprived of tobacco. The Minister of Justice, unfortunately, did not smoke; and he did not think that the Premier or the Native Minister knew the luxury. If they did they would feel that it was a very serious privation to keep men used to tobacco without it for two or three months, especially when they led such a dull life, and a life so full of care, as men necessarily must when they were confined awaiting trial. Now, he would not think for one moment of asking that the regulation should be more favourable for prisoners of one race than for those of another. On behalf of the whole of the unconvicted prisoners—he made no distinction—he wanted to represent the hardship of depriving them of what must, in their case, be one of the chief enjoyments they could have. Although the Minister of Justice did not smoke, he would like to remind the honourable gentleman that

> Earthly power doth then show likest God's
> When mercy seasons justice;

and that it was a wrong thing altogether to

treat persons who were presumably innocent until they were proved to be guilty in exactly the same manner as if they were convicted prisoners. He believed the deprivation he had referred to was unfair, unmerciful, and unnecessary; and he hoped the Minister of Justice would see that, although he did not smoke himself.

Mr. TOLE said the question put on the Order Paper by the honourable gentleman was so general that he (Mr. Tole) was prepared to state the whole of the differences of treatment of convicted and unconvicted prisoners; but, as the honourable gentleman in his remarks had confined himself to the matter of tobacco, he did not think it was necessary to mention other subjects. There were certain of the prisons in the colony where tobacco never had been allowed to any one—Auckland and Wanganui, for instance; and the Visiting Justices in many parts of the colony had represented that it was imperative that it should be stopped. In 1881 the Visiting Justices of Lyttelton Gaol—the largest gaol in the colony—recommended that the practice of giving tobacco should be stopped, not only there, but generally throughout the colony; and consequently it was stopped there: and the efforts of the Prisons Department had been directed ever since to extinguish whatever remained of this privilege, and it was now almost absolutely extinguished. The supplying of tobacco to the gaols used to cost the colony about £500 a year.

Mr. MOSS did not ask for that. Let their friends give it to them.

Mr. TOLE said there would then immediately be jealousy between those who got tobacco and those who had no friends to give it to them, and, as a result, the Government would be called upon to equalize the position by renewing the practice of supplying tobacco, at a cost of £500 a year or so—a very large sum. He did not think tobacco was a necessary at all; it was a luxury. The honourable gentleman must remember that, however innocent an unconvicted prisoner might prove to be, there was a *primâ facie* case against him, and he was under suspicion; and for those persons the Government should not be called on to provide luxuries. Certain rules of discipline must be maintained, for if they were once broken through it would lead to the subversion of all prison rule, and to serious abuses. Unconvicted prisoners would make "plants" of tobacco, which convicted prisoners would get—both would be punished, discipline would be destroyed, and very great trouble would be caused. Without going into the matter any further, he would say that he did not see any reason for changing the present system: on the contrary, he thought it was the most economical and the best.

Sir G. GREY thought it was rather hard that unconvicted persons should be punished in this way.

Subsequently,

Mr. MOSS said,—I move the adjournment of the House, that the House may consider the injustice that is being done to a number of men helplessly in our power—men of all races, characters, and creeds—detained in our prisons awaiting trial, and presumably innocent. I was very sorry to hear the Minister say that such persons should be treated as under suspicion at all events. That is a principle unknown to English law, and which ought not for a moment to be countenanced. We know that if these men had money or rich friends they would be bailed out; but, not being able to find friends rich enough to bail them, society has to detain them for safe custody to be ready to meet their trial. But I think it is the first time that it has been laid down in any English Legislature that prisoners detained for trial are to be treated as persons under suspicion. What are you going to do, if those persons are found to be innocent? An honourable friend near me laughs. I cannot laugh at these matters. It appears to me that this Legislature, with the enormous power it wields, ought occasionally to have some consideration for humanity, and ought not to reserve all its feeling and all its intellect for questions of roads, bridges, and railways. With what eagerness would the honourable member for Waimea rise to the occasion if it were a question of roads or works in his district! but here, when we have higher business, larger principles concerned, the honourable member laughs and ridicules. To me it seems a very important question. It is a question which ought to lift us above the ordinary road-and-bridge atmosphere, for it is our bounden duty to feel for those who are in our power. We sit here as kings, we wield enormous power, and, wielding that power, surely the weak and helpless ought to be our first consideration. There is no need to be so careful of the rich and strong. They can protect themselves. They do not want your help or mine. I have moved the adjournment of the House, in order to give honourable members an opportunity of considering the matter. I was surprised to hear the remarks which fell from the Minister of Justice, and I think that he will hold different views two or three years hence. Office has—I will not say a hardening effect, but it has a narrowing effect; and I feel sure that if the Minister were not in office he would not have taken the view which he has expressed this afternoon on this subject.

Mr. KERR.—I do not know why the honourable gentleman should have particularly picked me out for reference.

Mr. MOSS.—I will tell the honourable gentleman why. He laughed loudest.

Mr. KERR.—Well, Sir, it seems to me that it would be quite impossible to carry this thing out in the prisons as they at present exist. One difficulty would be this: that in the prison these two classes of people must mix together. I do not see how you could prevent one class of men giving tobacco to the others. I do not believe that the honourable member is doing this for the good of the men who are in the prison, but in order that he may say to the people outside the prison, "You see, I am the poor man's friend."

Mr. HAKUENE.—I entirely indorse what

has been said by the honourable member for Parnell. It troubles me to think that people who are innocent—who have not been convicted of any crime—should be treated as if they were proved to be guilty. If they were guilty it would be a different thing. I think it is a serious matter—I mean the trouble that led up to the taking of these prisoners; and members of this House should consider the matter very fully. Honourable members must bear in mind that they are all liable to be placed in the same position as these prisoners, and we ought to consider what is right. I hope that the House will always see that the laws are carried out with justice and mercy, and that people awaiting trial should not be treated with the severity with which they are treated. If honourable members think that the prisoners should be treated severely because the colony might have to buy tobacco for them, I say that they need not be afraid of that, because the Maori people will collect tobacco and take it to them. Now, with regard to Te Whiti, he has said that tobacco is absolutely necessary to him, because he has difficulty in breathing, and the want of tobacco affects his health. Looking at the matter from that point of view, I think that Te Whiti should be allowed to use tobacco, and I hope that the Government will see their way to relax the regulations relating to prisoners awaiting trial.

Mr. PERE.—I ask that the indulgence of tobacco may be granted to these prisoners. Perhaps the regulation against prisoners using tobacco was passed because it was thought inadvisable to allow prisoners the use of matches. I do not think that that objection can be urged in this case, because Te Whiti is allowed the use of a fire. It should also be borne in mind that Te Whiti's crime—if it is a crime—is a very exceptional one. It is different from the crimes of other people. Te Whiti is under the belief that the land has been taken from him wrongfully. Although the land is occupied by Europeans, and they have built houses upon it, Te Whiti is under the impression that that land should not have been taken from him, and it was with a view to bringing about an inquiry that he took the steps he did. If he had wished to take a wrongful course, he could have killed people or burned down their houses. Seeing that he has not been tried yet, but is an innocent person, I think that he should be allowed to have tobacco. I am sure he would not abuse the privilege. Natives love tobacco and potatoes more than anything else in the way of food, just as Europeans attach great importance to tea and bread, and just as Chinamen cannot get along without rice. I hope the Minister of Justice will relax the regulations. It will be quite time to treat Te Whiti as a criminal—as a prisoner—when he is proved guilty. I think the first duty is to extend justice to all persons—to every one—and particularly to those who are placed in the position that Te Whiti is in. I am not making an appeal on behalf of convicted persons. Some honourable member has said that it would cause jealousy if some prisoners were supplied with tobacco, and not others; but I do not think that matter need be considered at all. The Native members make this request in the House; and the same indulgence could be granted to other prisoners, if an appeal were made on their behalf. I believe Te Whiti made a request himself to a member of the Government, and I now reiterate that request. I hope the members of this House will support me in having this law relaxed. The members of this House have full power to bring about that alteration if they think fit. I ask them to help me in having this indulgence granted to Te Whiti. It was in consequence of a law passed in this House formerly that these regulations were made, and I now ask that they be relaxed.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—Sir, there are two points raised. The one is with regard to the supply of tobacco to prisoners generally, and the other is as to the prison regulations with regard to unconvicted prisoners. Now, with regard to the supply of tobacco to prisoners, I have always looked upon the regulation providing that that should not be continued as one of unnecessary hardship, because I feel quite convinced that as regards those prisoners who are used to tobacco one of the best incentives to good conduct is the idea that a little of it can be got, and one of the greatest punishments to any person who has used tobacco is to be deprived of it. It has always seemed to me that the arrangement was a most harsh and cruel one, and did not tend to meet the end we have in view—namely, that prisoners should come out of gaol better than they went in. I brought this matter before the House some years ago, and gave the same opinion then that I do now. In the district I represent there is certainly, on the part of the Visiting Justices, a very strong feeling that an error was committed in making this regulation with regard to prisoners in general. Then, with regard to prisoners who are there simply for safe custody, to be tried, it seems to me that it is a great injustice to deprive them of the ordinary wants of life which could be given without interfering at all with prison discipline. We do not know that a prisoner is guilty until he is tried. We are told that there is a *primâ facie* case against him; but you have no right to begin the punishment upon a *primâ facie* case, beyond keeping the man in safe custody. Then, with regard to the Maori prisoners in particular, I should say that we ought to be doubly particular in dealing with them, and not deprive them of comforts which are to them far greater than they are to us. When Te Whiti was in prison at New Plymouth I visited him, I think, every week, and we saw there that he had tobacco, and fresh fish, and things of that kind that his friends were quite willing to give him. We went so far, in our capacity as Visiting Justices, as to allow him to have apples and oranges and things of that kind that could do no harm whatever, so far as prison regulations are concerned, and were very grateful to him and his friends. It did not make the least difference to the people outside

—to the general public; and I have no doubt that the humane treatment of Te Whiti and his followers was an essential element in the after-peace of the district. Now they have brought Te Whiti to Wellington I do hope the prison authorities will relax the prison regulations in his favour. That is the feeling I have with regard to this matter; and I hope the whole subject that has been introduced by the honourable member for Parnell will soon receive the attention of the Ministry of the day.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Considering the period of the session and the urgency of business, I do not propose to make any lengthened remarks; but I strongly indorse the statements and the arguments used by the honourable member for Taranaki. I think in this case—I mean, relating to the Maori prisoners—that the Government, if they can possibly see their way, should relax the prison regulations.

Sir R. STOUT.—Why?

Mr. BUCHANAN.—For the reasons stated by the honourable member for Taranaki. I have already stated that I do not propose going into this question at any length; but I think in this case the relaxation should be made, if the Government can at all see their way clear to make it.

Mr. BRUCE.—Sir, I do not wish to prolong this debate, because it appears to me to be a very unimportant one; but I should just like to say one or two words in reference to it. I may say that I speak with twenty years' experience of tobacco. It has been alleged during the course of this discussion that it is a very great hardship to deprive prisoners of tobacco. Well, Sir, I do not coincide at all in that idea. I believe that all of us would be very much better without tobacco; and I know very well that the taste rapidly disappears, and that persons who have been some years in gaol acknowledge the benefit they have received from giving up the use of tobacco. But the strongest argument, it appears to me, that has been used in favour of allowing this unfortunate Native chief to have tobacco is that his health appears to suffer from being deprived of it. Now, I believe it is the case that tobacco is occasionally prescribed by the faculty for some pulmonary diseases, and I think that is one strong reason why he should not be deprived of that weed. I think, also, the House will recognize the circumstances of his case—which I am not going into—as of an exceedingly exceptional character; and I think it would be a generous act on the part of the Government to make an exception in this case to the established rule.

Major ATKINSON.—I also express a hope that the Minister will reconsider this question of prison regulations. It does seem to me unfair. I am not a smoker myself, and never have been; but I have happened to be with smokers, and it seemed to me that they did suffer very much if they missed their pipe; and especially is that the case if their mode of life is changed—if they have to go out and "rough it," as it is called. Now, when people are put in gaol their circumstances of life are generally new—at any rate, that is the case with first offenders; and it does seem to me to be against the general principle of English law that you should put a man to greater disability than is absolutely necessary before he has been proved guilty of any offence. I hope the honourable gentleman will reconsider the matter. I confess that, so far as tobacco is concerned, I have no sympathy with it whatever. I think people would be much better without it, and I am sure that those who do not smoke would be very much better without the amount of tobacco that they are obliged, through coming in contact with smokers, to inhale, whether they like it or not. I suffer, myself, very much for the first fortnight of the session from the smoke I have to inhale against my wish. But I think the honourable gentleman should reconsider the matter, and that no one should be put to greater personal inconvenience while being detained for trial than can be possibly avoided.

Mr. TOLE.—The honourable gentleman who has just sat down seems to forget that the regulations under which we are acting now were the regulations of his own Minister of Justice, Mr. Conolly.

Major ATKINSON.—May I say that I intended to refer to that? My honourable friend the late Minister of Justice told me so a few minutes ago; and I meant to refer to it, and to express my regret, and to say that, were I now in the position I was in then, they certainly would not be continued longer.

Mr. TOLE.—I was going on to say, further, that these regulations were carefully considered by that honourable gentleman and by the officers of the department, and seem to have acted very well on the whole. I will, further, say this, with reference to the honourable member for Parnell: that it is quite clear to me that that honourable gentleman would not have brought this question forward but for the element introduced into it by the circumstance that Te Whiti is now in gaol. What is the fact? The present rule prohibiting the introduction of tobacco into gaols has obtained for eleven years—namely, since 1875—except on the written consent of a Visiting Justice or the Surgeon of the gaol. The only alteration made by the rules of 1883 is that the Visiting Justices were deprived of the power of giving that consent, and it now rests solely with the Gaol Surgeon. That is the position. I may say, also, that the inauguration of this rule and the carrying-out of it strictly has been productive of a very great deal of good. It has been proved indisputably that, for years, people of a vagrant type were in the habit of committing crimes about winter-time and getting into gaol, and having their smoke and living there in comfort till the winter was over. That was continued for years.

Mr. MOSS.—Were they convicted persons?

Mr. TOLE.—Convicted persons, and, of course, also persons awaiting trial. In this way crime decreased wonderfully when the present rule came into force. That is a notorious fact. I would further observe that this is no new rule. It does not obtain only in New Zealand.

Smoking is absolutely prohibited in the prisons of the United Kingdom, and no tobacco is allowed in the prisons of other colonies; so that we are more merciful—we do give it on the recommendation of the Gaol Surgeon. I am glad this matter has been brought up. I made it my business to visit the gaol on Sunday, and it was with very great difficulty I could get into the gaol for the number of members of the House who were there. I was very sorry to see that, because I think to make the imprisonment of Te Whiti appear anything like a martyrdom was wrong, and I did not hesitate to express my opinion to one or two members there. I did not see the prisoners until the members had gone away, and I then saw Te Whiti at his tea. He did not ask me for any tobacco; but I passed on to see Titokowaru, and on my return Te Whiti made this request for the "pipe." He pointed to his chest, and I inferred that he had some chest affection. I immediately said, "The doctor will be here tomorrow: you ask him, and, if he approves, you may have tobacco; but there is a regulation which provides that you cannot have it without the recommendation of the doctor." I learned since that the doctor sounded him next day, and said that he never tested a sounder chest; and he absolutely declined to give Te Whiti tobacco. The rule is elastic. It provides that in all cases of necessity tobacco shall be given on the recommendation of the Gaol Surgeon. I think, altogether, the rule is a proper one, and I say that with all the responsibilities of my office, and all the sense of justice which I should entertain in a case of this kind. If Maoris or Europeans get tobacco, why should not Chinamen get opium, which is almost as much a necessity to them as tobacco is to the Natives?—and there are many Europeans even to whom smoking is as much a necessity as it is to the Natives. In Auckland I was asked if I would allow plum-pudding to be given to the prisoners, because it would be an incentive to improvement.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why not?

Mr. TOLE.—Well, why not give them a glass of beer or whiskey, or allow them to go out to the theatre for an evening, or allow temperance reformers to go into the gaols and deliver lectures or get up entertainments? Where is the line to be drawn? Where was the honourable gentleman in 1883 when this whole question was discussed? I have looked in vain in *Hansard* for a protest from the honourable member for Parnell in regard to this matter.

Mr. MOSS.—Against smoking?

Mr. TOLE.—The honourable member at the time referred to flogging, but not to smoking, though that subject amongst others was under discussion. The honourable member for Tararaki did speak on the question of tobacco, but the honourable member for Parnell did not.

Mr. MOSS.—The argument was as to convicted prisoners.

Mr. TOLE.—The prison regulations refer to unconvicted as well as convicted prisoners. We should never have heard of this question if it had not been for Te Whiti. I have visited all the large gaols in the colony, and, in answer to my inquiries if there were any complaints, I have never heard a single unconvicted person ask for tobacco. I really think there is nothing in this question raised; and this motion for the adjournment of the House will settle nothing: but I will ask the House to support me in maintaining the present rule.

Mr. ROSS.—A great deal has been said of the hardships of those who are deprived of tobacco in prison. I look upon smoking as being a very filthy habit. It is an excrescence of barbarism which was grafted on to the boasted civilization of the sixteenth century; but it has got such a hold upon all classes of society that it seems impossible that one can get up to raise his voice against it without giving offence or incurring a certain amount of odium. In Berlin, some years ago, an Act was passed prohibiting smoking in the streets, under a penalty of 1 thaler. I think the habit should not only be done away with in our gaols and public institutions, but even in our streets. How often, as one is walking along the footpaths, one meets some foul-mouthed smoker, and is compelled to receive the fumes from his mouth and, frequently, the ashes from his pipe!

Mr. PARATA.—The Minister of Justice has stated that tobacco is given to prisoners in certain gaols—that it has been supplied to prisoners in Auckland and other places. There are many Europeans and Natives who value their tobacco more than anything else, and it is a great hardship that they should be deprived of it when they go to gaol. It is quite right that indulgence should not be shown to prisoners who have been convicted of a great crime. It seems that the regulations have been relaxed in certain cases: why should they not be relaxed now? I think that the request which Te Whiti has made to the Minister of Justice should be granted. I have been to see Te Whiti to-day, and it struck me that he was not in such good health as he was when he was in the South. Seeing that Te Whiti has not been guilty of any crime as far as we know, and that he has not been convicted, I think he should certainly be allowed the use of tobacco—and not only Te Whiti, but all his companions. If the Government do not like to incur the expense of supplying these prisoners with tobacco, I am sure the relatives of the Natives would gladly do so. I had no wish that this matter should be made so much of; but, as the debate has gone on at such great length, I think I had better lay before the House all the facts connected with Te Whiti's incarceration. Te Whiti did not break the law—he did not assault anybody, or take anybody's life. The whole of the circumstances connected with the taking of Te Whiti's land should now be looked into. If the Government do not care to provide Te Whiti with tobacco, I ask them to grant this concession—namely, let Te Whiti's relatives give him some out of their love for him. If that is done I will withdraw my proposal for an inquiry into all the circumstances connected with Te

Whiti's present attitude. I am afraid the House is impatient; therefore I will give way.

Sir G. GREY.—I wish to express my opinion that it is not right to deprive innocent people of their tobacco. I am not a smoker myself, and disapprove very much of the habit; but I do not think I have any right to deprive a man of his tobacco unless he has been proved guilty of a crime. The fact that these rules have been in force for a certain period is no excuse for continuing them if they are wrong. I did not know myself before that this particular rule was in force, or I should certainly have called attention to it sooner. I say that the fact that a Minister approves of this rule is no reason why we should support him if he is wrong. This is a question of depriving people of a right which they ought to enjoy until they have been convicted of crime. I think that if I, or some other person, were sent to gaol under the same circumstances, and had not been tried, some way or another would be found to allow us to have a smoke if we wanted it in some quiet place. I cannot help thinking that would be the case with some persons, and that this rule falls unfairly on uninfluential people.

Sir R. STOUT.—I think that by next session we shall have to introduce some Standing Order by which a single member shall not be allowed to move the adjournment of the House. Here we have been since half-past two—and it is now nearly half-past five—and nothing has been done except that the adjournment has been moved twice. I think it ought to be necessary for at least nine or ten members to require it before the adjournment of the House is moved. I think it is also very inopportune for the honourable member for Parnell and others to show sympathy with those who have broken the law in this way. In fact, to my mind it is most discreditable for members of Parliament, as soon as they find that a person has broken the law in such a way as might lead to grave complications, to take those persons in hand and show such an amount of uncalled-for sympathy with them. It is really doing the best they can to stop the course of justice; and that is a thing which no Parliament should consent to. I am surprised at the honourable gentleman. This is not a political matter, but it is a case of breaking the law of the land. Why, then, should those people be taken in hand in this way? The matter of the tobacco is simply brought forward as a peg to hang something else upon. He has allowed this question to stand over for many years, and has taken no notice whatever of it, but now suddenly he brings it forward in this extraordinary way, with a desire to show sympathy with certain persons who have broken the law. I think members would do much better if they would try to devise means for stopping smoking, especially among the youth of the colony. I tell them that what is now going on in this colony is degenerating our youth physically. You cannot go along the streets of any town without seeing youths down to the age even of eight or ten years smoking their cigars and cigarettes. There should be some law passed to prohibit smoking as it is going on now; for it is injuring our youths physically, mentally, and morally. But the honourable gentleman must take up the case of people who are committed for trial for having broken the law, and he tells us that we ought to give them tobacco because they have been accustomed to it. I take it that some of my own countrymen are rather fond of, and have been accustomed to, drinking whiskey. Will the honourable gentleman contend that prisoners of my nation ought to be supplied with whiskey because they have been accustomed to it? Then, others take delight in theatrical entertainments, and go to them whenever they can; they probably take more enjoyment in that than others do in tobacco; and why should they be deprived of it? If a person has the misfortune to be committed to prison he must abide by the prison rules. It is not as if we were dealing with Te Whiti and the other Maori prisoners under a special Act of the Assembly. They are being dealt with under the ordinary laws of the colony. They have broken a law which has been the law of England since the time of Richard II., and I ask why this misplaced sympathy should be shown to them.

Mr. MACARTHUR.—The argument of the Premier is altogether beside the question. He says, practically, that these men are to be punished although they have not yet been proved guilty. The English law, as I understand it, is that until a man has been proved guilty of a crime by a jury of his countrymen he is assumed to be innocent; but the present prison regulations punish these men although they have not been proved guilty. I am not a smoker myself, and therefore I have no personal sympathy with these men in that respect; but I hold that this discussion is no waste of time, because we are striving to uphold a principle of the English law which has always been held to be one of the greatest safeguards of the subject. The next thing will be that we shall have a vegetarian as Prime Minister, who will argue that it is inadvisable that prisoners should eat meat, and therefore we should take steps to put a stop to that and pass a law that they shall eat nothing but oatmeal, which is, I believe, a favourite article of consumption by some of the fellow-countrymen of our present Prime Minister. That, certainly, would be a punishment to persons who are accustomed to live on different fare. Even with regard to whiskey, to which the honourable gentleman alluded, I would say that those who are merely kept in confinement to insure their safe keeping should not be deprived of it if it were necessary for them. If you cannot under the present regulations keep unconvicted prisoners safe without mixing them up with those who have been convicted, and subjecting them to the same strict regulations, you should remedy your prison rules. Nothing should be done with such persons beyond what is necessary for keeping them in safe custody until they are tried. One hears a

great deal in this House about protecting the poor man; but here is a case in which the rich man is protected as against the poor, for the rich man, if he is charged with a crime, can get bail and go about and enjoy himself till he is tried, while the poor man has to stay in gaol for perhaps three or four months and suffer punishment during all that time, though he has not been convicted of any crime. It is specially a hardship to Maoris, who are so accustomed to tobacco that it is their greatest necessary. I have no sympathy with any one who has broken the law, but I maintain that these people have not been proved to have broken the law. There may be very clear evidence against them; but neither the Premier nor any one else has a right to say that they have broken the law until it has been absolutely proved that they have done so; but he has no right to prejudge the case, and especially in this House. My fullest sympathy goes with the honourable member for Parnell; and I maintain that, although an afternoon has been spent over this matter, it has not been wasted if the expression of opinion on the part of members shows the Government that an alteration in the prison regulations should be made.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Surely the opinion of the honourable member who has just sat down can only lead to the greatest absurdity. No one asserts that Te Whiti has broken the law; but he has placed himself in circumstances of the greatest suspicion, and it is in the highest degree likely that it will be proved that he has broken the law, a *primâ facie* case having been made out against him. We all admit that the circumstances are quite sufficiently suspicious to warrant us in incarcerating him; and therefore, if we are legally justified in depriving him of his liberty, we are surely as much justified in depriving him of his tobacco. The thing is mere nonsense. How can you bring a man to justice at all if you cannot do these things? The only conclusion to be drawn from the arguments of the honourable gentleman is that you should have no one incarcerated pending trial. I will only add that I agree with the Premier in regretting that the time of the House should have been taken up over so trumpery a matter.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I should not say a word on this subject if it had not been for the extraordinary speech of the honourable member for Mount Ida. The honourable gentleman evidently did not spend the time in getting up that speech which he usually does, or he would not have spoken as he has done. The reason for incarcerating Te Whiti and the others is not to punish them, but to secure their persons until the day of trial; and they are held to be innocent until they are tried and convicted, and should not be punished. Under these circumstances the honourable gentleman is entirely wrong in his arguments.

Mr. HATCH.—I can only regret that the business of the House has been so much delayed in discussing this subject. I was glad to hear the Minister of Justice deal with the matter as he did, and explain the position so clearly. I think the honourable member for Parnell and others were making a great mistake when they took upon themselves to go and visit the gaol on Sunday with a view of turning it almost into a wild-beast show. When a dozen or fifteen persons were confined there on this charge was not a time for members of this House to make a rush to the gaol. I did not quite catch whether they were committing a breach of the prison regulations by going there on Sunday.

Mr. TOLE.—No.

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

NEW ZEALAND LOAN BILL.

Mr. BRYCE.—I wish to make a personal explanation. The honourable member for Hokitika the other night made reference to a banquet which took place ten years ago. I suggested to him that, although I recognized some of the terms of the report he was reading, probably the chairman of that banquet was somebody else. On refreshing my memory by reading a paper I find that I was entirely wrong, and that the honourable gentleman was entirely right, and that moreover the report he read, as far as my recollection goes, contains the substance of what I said at the time. I might be permitted to explain, perhaps, still further; but the explanation is so obvious that I feel it unnecessary to make it.

NORTH ISLAND MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY LOAN BILL.

Sir J. VOGEL, in moving the second reading of the North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Bill, said,—A great deal was said about this measure in the late debate. I thought it better not to discuss the question, but to leave it until the Bill came up. The object of this Bill is to secure the expenditure of the North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan to the purposes for which it was authorized. There is no disguising the fact that, as it stands now, any votes passed against the Public Works Fund might be met out of this loan; and, moreover, it was in the exercise of a considerable amount of responsibility and risk that the Government forebore to negotiate the loan in the earlier part of the year, preferring, if possible, not to do so until Parliament could secure its application to the purposes for which it was intended. If this Bill were thrown out, and if the ideas of some honourable members were carried into effect,—that borrowing should cease,—there is no disguising the fact that the North Island Trunk Loan, under the law as it stands now, would be applicable to all purposes of the Public Works Fund. Therefore I apprehend that there are no members of the House who will not be glad to see this Bill passed—not only those who may be interested in the railway itself, but those who may feel that an obligation devolves

on them to carry out the intention of the Legislature; for undoubtedly it was the case, when this loan was authorized some three years ago, that it was intended to be specifically devoted to the purposes for which it was designed. I take it, therefore, that there will be no honourable members who will oppose the Bill as a whole. Now as regards its purport. The various objects to which the loan is allocated are these—they all strictly belong to it with the exception of one, which I shall discuss separately—that is to say: The cost of raising the loan, and repayment to the Public Works Fund of advances made on account of the railway, on account of its survey, on account of acquiring land for the railway itself, are all purposes which it was always intended should be recouped out of the loan when negotiated. The single exception, then, is the purchase of Native lands to the value of £100,000. As regards that, I am perfectly free to confess that it is a new feature, and I have already explained it to the House, so that there is no disguise about it. It is adopted as a means of increasing the amount available for expenditure out of the general Public Works Fund for general purposes. Now, I have on more than one occasion ventured to express my opinion as to what was for the benefit of Auckland—sometimes against the opinions of many of its members; and on this occasion also I wish to express a strong opinion that every Auckland member, every Wellington member, every member representing Taranaki — in fact, all those who have an interest in this railway—will greatly mistake the interests they specially represent if they oppose the clause for the purchase of this land. It is a stroke of good fortune to those specially interested in the North Island Trunk line that the Government are able to come down and propose what will really be a magnificent endowment for opening up the country in connection with the line. There is no disguise in the matter—it is a chance which has come to those interested in the railway. In ordinary circumstances, if this land were bought out of ordinary loan funds, if it were not sufficiently desirable to charge it specially to this special loan, the proceeds of the land would have, like those of other lands purchased from the Natives, been applicable to all the purposes of the colony, instead of being, as now proposed, a specific endowment for the purpose of opening up the country adjacent to the North Island Trunk Railway. The Government have maturely considered the matter, and they think it desirable that the land should be bought out of this loan, recognizing that the rest of the loan and the proceeds of the sale of the land should be specifically tied down for the proper purposes of the railway. The Government feel it incumbent on them to propose that the land should be set apart as a special endowment for purposes connected with the railway to open up the country adjacent to it. It is quite absurd to think that the railway will not be finished: £100,000, more or less, will not stand in the way of the colony finishing the line. There can therefore be no cause for any honourable member to pretend that, because this £100,000 is taken away for the purchase of Native land, the completion of that railway will be in the least degree jeopardized. The fact therefore remains that we are offering this land as an endowment for the purpose of opening up the country connected with the railway. That the land will be of enormous value in the future is my strong opinion. There are parts of the country that the railway will open up which are unquestionably very rich in mineral wealth, and there are parts which I have authority for saying will prove better than honourable members have had reason to believe; and, in short, if this endowment is properly managed it will be the means of enabling railways in connection with the trunk line, in course of time, to be made to expedite the settlement of the country adjacent to the line. If there were any other line to which a loan had been specially allocated, and a proposal were made to give in this way a great endowment for works subsidiary to that line, I do not think the members representing the districts through which the line ran would offer any objection. If, as I am given to understand, the members from Auckland particularly object to this allocation as being not quite fair to them, I will say, on behalf of the Government, that, if the land is purchased out of any other fund, the proceeds of the land, when sold, will be used for the benefit of the colony generally instead of being devoted as I have stated. I do not wish the Bill to pass under any false pretence, but I state plainly that the object is to tie up the loan; and we find it convenient, for financial purposes, to aid the general Public Works Fund, to expend £100,000 out of this loan in the purchase of Native land; and we think it is fair and in accordance with the principles laid down in the past that the land so purchased should be set apart in the manner proposed. Sir, I do not think it is necessary to trouble the House with any further remarks, and I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Major ATKINSON.—I shall have very great pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill; but I shall also feel it my duty to very strongly oppose subsection (5) of clause 4, and the whole of clause 5. The Treasurer now tells us that the reason why we are asked to make an appropriation out of the North Island Trunk Line Loan for the purchase of Native land is that he has not enough money otherwise; and apparently he is in a difficulty to know where to turn to get this money. Well, that does not look very like a well-thought-out finance. The Government now tell us they have thought out this matter carefully; and, apparently, in order to make this proposal palatable, they hold out a sort of bait to the North Island members that there shall not only be enough money provided to make the railway, but that there shall be an endowment for the making of branch railways, tramways, and roads along it. I venture to say—and I speak at the present moment as a North Island member — that we do not want any endow-

ments of that sort. We do not want to secure any unfair advantages over the rest of the colony. I do not see why the proceeds of Crown lands—and these lands would then be Crown lands—sold anywhere should be applied to the North Island any more than to the South. The line the House has taken with regard to the Land Fund is clear—that all parts of the colony should be treated alike in the matter—that, if any profit arises out of the disposal of the land, it should go into the general fund. Let the rest of the colony have its fair share of the profits of land along the railway, as we have from the Land Fund derived from other parts of the colony. I am only speaking of late years; for we know that formerly many parts of the colony lived and grew fat on the heritage of the colony. I do not want to raise the question now, but, as I have always contended that the Land Fund of the colony belongs to the colony, I have no wish now to see it localized in the way proposed by the Bill. But surely the Treasurer is able to devise some other means of finding money. I venture to think he will find the North Island members do not want money to be used for this purpose in order to get special benefits. The offer, no doubt, is made in a way which may make it rather hard for North Island members to refuse; but I think we should refuse. Of course it may be absolutely necessary to use part of the Trunk Line Loan Fund for the purpose of paying for Native land if the money cannot be found in any other way; but if it is used in that way it must be borrowed in ordinary course as an advance, to be recouped subsequently. But there should be no occasion for that at all. The Treasurer has told us he sees his way clearly, and he laughed at the idea that he had not the money when we talked about his not having the £800,000, and he has kept on laughing till now; but now he tells us he has not got the funds. But if the honourable gentleman wants funds for this purpose he can have them under the Loan Bill we shall consider to-night. We can strike out certain railways in its schedule which the Premier quite agrees are not wanted, and we shall be happy to assist the Premier in reducing the schedule to works which are required—works such as the Premier pointed out, and such as the Opposition have always pointed out. Then the Treasurer will have amply sufficient balance to provide from the general fund, instead of taking it from a special fund allocated to a special purpose. I quite agree with the Treasurer that there is no fear that a question of £100,000, more or less, will make any practical difference in the completion of the railway; but I do object altogether to these special allocations of Land Fund to particular districts in this way. It would create enormous complications, and would create enormous difficulty to settle presently; and, further than that, it would be raising hopes which I, for one, submit are not very likely to be fulfilled for many years to come, if at all. Therefore I do hope the Government will see their way to permit the parts of the Bill I have referred to to be struck out. The Treasurer holds this proposal out as rather a boon to North Island members—to get a special advantage; but I am satisfied that we do not require any special benefit; and, as I say, there is no difficulty, as the honourable gentleman now says he is hard up, in providing him with the necessary money out of the other loan.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—As a South Island member I voted for the loan for the North Island Trunk line as a colonial work; and my impression is that this House, or any House which may succeed it, will see that that line is made if it costs a great deal more than a million, as, no doubt, it will. I believe it will cost nearer a million and a half, and therefore any argument as to the diversion of £100,000 of the loan to the purchase of Native land affecting the completion of the railway should not have much weight; for I think the House will find the necessary money for the purpose when the time comes, by further borrowing if it is required. But I rise for the purpose of saying that I think we should not devote any portion of the special million loan to any other purpose than the making of the railway. I earnestly hope, therefore, that the whole loan will be strictly tied down to that purpose, and that, having enacted that a special loan shall be devoted to a special purpose, we shall adhere strictly to that purpose, and not deviate in the slightest degree from the intention of the Legislature. Therefore I now vote for the second reading of this Bill with great pleasure, and I trust the Treasurer will see the wisdom and, I might say, the justice, of striking out subsection (5) of clause 4, and the whole of clause 5.

Mr. PEACOCK.—The Treasurer has entirely failed to show why this proposed departure should be made—why part of the North Island Trunk Loan should be diverted to the purchase of Native land. It seems to me that, if the Act passed in 1882 required amendment for the purpose of insuring that the proceeds of a loan allocated to a special work should be tied down more strictly to that work, the Treasurer should confine his attention to that point, instead of trying at the same time to introduce quite a new feature in the purchase and disposal of Native land. The Loan Act distinctly states that the money raised under it shall be for the purpose of constructing the said North Island Trunk line of railway; and I contend that the making of an endowment for the construction of branch railways to join the main line out of the proceeeds of this loan was not contemplated in the least when the Act was passed. The Treasurer put it in a way that inferred that this proposal will be conferring a favour on the people of the North Island, by taking money voted for one particular purpose to be used for another purpose; but I believe the feeling is very strong indeed that this special loan should not be tampered with or diverted in any way from its original allocation; and I trust the Government will be willing to allow those parts of the Bill which propose to so divert it to be struck out. I do not think there is any justification for the alteration proposed in the spend-

ing of the money, and I shall be prepared to oppose that in Committee.

Mr. DARGAVILLE.—I intend to support the second reading of the Bill in so far as it "ear-marks" the one million loan for the North Island Trunk Railway; but, in common with those honourable members who have preceded me, I shall in Committee support the striking-out of subsection (5) of clause 4, and the whole of clause 5. It will then remain for the Government by some other means to provide funds for the purchase of Native land in the North Island. I suggest that it might be by no means improper that certain portions of the schedule of the general Loan Bill itself may be struck out; and then the Government will find that they would be able to provide, from a source that would then be rendered open, for the purchase of Native land—I mean the lines from Blenheim to Tophouse and Westport to Inangahua, to which exception has been taken. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill, but on the distinct understanding that we shall strike out clause 5, and subsection (5) of clause 4.

Mr. BRUCE.—I should like to make a very few remarks in reference to the measure now before the House. I do not intend to speak at length, because I gave a pretty full expression of my views during the recent debate; but I must say that when I first saw this Bill I thought it was the most incomprehensible measure ever submitted to the House. Though ostensibly introduced for the purpose of securing the loan to the objects declared in the title, at the same time it is coolly proposed to use £100,000 for a purpose not contemplated by the House when the original Act was passed. Now, Sir, where is the necessity for such a measure? Has it been customary in the past for Governments to try to misappropriate loans which had received the sanction of Parliament for certain specific purposes?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Yes.

Mr. BRUCE.—I cannot believe it. There may be exceptional instances.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No—a regular thing.

Mr. BRUCE.—Well, Sir, the question that suggests itself to me is this: Is this Government afraid to trust itself with this money without having an Act passed by this House to protect the money from misappropriation? An honourable gentleman near me suggests that it might be done by a Government that comes after this one. Then, do they wish by an Act of this House to prevent their successors from doing what they themselves threatened to do during the recess? That is practically the position. It appears to me that this measure was introduced in the first place for the purpose of enabling the Treasurer to get hold of this £100,000, and, secondly, for the purpose of making it appear to the country that they have a perfect horror of seeing done that which they threatened to do during the recess. The Colonial Treasurer, when speaking of the proposal to create an endowment of land for the line, held it up as a great boon to the North Island; but, Sir, I do not think that North Island members will see the advantages in the same light as the honourable gentleman does; and, as for myself, while I shall be quite willing to vote for the second reading of the Bill, I shall vote, as has been suggested by several honourable members, for striking out the objectionable clauses in the Bill.

Mr. T. THOMPSON.—While thanking the Colonial Treasurer for his recommendation to the North Island members in the direction indicated by him in his speech in moving the second reading of this Bill, I have to say that I will vote for the second reading, but in Committee I shall vote against the clauses to which exception has already been taken by other honourable members.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I regret that I have to look at the questions involved in this Bill in a different light from that in which they present themselves to members from the North Island. I may be wrong, but it appears to me that honourable gentlemen generally do not take into account the circumstances under which moneys are appropriated for public works. I will first refer to what the honourable member for Rangitikei said. He asked if we were afraid to trust ourselves with the money, and, if that was not the reason, why we propose to tie it up. Well, that is not the reason at all; but I would point out that under our system of finance it is quite possible that the money might be encroached upon quite unintentionally. The honourable member will see this: that we do not, as a rule, get our appropriations passed until nearly September, and the financial year ends on the 31st March following, and the money spent between March and September is partly spent under imprest. It all comes out of one common fund for public works purposes; and when money is going out from day to day for four or five different departments it is very difficult for the Treasury to have any check unless there are specific appropriations, and therefore, unless the items are tied up, one may encroach on another. In 1878 the whole of the Loan Act schedules passed during previous years, amounting in all to many millions of money, were absolutely repealed; and it may be necessary to repeal the schedules to the Loan Acts between that time and this when we propose to change our system. Now, I am not going again into the general question of the finances; but I say that if the honourable member for Egmont correctly represents the views of the North Island members the Government will, as far as possible, meet him. We shall not offer the slightest objection to the striking-out of clause 5, if that is the desire of the North Island members; but we are not prepared to strike out subsection (5) of clause 4, because if we did so we should not be giving ourselves means to purchase that land which over and over again members have urged us to buy before proceeding further with the line. Therefore we are not prepared to strike out that subsection. As to the suggestion of the honourable member for Auckland West—that the amount should be placed in the schedule to the other Loan Bill—

I am afraid that that cannot be done, because that Loan Bill is for railway purposes alone. We put our foot down on that, as the policy of the Government is that the money raised under that Bill shall be applied to railway purposes only. And if honourable members insist on striking out subsection (5) it may be better that the Bill should not proceed, and that we should accept what seems to be the suggestion of the honourable member for Rangitikei, that we should be trusted not to divert this loan, and that things should remain as they are till next year. I do not think it is advisable, therefore, that we should proceed further with this Bill if subsection (5) of clause 4 be struck out; but clause 5 may be eliminated if that is the desire of members from the North Island. I shall not follow the honourable member for Egmont in his speech beyond saying this: It seems to me to be perfectly legitimate that land should be purchased for the railway; and that by-and-by it would serve a most useful purpose. There is no doubt that the land will require to be opened up very rapidly after this line is pushed on, because the progress of settlement will be enormous. I believe that one of the most important towns in the colony will be formed where the Wanganui River crosses the main line; and there is no question that there is a large amount of valuable mineral country between the Mokau and the main line. In my opinion the difficulty will be to find means for opening up roads and branch railways to connect the country with the main line; and I think most useful revenue might be derived from land bought in this way. Such an endowment as this, I take leave to think, would be looked upon in the future as a most beneficent provision. I am sorry to find that it does not appear acceptable to Auckland members. However, I can only express my own opinion. I do so with becoming deference, and I may be wrong. I am sure that in a matter of this kind the honourable member for Newton is not influenced by party feeling, but has the interests of his constituents in view; but my opinion differs from his, for it seems to me that the course proposed is one which, if followed out, would in the course of a few years produce very excellent results. I can understand objections coming from Middle Island members—the objection raised by the honourable member for Akaroa was not unnatural; but that members from the North Island should object to take advantage of this opportunity which is offered them of obtaining an endowment for this great trunk line seems to me to be a most surprising instance either of want of discrimination or of unselfishness.

Bill read a second time.

NEW ZEALAND LOAN BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Schedule.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE moved, That the words, "Helensville northwards, £50,000," be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be retained."

AYES, 64.

Atkinson	Ivess	Richardson, E.
Ballance	Johnston	Richardson, G.
Beetham	Kerr	Ross
Bevan	Lake	Russell
B.-Bradshaw	Lance	Smith
Bruce	Larnach	Steward, W. J.
Buchanan	Locke	Stewart, W. D.
Buckland, W.F.	Macarthur	Stout
Cadman	McKenzie, J.	Sutter
Conolly	McMillan	Taylor
Cowan	Menteath	Te Ao
Dargaville	Moss	Thompson, T.
Dodson	Newman	Tole
Duncan	O'Callaghan	Trimble
Fergus	O'Conor	Vogel
Fraser	Ormond	Walker
Gore	Parata	Whyte
Grace	Peacock	Wilson.
Hakuene	Pearson	
Hatch	Pere	*Tellers.*
Hobbs	Reese	Mitchelson
Holmes	Reid	Moat.

NOES, 13.

Allwright	Hislop	Thomson, J. W.
Barron	Levestam	
Bryce	Mackenzie, M.	*Tellers.*
Buckland, J. C.	Montgomery	Guinness
Fulton	Rolleston	Hursthouse.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Brown	Wakefield
Joyce	Pyke
Macandrew	Hirst, H.
Samuel.	Fisher.

Majority for, 51.

Words retained.

Mr. J. C. BUCKLAND moved, That the words, "Hamilton to Grahamstown, £53,000," be omitted.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be retained."

AYES, 47.

Ballance	Kerr	Reese
Bevan	Lake	Richardson, E.
B.-Bradshaw	Lance	Smith
Buckland, W.F.	Larnach	Steward, W. J.
Cadman	Macarthur	Stout
Cowan	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Dargaville	Menteath	Te Ao
Dodson	Moat	Thompson, T.
Duncan	Moss	Tole
Fergus	Newman	Turnbull
Gore	O'Callaghan	Vogel
Guinness	O'Conor	Walker
Hakuene	Parata	Whyte.
Hatch	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Holmes	Pearson	Fraser
Ivess	Pere	Grace.

NOES, 26.

Atkinson	Conolly	Mitchelson
Barron	Fulton	Montgomery
Bruce	Hislop	Ormond
Bryce	Hursthouse	Reid
Buchanan	Johnston	Richardson, G.
Buckland, J. C.	Mackenzie, M.	Rolleston

Ross	Sutter	*Tellers.*
Russell	Thomson, J.W.	Allwright
Stewart, W. D.	Trimble.	Levestam.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Brown	Wakefield
Fitzherbert	Beetham
Garrick	Wilson
Joyce	Pyke
Macandrew	Hirst, H.
Samuel.	Fisher.

Majority for, 21.

Words retained.

Mr. SUTTER moved, That the words, "Greymouth to Hokitika, £76,000," be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be retained."

AYES, 39.

Ballance	Ivess	Smith
Bevan	Kerr	Steward, W. J.
B.-Bradshaw	Lance	Stout
Cadman	Larnach	Taylor
Cowan	Levestam	Te Ao
Dargaville	McMillan	Thompson, T.
Dodson	O'Callaghan	Tole
Duncan	O'Conor	Turnbull
Fraser	Parata	Vogel
Grace	Pearson	Walker.
Guinness	Pere	*Tellers.*
Hakuene	Reese	Menteath
Hatch	Richardson, E.	Seddon.
Holmes		

NOES, 34.

Barron	Johnston	Richardson, G.
Bruce	Lake	Rolleston
Bryce	Macarthur	Ross
Buchanan	Mackenzie, M.	Russell
Buckland, J. C.	Mitchelson	Stewart, W. D.
Buckland, W.F.	Moat	Thomson, J. W.
Conolly	Montgomery	Trimble
Fergus	Moss	Whyte.
Fulton	Newman	
Hislop	Ormond	*Tellers.*
Hobbs	Peacock	Allwright
Hursthouse	Reid	Sutter.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Brown	Wakefield
Fitzherbert	Beetham
Garrick	Wilson
Joyce	Pyke
Macandrew	Hirst, H.
Samuel.	Fisher.

Majority for, 5.

Words retained.

Mr. ALLWRIGHT moved, That the words, "Westport to Inangahua, £63,000," be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be retained."

AYES, 32.

Ballance	Cowan	Guinness
Bevan	Dodson	Hatch
B.-Bradshaw	Fraser	Holmes
Cadman	Grace	Ivess
Kerr	Reese	Tole
Lance	Richardson, E.	Turnbull
Larnach	Samuel	Vogel
Levestam	Seddon	Walker.
McMillan	Smith	*Tellers.*
Parata	Stout	Menteath
Pere	Taylor	O'Conor.

NOES, 41.

Barron	Johnston	Rolleston
Bruce	Lake	Ross
Bryce	Locke	Russell
Buckland, J. C.	Macarthur	Stewart, W. D.
Buckland, W.F.	Mackenzie, M.	Sutter
Conolly	Mitchelson	Te Ao
Duncan	Moat	Thompson, T.
Fergus	Montgomery	Thomson, J. W.
Fulton	Moss	Trimble
Gore	Newman	Whyte
Hakuene	Ormond	Wilson.
Hislop	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Hobbs	Reid	Allwright
Hursthouse	Richardson, G.	Buchanan.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Brown	Wakefield
Fitzherbert	Beetham
Garrick	Fisher
Joyce	Pyke
Macandrew	Hirst, H.
McKenzie, J.	Atkinson.

Majority against, 9.

Words struck out.

Mr. REID moved, That the words, "Blenheim to Tophouse, £68,000," be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question "That the words be retained."

AYES, 22.

Ballance	Larnach	Stout
Bevan	Menteath	Tole
Fraser	Parata	Vogel
Grace	Pere	Walker.
Guinness	Reese	
Holmes	Richardson, E.	*Tellers.*
Kerr	Seddon	Dodson
Lance	Smith	Levestam.

NOES, 50.

Allwright	Hislop	Pearson
Barron	Hobbs	Rolleston
B.-Bradshaw	Hursthouse	Ross
Bruce	Ivess	Russell
Bryce	Johnston	Stewart, W. D.
Buchanan	Lake	Sutter
Buckland, J. C.	Locke	Taylor
Buckland, W.F.	Macarthur	Te Ao
Cadman	Mackenzie, M.	Thompson, T.
Conolly	McKenzie, J.	Thomson, J. W.
Cowan	Mitchelson	Trimble
Dargaville	Moat	Turnbull
Duncan	Montgomery	Whyte
Fergus	Moss	Wilson.
Fulton	Newman	*Tellers.*
Gore	Ormond	Reid
Hakuene	Peacock	Richardson, G.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Brown	Wakefield
Fitzherbert	Beetham

No. 23.

NEW ZEALAND.

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SESSION 1886.

29th July to 3rd August.

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The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—It appears that the name of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary is at the head of this Bill; but the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker has charge of it. This Bill has a special object. It is intended to do away with what is called "the power of the dead hand," and to deal with landed property irrespective of the will of the party settling it. It has advantages and disadvantages. My impression is that, although a somewhat similar Bill came before the Council on a previous occasion, this Bill has been brought in to meet some special difficulty: and that is the worst feature of it. The only case I have heard of which will be at all likely to require such a Bill as this is a case where land was bound up for three generations. But the mere act of an eccentric old man should not create any alarm in the public mind that this example will be generally followed. I question, therefore, whether there is any necessity for this Bill at the present moment. My impression is that one reason why land is sought as a permanent investment beyond anything else is its peculiar stability. It cannot run away. It cannot be converted under our present law nearly so readily as it could be under this Bill if it were passed, and we know that whenever land is turned into money it becomes, as it were, fluid. One of the drawbacks to this Bill is the provision as to reinvestment. It is intended that when land is sold the money shall be reinvested. Supposing the land has been properly acquired, and the property is valuable, why sell it in order to invest again? Under this Bill the investment may be made in Government securities, or in real security, or in the purchase of land in fee-simple—what has just been parted with—in the payment to any person becoming absolutely entitled to payment, and in the payment of costs and charges. There is not the slightest doubt that this is essentially a lawyers' Bill, and one that, for all property coming into the hands of lawyers, will give them double and treble the fees that they have been in the habit of receiving heretofore from this source, because it will not permit the property to remain as it is, and so, in consequence of changes from time to time, the charges will be multiplied. There is another feature of the Bill which I disapprove of, and that is clause 9, which reads, "Capital money arising under this Act from settled land in New Zealand shall not be applied in the purchase of land out of New Zealand, unless the settlement expressly authorizes the same." I can imagine investment out of New Zealand being better than investment within New Zealand. The tying of the hands of trustees and preventing them investing out of New Zealand I think is very wrong. Then, there is another clause—28—to override settlement: that is to say, although a settlement may be made having a different tendency from that of this Bill, the Bill will override the settlement and allow the trustees to do as they like. There is another provision that I dislike, and that is the one which allows a wife—although she is debarred by the present law from anticipating her income by the sale of property—of her own motion to sell the property under this Bill. There are several clauses in Lord Cairns's Act which have been omitted from this Bill, although they might with advantage be included in it—for instance, clauses 5, 6, 15, and 24 of the Act—the last relating to the settlement of land purchased or taken in exchange. Then, clause 25 of the Act, which gives the right to improve the property with a portion of the capital, is omitted from this Bill. Clause 28 of the Act should also be included, providing that the tenant for life shall maintain and insure. Evidently the Bill has been got up in a hurry, and all the good points of Lord Cairns's Act are not included in it; and I would strongly urge upon the Council that, if the reading of the Bill a second time be assented to, it should then be taken and compared carefully with Lord Cairns's Act, and everything in the latter which applies to the circumstances of this colony should be included in the measure we are now considering. There are some miscellaneous provisions also which I think it would be desirable to include. This Bill is to render impossible the settlement of estates by the law of entail or primogeniture, and, although agreeing with the leading principles of the Bill, I cannot help regretting that we are doing away with every vestige of the laws that made England a great nation—that produced a race of men second to none in the whole world for patriotism and honour and high resolve on behalf of their country; and, on the other hand, we are imitating those whom, I think, we ought not to imitate. I regret this course of legislation exceedingly; but it cannot be avoided. Still, it is a great pity that that which brought about the greatness of our common country will shortly be done away with and not a vestige of it left.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—The necessity to reply is almost done away with, because the greater portion of the objections raised have been objections to details, which can better be dealt with in Committee. The Hon. Mr. Holmes is under a misapprehension as to the purport of this Bill. He altogether overlooks the fact that we have already two statutes—the Settled Estates Act of 1865, and another Act of 1879—which provide for leasehold; and the reason why that is not introduced into this Bill is that the provisions of those Acts are sufficient for the purposes he mentions at the present time. For my own part, I would rather have consolidated the whole of the laws on the subject; but these others exist, and it is proposed that they should be left on the Statute Book to provide for leases and for other purposes, and that this Bill should be confined to the selling of land entirely and absolutely. I have found—and I have no doubt that other honourable members have found the same thing—that if too many matters are mixed up in a Bill it generally gets thrown out, because one honourable member objects to this clause and another to that, and it has the effect of throwing the Bill out altogether,

whereas several Acts can afterwards be consolidated and put into one measure. I believe the present is not an inconvenient course—that the Bill should be confined entirely to questions of sales, leaving out leases, to be dealt with afterwards. There are a great number of clauses which were alluded to by my honourable friend Mr. Holmes which are in Lord Cairns's Act and not in this; but I think I shall be able to show, when we go into Committee, that all those that are applicable to the subject have been taken out of Lord Cairns's Act and included in the Bill now before us. My honourable friend says that he does not see the necessity for the Bill; but he says that there is — I am not aware of the place to which he refers, but I believe it is Canterbury—a case which might properly be dealt with under this Bill. If there is a case in Canterbury there may be others that we do not know of, and I believe that there are many in New Zealand that might be properly dealt with. At any rate, I think that the best thing we can do before the evil gets too great is to stand in the way of preventing their accumulation, before a lot of interests have sprung up which may occasion a great deal of difficulty and confusion. It is far better that we should take the matter in hand and put it on a proper footing, and not wait till great evil arises. My honourable friend says, "You have got landed estate, and you are going to sell it; and why should you sell it if you are going to invest the money in other land?" He overlooks this point: Suppose a man is a tenant for life of an estate which is producing nothing. It may be an estate of five thousand acres, which may be worth £5,000 or £10,000; but yet it does not return him five thousand farthings. If he sells that land, and purchases other land producing a revenue of 6 or 8 per cent., surely there is great advantage to him and no disadvantage to those who come afterwards, because the value of that land will increase in proportion as the country advances. Therefore it seems to me that it is a very proper investment and a very proper transaction that one property should be sold and its place supplied by another property, the first one yielding no income, the second a very good one. Therefore it would be inadvisable to strike out that clause, which enables money arising out of the sale of land to be again invested in land. He also objects to the provision relating to married women; but he forgets that he was a party to the passing of an Act which puts a married woman in the same position as men in regard to property; and she, being a tenant for life, would be already enabled, without this law, to dispose of her interest in property. But the reason these clauses are retained in this Bill is simply this: that the Married Women's Property Act applies to the future, and not to the past; while the clauses in this Bill apply to both past and future. Therefore the use for these clauses will be gone when sufficient time has elapsed for those women who have been married before the passing of this Act to die off. We have already dealt with the question of married women; and, for myself, I have always advocated that they should be placed in the same position as regards property as men are in. When the past has been cleared up all women will stand precisely in the same position. My honourable friend says the old laws produced good. I apprehend what we want to do is to prevent the havoc that has been done under the old law. I need not go again into the time-worn arguments and history of the subject: these will be found in the books to be obtained in the Assembly library, pointing out all the evils which exist under the law of settlement. And I would remind honourable members of this: We have dealt with almost everything relating to land, and almost the only thing remaining at all in which we can make any improvement whatever is by some such Bill as this. My honourable friend says the Bill was got up hurriedly. The Bill was drawn up more than three years ago, and, although then on a more extended scale, as it consolidated the different laws that exist, still all the clauses are taken out which have reference to the sale of land. I have a number of notes, but I do not think it is necessary that I should go through them, because it appears to me that there was no objection taken to the principle of the Bill. The speech made by the Hon. Mr. Reeves was, to me, a most extraordinary one. If I understand him aright his opinion is this: that things are very bad, and are going from bad to worse; but it is best to let them get into such a state that we must have a revolution in order to put them right. That is altogether contrary to the proverb that "Prevention is better than cure." Is it not better, when we see an evil coming, to avoid it, than allow it to come to a most dangerous head, and then deal with it in a dangerous fashion? I am not behind my honourable friend in desire to put the land-laws in a position by which we shall avoid all the evils that have resulted in other countries through the tying-up of land. We have done away with entail, and we have put landed property in the same position as personal property. Very little now remains to be done. It is true that I brought in a Bill in 1881. Many of my honourable friends, particularly the Hon. Mr. Stevens, look upon that Bill as being very much better than the present one. I still think it is; but it went just upon the opposite principle to the present Bill. It went on the principle, not of curing evils after they have arisen, but of absolutely preventing evils occurring. It provided that no person should be allowed to restrain the alienation of land. That Bill was referred to a Committee, and was laid aside to this extent: It was said, "It is a very important matter; let the country see what it is;" and it was put off from time to time for five years. I say the time has come when we should deal with the matter, and that as speedily as possible. Here we have the best authority for what we are doing. We are not going to follow a Socialist or a reckless Radical, but we are following an eminent statesman and an eminent lawyer of a conservative mind, who, seeing the evils aris-

Hon. Sir F. Whitaker

ing out of this law of settlement, took the matter in hand for the purpose of getting rid of those evils. I believe the Bill has worked very satisfactorily in England, and I have no doubt it will work satisfactorily here. I think we should be doing a great wrong to reject this Bill on this occasion. I propose to give every opportunity for discussing the various clauses, and if we can make any improvements in the Bill it will give me great satisfaction. I am also quite willing to re-examine Lord Cairns's Bill; and, if anything has been omitted from this measure, let us insert it.

Bill read a second time.

GOVERNMENT LOANS TO LOCAL BODIES BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

New clause 36.—Treasurer may, in each financial year, grant loans to local bodies to such amount as may be appropriated by Parliament for that purpose.

Amendment moved to strike out the last paragraph of clause 36, as printed in the Bill.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 17.

Bathgate	Martin	Swanson
Bonar	Peacock	Walker
Brett	Reeves	Whitaker
Buckley	Reynolds	Williams
Dignan	Shephard	Williamson.
Lahmann	Shrimski	

NOES, 16.

Acland	Holmes	Peter
Barnicoat	Johnson, G. R.	Pollen
Brandon	Mantell	Stevens
Chamberlin	Menzies	Wigley
Fraser	Miller	Wilson.
Grace		

Majority for, 1.

Words retained.

Clause added to the Bill.

COUNTIES BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 195.—When resolution deemed to be carried.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the following words be omitted: "If the number of votes given for the proposal within the several ridings, taken together, is not less than three-fifths of the total number of votes given at the poll to be taken as aforesaid;" with the view of inserting the following words: "If a majority in number of the ratepayers vote in favour of the proposal, and the number so voting are entitled to more than one-half in number of the votes which can be exercised by the whole number of ratepayers."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 11.

Barnicoat	Bonar	Kenny
Bathgate	Buckley	Lahmann
Peacock	Shephard	Swanson.
Reynolds	Shrimski	

NOES, 13.

Brett	Mantell	Stevens
Chamberlin	Menzies	Whitaker
Dignan	Miller	Williamson
Fraser	Pollen	Wilson.
Holmes		

Majority against, 2.

Words struck out.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 198.—Special loan for special public works for portion of county.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER moved the following proviso: "Provided always that the total amount of all rates, general, separate, and special, levied in one year in any county or part of a county shall not exceed seven farthings in the pound."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the proviso be added to the clause."

AYES, 12.

Barnicoat	Mantell	Stevens
Brett	Menzies	Swanson
Dignan	Miller	Williamson
Holmes	Peter	Wilson.

NOES, 12.

Bathgate	Kenny	Reynolds
Bonar	Lahmann	Shephard
Buckley	Peacock	Shrimski
Fraser	Pollen	Whitaker.

The CHAIRMAN gave his casting-vote with the "Noes."

Amendment negatived.

Clause agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 14.—Leave of absence.

The Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON moved to strike out "shall," in the first line of the clause, and insert after "hereafter" the words "appointed shall."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 12.

Bathgate	Lahmann	Shrimski
Buckley	Peter	Swanson
Fraser	Reynolds	Williamson
Holmes	Shephard	Wilson.

NOES, 11.

Barnicoat	Kenny	Pollen
Bonar	Mantell	Stevens
Grace	Menzies	Whitaker.
Johnson, G. R.	Miller	

Majority for, 1.

Words retained.

Progress reported.

PORT CHALMERS FIRE-BRIGADE SITE BILL.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON, in moving the second reading of the Port Chalmers Fire-Bri-

gade Site Bill, said its object was to enable a profitable use to be made of a small piece of land granted for the site of a fire-brigade station at Dunedin. The Local Bills Committee had reported that the Standing Orders had been complied with, and recommended that the Bill, as amended, be allowed to pass. In Committee he would move that the proposed amendment be agreed to.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER congratulated the honourable gentleman on introducing one of the most wonderfully-constructed Bills it had ever been his fortune to see. The preamble was remarkable in itself. It said,—

"Whereas by 'The Special Powers and Contracts Act, 1882,' it was enacted that the Governor might, among other things, issue a Crown grant in fee to the Corporation of the Mayor, Councillors, and burgesses of the Borough of Port Chalmers of the piece of land therein and in the schedule hereto described, together with the buildings thereon, to be held in trust as a site for a fire-brigade station."

That was the object for which the land was given. The land was vested in the Corporation, and the Corporation was going to agree with itself to erect a fire-brigade station on another piece of land. The next peculiar part was this:—

"And whereas, by virtue of two separate grants from the Crown, dated respectively the fourth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, and the twentieth day of June, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, the said parcel of land is vested in the said Corporation to be held in trust as aforesaid."

So that there were two separate Crown grants for one piece of land. There was no explanation why it became necessary to Crown-grant the land twice. After getting the land the Corporation found that it was not a proper place for a fire-brigade station; and they, it appeared, had made arrangements with themselves that it was desirable to erect a town-hall, a fire-brigade station, and municipal buildings on another piece of land. The Bill went on to say that the land, the subject of this Bill, was to be let for twenty-one years, subject to "all such covenants, agreements, conditions, and provisions as the Council shall think fit." The usual limitations in such cases were absent from the Bill. The mortgage was to be of a peculiar character, for the land was not to be subject to sale. The 6th clause provided,—

"All moneys borrowed under the provisions of this Act shall be applied in or towards the erection, maintenance, repair, or rebuilding of a town-hall, fire-brigade station, and other municipal buildings, in conjunction with a Customhouse, Courthouse, and other buildings for public purposes, upon section numbered four hundred and eight on the map of Port Chalmers, or in or towards the repayment of any sum or sums of money which may from time to time be charged upon the said piece of land; and such fire-brigade station may be erected in connection with, or as part of, any other building on land at Port Chalmers aforesaid vested in Her Majesty the Queen or the Corporation: Provided that no lender of the said moneys, or any part thereof, shall be concerned to see or inquire as to the application of the said moneys, or be answerable for the misapplication or non-application thereof."

So, whether the fire-brigade station and all those other buildings were to belong to the Queen or to the Corporation they did not know. All they did know was that a site set apart for a fire-brigade station was not to be used for that purpose at all. His honourable friend had most ingeniously contrived that first of all, the Corporation should get this piece of land for a fire-brigade station; and then they found another place more suitable, and they got power to raise money on the first site for the purpose of building on the other. This was the conversion of land held on trust to a purpose for which it was never intended. The ingenuity of the whole thing was just simply this: They wanted money to build a station, and they wanted a piece of land for the station. They got the land for the station; but they were not going to use it for that purpose, but proposed to borrow money on it, and to put up the fire-brigade station in another place, on land belonging to the Crown; so that the Crown found both the money and the site for the fire-brigade station. He congratulated his honourable friend on having so wrapped up this Bill that it was very difficult to find out what was at the bottom of it. It was only after carefully reading it that he had come to the conclusions he had endeavoured to put before the Council.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said it was about twelve years ago when this, the old post-office, which was a provincial building, was given for the fire-brigade station. With the abolition of the provinces the property belonged to the Crown. He believed they had since got a Crown grant for it, though he was not quite sure as to that. The building was now useless for the purposes of the Fire Brigade, and the site was too valuable for the fire-brigade station, but would be useful for other purposes. The Corporation wanted to let this site and to erect the municipal buildings—including accommodation for the Fire Brigade—in another place, and also to provide accommodation for a Customhouse and Courthouse in conjunction with these buildings without calling upon the colony to provide these conveniences. It would therefore be a saving to the colony if the Bill were allowed to pass.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said it would have been more satisfactory had they seen in print the changes made in the preamble, because they were extremely long, and might contain provisions of an important character. He understood that there was to be no rating-power in this Bill, and no local liability; and he hoped the honourable gentleman would be able to satisfy the Council on that point. It seemed exceedingly difficult to understand how money for building such extensive edifices could be secured on the terms offered. The terms of the power of sale would seem to

make it almost impossible. Why should special arrangements be made in regard to this piece of land as to leasing, and why should not the terms of the Municipal Corporations Act govern the present case? Then, why was it intended to erect a Customhouse and a Courthouse in connection with these buildings? Were they to be leased to the Government? If they were not, they would be of no use whatever. He did not see in the Bill any provision for leasing, although the buildings were to be erected by the Corporation out of such funds as they might borrow. Moreover, would the Government be prepared to rent the buildings when they were erected. This was Government land; and why should the money be expended on land belonging to the Crown? A great deal more explanation was required than had been given.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES thought it would be satisfactory if some member of the Committee which had inquired into the Bill gave some explanation.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT, as a member of the Committee, said they had carefully inquired into the Bill, and could see no reason whatever to justify them in recommending the Council not to pass it. The Governor was authorized, under the Special Powers and Contracts Act of 1882, to grant to the Corporation a piece of land for the purpose of erecting a fire-brigade station; but, instead of erecting a fire-brigade station thereon, they preferred leasing the land, and with the revenue so derived maintaining a fire-brigade station elsewhere. The Committee recommended that the Bill should be allowed to proceed without substantial amendment. There was a technical amendment in the preamble, giving a slightly different history of the proceedings after the passing of the Special Powers and Contracts Act of 1882. It appeared that no Crown grants were issued, but two certificates of title.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES said the matter was as clear as noonday. The operation to which the honourable gentleman had alluded was a proceeding with which he was well acquainted — that was, first getting a piece of land and then raising money on it. The land was vested in the Corporation of Port Chalmers for the purpose of a site for a fire-brigade station. The Corporation afterwards proposed to build on the other side of the street. There was nothing singular about that. It was thought to be far cheaper to build several buildings together instead of a fire-brigade station by itself. The real object of the Bill was to procure money—whatever amount could be procured—on the leasehold. Of course, the amount would be estimated according to the rent derived from that leasehold. The party who lent would only have the security of the rent for the money advanced.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR said what puzzled him most in connection with the Bill was this: They had spent a considerable portion of the present session in passing a Municipal Corporations Bill, which gave power to Corporations to borrow money on leaseholds. Why they should pass a special Act like the present to do what ought to be done under the Municipal Corporations Act he could not understand. He asked what amount of money it was proposed to borrow under the present Bill. There was no limit mentioned as to the amount, nor was there any limit to the rate of interest. Taking into consideration the conditions mentioned in clause 5, he thought this would be exceedingly high. Again, the property on which it was now proposed to erect the fire-brigade station was the property of the Government. This was a curious combination—the Government and the Corporation.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON was exceedingly glad to notice the interest which had been excited among honourable members by the present Bill. It was really a very small matter, and a great deal of eloquence had been wasted over it. They had Bills of this kind every session. A great deal had been said about the two grants. There were no such grants. The preamble was incorrect, and had been amended. The real position was that the certificate of title was issued in 1885, not 1886, vesting a portion of the land in the Corporation in trust. They found that this piece of land was not good enough for a site for a fire-brigade station, and they therefore wanted to borrow money on the property. He had no doubt there were people in Port Chalmers who would advance money on it. With regard to what the Hon. Mr. Bonar had said, the Corporation had no power to lease the present land, as it was vested in them as a site for a fire-brigade station. There were no rating-powers involved in the Bill. The Council was now in possession of the facts, and he hoped it would allow the Bill to be read a second time.

Bill read a second time.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes to eleven o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 29th July, 1886.

Third Reading—Napier Supreme Court—North of Auckland Maoris—Foxton Wharf Charges—Privilege: Offensive Words used — Public Bodies' Leaseholds Bill—Harbours Bill—Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

THIRD READING.

Administration Bill.

NAPIER SUPREME COURT.

Mr. SMITH asked the Minister of Justice, If he will make arrangements so as to have a sitting of the Supreme Court held at Napier every quarter, instead of only half-yearly as at present? He would point out to the Minister of Justice that great inconvenience was caused by the present system, and that it was very necessary that the Supreme Court should sit

quarterly in Napier, more especially as there was no District Court in the Hawke's Bay District. He hoped, therefore, a change to quarterly sittings would be made.

Mr. TOLE said he was now making inquiries, with the object, if possible, of having an additional sitting of the Supreme Court at Napier—say, once every four months.

NORTH OF AUCKLAND MAORIS.

Mr. HOBBS asked the Government, Whether it is true that, according to the last census returns, the area of cultivated land owned by Maoris north of Auckland does not exceed half an acre per head? Also, is it true that the Government intend to allow Maoris to select land in the North under the new special-settlement regulations?

Mr. BALLANCE believed the census returns did show the area was not more than half an acre per head, and he believed this state of things was likely to continue as long as the Natives adhered to their socialistic habits. As to the second part of the question, there was no special provision enabling Maoris to select land; but he had advised that as far as possible, where there were landless Natives, they should avail themselves of the deferred-payment system or the special-settlement regulations to acquire land. He thought it advisable that, as far as possible, the Natives should select and settle on land in the same way as Europeans. He saw no other way of providing for landless Natives, unless large tracts of land were set aside for them. He thought, where Natives were without land, they should be given every facility to acquire and settle on it in just the same way as Europeans could.

FOXTON WHARF CHARGES.

On the motion of Mr. WILSON, it was ordered that a return be laid on the table showing the amounts received by the Railway Department from all sources during the year ending the 31st March, 1886, in connection with the Foxton Wharf, and the amount of expenditure of the Government in connection with the working of the wharf and port of Foxton during that period.

PRIVILEGE: OFFENSIVE WORDS USED.

Mr. BEVAN.—I wish to bring under your attention, Sir, something which took place last night, or rather this morning, of a personal nature affecting myself. I think it my duty to do so, in order that the honour and dignity of this House may be sustained in future as it has been in the past. When the House was in Committee on the Loan Bill, and long after the vote had been passed for a railway proposed to be constructed in my district — namely, the Hokitika–Greymouth Railway—I was assailed by very coarse remarks made by the honourable member for Wakatipu. He spoke in reference to that railway, and his remarks were interspersed with gross adjectives. He said, among other things, that the railway was "a swindle and a job," and should be "chucked out." These utterances were made in the immediate neighbourhood of my seat, and in tones intended for my hearing. I remonstrated with the honourable member and said to him, "This railway seems to give you a great deal of trouble." He immediately made remarks of a most obscene character. His words were so filthy that they are not fit to mention to this House. I have written them on a piece of paper, so that you, Sir, may judge of their nature. I am sorry to have to bring such a matter up in this House, but I think that, whatever may be our differences of opinion, we should not forget the relations that should subsist amongst gentlemen, and as representatives of the people. I do not know that I have ever in any way spoken offensively to members, and certainly I have never used indecent language such as was used to me in this chamber. I may say that I thought of mentioning the matter at the time to the Chairman of Committees, but I was not quite aware of what was the proper proceeding, and, having taken the advice of older members, I have thought it my duty to bring it under your notice now, so that this sort of thing may not take place in future.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It was the duty of the honourable member to have at once brought the matter under the notice of the Chairman of Committees, who would have, if the Committee desired it, reported the matter to me in order to its being dealt with by the House; but, under the circumstances that have been stated by the honourable member for Hokitika, I do not propose, if the House will concur, to allow his failure to do so at the proper time to prevent him bringing it forward now.

Mr. BEVAN.—I am a junior member of the House, and do not know its forms so well as older members do; but I thought it my duty to take the first opportunity of directing your attention, Sir, to the matter. I have nothing more to say beyond this: that I hope, in order to prevent members being insulted again, you will administer to the honourable member for Wakatipu such admonition as may be necessary.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is the duty of the honourable member for Wakatipu to offer now such explanation as he may desire. If his explanation is unsatisfactory, I shall expect a motion to be made on the subject.

Mr. FERGUS.—The facts of the case are simply these: The honourable member for Franklin North asked my opinion as to a certain line of railway then under discussion. We were speaking in a confidential and private manner, and I told him that I did not believe in the railway; and I believe that what I said was that it was a political fraud, or words to that effect. I had no idea that the honourable member for Hokitika was listening to the private conversation passing between us; but the honourable member for Hokitika interjected some remark, and it is quite possible that I told him "to hold his tongue," or something of that sort. I am sorry that he should have adopted this course this afternoon, because, if he had spoken to me last night and had told me that he was offended,

I should immediately have apologized to him, for I would not wilfully offend any member of this House. The conversation between the honourable member for Franklin North and myself I deemed quite private; and when the honourable member for Hokitika unwarrantably thrust himself into the conversation, and interjected something which was grossly offensive to me, it is quite possible that I said something I should not have said otherwise; but I absolutely deny that there was anything obscene or indecent in the term I applied to him, and the honourable member for Franklin bears me out in that. Had he spoken to me at the time or before coming into this chamber this afternoon I would instantly have withdrawn the expression, as I do now if he feels himself offended at anything I have said. I had no desire to hurt his feelings, and if I have committed any breach of privilege I tender him now, in your presence, Sir, and that of the House, a full apology.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think that the honourable member for Wakatipu has met this charge in a way which any honourable gentleman might be expected to do who had given offence to any honourable member, or had offended against the proprieties of the House. He has expressed his apologies to the member complaining, and also to the House, and, under the circumstances, probably the House will not deem it necessary to proceed further in the matter.

Mr. BEVAN.—I accept the apology, Sir. I may say that I would have asked the honourable member to apologize last night were it not that he appeared to be in such a state of excitement.

PUBLIC BODIES' LEASEHOLDS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 10.—Surrender of existing leases may be accepted, and new leases granted.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE moved, That the following words be struck out: "The rent to be payable in respect of such new lease shall in no case be less than that payable under the previous lease."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 43.

Atkinson	Lake	Ross
Ballance	Lance	Russell
Barron	Larnach	Seddon
Bevan	Levestam	Stewart, W. D.
Brown	Macandrew	Stout
Cadman	McKenzie, J.	Sutter
Dargaville	McMillan	Taylor
Duncan	Menteath	Tole
Fraser	Mitchelson	Turnbull
Guinness	Moat	Walker
Hatch	Montgomery	Whyte.
Hobbs	Newman	
Ivess	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Johnston	Reese	Fulton
Kerr	Rolleston	Thompson, T.

NOES, 11.

Bruce	Moss	Thomson, J. W.
Buckland, J. C.	Reid	*Tellers.*
Hursthouse	Richardson, G.	Buckland, W. F.
Macarthur	Samuel	Mackenzie, M.

Majority for, 32.

Words retained.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

HARBOURS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. GUINNESS moved the addition of a new clause: "Harbour Boards may authorize the payment by way of subsidy of twenty-five per centum of the rents received in any one year from the reserve held as an endowment by the Harbour Board to the local body having control of streets and roads of districts within which such reserves are situated, for forming and constructing streets or roads upon such reserves."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 10.

Barron	Macarthur	*Tellers.*
Bevan	Ormond	Guinness
Brown	Pearson	Seddon.
Levestam	Samuel	

NOES, 46.

Allwright	Larnach	Smith
Ballance	Locke	Steward, W. J.
Bruce	Mackenzie, M.	Stout
Bryce	McKenzie, J.	Sutter
Buckland, J. C.	Mitchelson	Taylor
Buckland, W. F.	Moat	Thompson, T.
Cadman	Montgomery	Thomson, J. W.
Conolly	Moss	Tole
Cowan	Newman	Trimble
Dargaville	O'Callaghan	Walker
Fulton	O'Conor	Whyte
Hobbs	Parata	Wilson.
Ivess	Reese	
Johnston	Richardson, G.	*Tellers.*
Lake	Rolleston	Duncan
Lance	Ross	Hislop.

Majority against, 36.

Clause rejected.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2B. — Representation on District Boards to be proportioned to amount of contribution thereto by the several contributories.

Sir R. STOUT moved the addition of the following words to the first paragraph: "and in proportion to the population of the districts of the various contributory local authorities."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 35.

Allwright	Cowan	Kerr
Ballance	Dodson	Larnach
Barron	Fraser	Levestam
Bevan	Gore	Locke
B.-Bradshaw	Hatch	Macandrew
Conolly	Johnston	McKenzie, J.

Menteath	Smith	Thomson, J. W.
Newman	Stewart, W. D.	Tole
Ormond	Stout	Turnbull.
Pere	Sutter	*Tellers.*
Reese	Taylor	Cadman
Richardson, E.	Thompson, T.	Peacock.

NOES, 25.

Beetham	Lake	O'Conor
Bruce	Macarthur	Richardson, G.
Bryce	Mackenzie, M.	Rolleston
Buchanan	McMillan	Steward, W. J.
Buckland, W.F.	Mitchelson	Walker.
Fulton	Moat	
Hobbs	Montgomery	*Tellers.*
Hursthouse	Moss	Duncan
Ivess	O'Callaghan	Whyte.

Majority for, 10.

Words added.

Clause 8A.—Board to collect contributions on a uniform scale.

Mr. McMILLAN moved to strike out the words enacting that the contributions should be uniform.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 35.

Allwright	Levestam	Richardson, E.
Ballance	Locke	Smith
Barron	McKenzie, J.	Stewart, W. D.
Bevan	Menteath	Stout
B.-Bradshaw	Montgomery	Sutter
Cadman	Moss	Taylor
Fergus	Newman	Thompson, T.
Hatch	O'Conor	Tole
Ivess	Ormond	Turnbull.
Johnston	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Kerr	Reese	Duncan
Larnach	Reid	Fraser.

NOES, 20.

Atkinson	Hursthouse	Rolleston
Beetham	Lake	Seddon
Bruce	Lance	Walker
Buchanan	Macarthur	Whyte.
Buckland, W.F.	Mitchelson	*Tellers.*
Garrick	Moat	McMillan
Hobbs	Richardson, G.	Pearson.

Majority for, 15.

Words retained.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be added to the Bill."

AYES, 33.

Allwright	Johnston	Richardson, E.
Ballance	Larnach	Stewart, W. D.
Barron	McKenzie, J.	Stout
Bevan	Menteath	Sutter
B.-Bradshaw	Montgomery	Taylor
Cadman	Moss	Thompson, T.
Duncan	Newman	Tole
Fergus	O'Conor	Turnbull.
Fraser	Ormond	*Tellers.*
Gore	Reese	Levestam
Hatch	Reid	Smith.
Ivess		

NOES, 21.

Beetham	Lake	Rolleston
Bruce	Lance	Seddon
Bryce	Macarthur	Walker
Buckland, W.F.	McMillan	Whyte.
Conolly	Mitchelson	*Tellers.*
Fulton	Moat	Buchanan
Hobbs	Richardson, G.	Pearson.
Hursthouse		

Majority for, 12.

Clause added to the Bill.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past twelve o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 30th July, 1886.

First Readings—Second Reading—Third Readings—Gold Duty Reduction Bill—Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill—Civil Service Reform Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Administration Bill, Public Bodies' Leaseholds Bill.

SECOND READING.

Otago Harbour Bridge Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Counties Bill, First Offenders Probation Bill, Native Land Administration Bill, Native Land Court Bill, Sheep Bill, Mortgage Debentures Bill.

GOLD DUTY REDUCTION BILL.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I promised the Council to give my opinion upon the question put by the Hon. Mr. Wilson yesterday with regard to the provisions of this Bill having reference to the Standing Order No. 131. The second reading of the Gold Export Duty Abolition Bill was taken on the 20th June. On the 2nd July the debate was resumed and adjourned. On the 6th July the debate finished, and the Bill was ordered to be read the second time that day six months: the division-list showed 16 to 15. On the 29th July a Bill was sent to the Council called the Gold Duty Reduction Bill. An order for the second reading was made for to-day, and I was requested to state my opinion, when that order should be called on, whether Standing Order No. 131 permitted of such a Bill being introduced. The full title of the Bill rejected by the Council was "An Act to abolish the Export Duty on Gold by Gradual Reduction;" the full title of the Bill now presented for second reading is "An Act to reduce the Export Duty on Gold for a Limited Period." Standing Order No. 131 reads as follows: "When a Bill or motion shall have been rejected by the Council, no Bill or motion of the same argument and matter, or to effect

the same object, shall be brought forward during the same session." The Council, in my opinion, cannot entertain the Bill now called on for second reading without violating Standing Order No. 131. The Bill is accordingly laid aside.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—Then I cannot move the second reading of the Bill. The Bill is laid aside, and the other House may take whatever course is open to it under the Standing Orders. I have nothing further to say on the subject.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—It goes without saying, but perhaps it is as well to say it, that the Council knows that my ruling is that of the Speaker; but, nevertheless, there is provision for calling that ruling in question.

GOVERNMENT LOANS TO LOCAL BODIES BILL.

On the question, That the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill be read the third time,

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said,—When this Bill was in Committee objection was taken to clause 36 on the ground that it was an appropriation clause, which the Council could not deal with; and, on making inquiry, you, Sir, held that the clause was an appropriation clause, and that it was beyond the power of the Council to deal with it. I then put the question to you, whether, in your opinion, the whole Bill was an Appropriation Bill, and whether or not we could interfere with any of the clauses in it. You expressed your opinion that the Bill was entirely so, and that it was not within the power of the Council to amend it in any part. There is no desire to get rid of the Bill: on the contrary, there is rather a desire to allow it to pass. My own opinion is very strong on the point, and I think the Bill should pass. At the same time it appears that the provisions are of such a character that it will be impossible to pass it in the form in which it is at present. It makes the following provision:—

"In order to give effect to this Act the House of Representatives may, by resolution to be passed in each financial year, declare what amount the Treasurer shall lend to local authorities under this Act in that year, and the Treasurer may make loans to such amount accordingly.

"If no such resolution is passed in any financial year, the Treasurer may make loans under the authority of this Act in such year to a total amount not exceeding two hundred thousand pounds, and such amount shall be in addition to any loans agreed by the Treasurer to be made previously, but not yet completed."

That is an appropriation by the House of Representatives. It altogether ignores the Legislative Council and the Governor, and leaves it to the House of Representatives to vote away almost any amount of money they may think fit for the special purpose mentioned. I apprehend that there can be no question that that is highly unconstitutional, and contrary altogether to the mode in which money-matters ought to be dealt with. It is quite true that we cannot amend the clause; but, on the other hand, it is equally clear that it ought not to pass it. We had under consideration the question of our power to alter such a Bill when discussing a very similar Bill in 1881—the Pensions Bill—in which we endeavoured to make an alteration; but the whole question was referred to Sir Erskine May, and he distinctly decided that it was an appropriation Bill, and that the Council had no right to alter or amend it. It is quite clear this Bill is of the same character. The Hon. Dr. Pollen, when the Bill was under discussion, referred to the Privileges Act of 1865, in which the powers and privileges of the House of Commons are given to this Council. I apprehend that when that was passed it was through inadvertence. The question was referred to the Law Officers of the Crown in England, and they were distinct in their opinion that the Privileges Act did not confer on the Legislative Council the right to alter these Bills. We are desirous that this Bill should pass. We have amended it in two clauses; and I have no doubt, if we were to pass the Bill and send it down to the House of Representatives with the amendments in it, they would lay the Bill aside or send a message asking us to restore the original clauses. There is another portion of the subject which appears to me also of very considerable moment, and that is, that this Bill has come down from the House of Representatives, but I cannot find anything on record which shows that these appropriations have been recommended by the Governor. Now, our Constitution Act is very explicit on that subject. It is prohibitory on the Legislative Council or the House of Representatives to pass any Bill where there is an appropriation of money which has not been recommended in the first instance by the Governor. The clause is clause 54 of the Constitution Act,—

"It shall not be lawful for the House of Representatives or the Legislative Council to pass, or for the Governor to assent to, any Bill appropriating to the public service any sum of money from or out of Her Majesty's revenue within New Zealand, unless the Governor, on Her Majesty's behalf, shall first have recommended to the House of Representatives to make provision for the specific public service towards which such money is to be appropriated, and (save as herein otherwise provided) no part of Her Majesty's revenue within New Zealand shall be issued except in pursuance of warrants under the hand of the Governor directed to the Public Treasurer thereof."

I apprehend that there should be some record in this Council that such a recommendation has been given; but, so far as I know, there is no record of anything of the kind, and I understand in this case the recommendation in the form that is usually sent was not sent down to the House of Representatives. I understand that an assent was given on the part of one member of the Government that the Bill should proceed. I know that it is the case in the House of Commons, in the Parliament of England, that it is competent for the Mi-

to express the Crown's assent to certain Bills; but that does not apply to Bills of this character, but applies only to certain Bills interfering with the Crown's property, and matters of that kind; but where money is to be appropriated it is the practice, I believe, always to proceed by way of recommendation from the Crown. In this Council we are not made aware of any such recommendation. In a book which I hold in my hand I see that this question has been very well considered in Adelaide, where a Bill of this character was introduced. It was called the Inscribed Stock Act of 1882. The clause of the Constitution Act of South Australia is very like our own. Clause 40 expressly provides that—

"It shall not be lawful for either House of the said Parliament to pass any vote, resolution, or Bill for the appropriation of any part of the revenue, or of any tax, duty, or impost, for any purpose which shall not have been first recommended by the Governor to the said House of Assembly during the session in which such vote, resolution, or Bill is passed."

A question arose that this provision had not been complied with, and some discussion took place on the question with which I need not trouble the Council, but which is well worth reading. I will read the decision of the President, Sir Henry Ayers, K.C.M.G.:—

"I am of opinion, under the 40th clause of the Constitution Act, that this Council cannot proceed with this Bill, as it does not come with a certificate to the effect that it has been recommended to the House of Assembly by His Excellency the Governor. That the Bill clearly appropriates revenue there can be no doubt."

It appears that the plan which is adopted in South Australia is, that when a Bill appropriating money is sent up from the House of Assembly to the Legislative Council a certificate is sent up with it that the Governor has recommended the appropriation. I am not aware that we have adopted that course, or whether there is any authentic record with the House of Representatives that His Excellency has recommended this appropriation. Therefore it appears to me that, either on the one ground or the other, there are irregularities which we cannot pass over. I would propose that the Bill be laid aside. The consequence is that, if the House so desire, they can search our Journals and find what we have done with the Bill; and it will then be competent to send up another Bill in such a form as they think fit. And, if they consider that the amendments we have made are reasonable and that their privileges are not infringed, they will send up another Bill with those amendments contained in it. I think that will get rid of any difficulty with regard to this Bill. I propose, as an amendment, That this Bill be laid aside.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—Perhaps the best procedure is that I should lay the Bill aside. I may say that I really could not myself put the question. I lay the Bill aside.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—While I wholly concur with all that has fallen from the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker, I wish to add that a very large section of the members of the Council object altogether to certain amendments being made. Clause 36 provides that a resolution of the House of Representatives alone shall, under the operation of this Act, be sufficient to appropriate such a sum as the Treasurer is authorized to distribute to the local bodies. In the second paragraph, however, it is proposed to authorize the Colonial Treasurer to appropriate without any vote by the House. The amendment which the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker proposed simply altered the phraseology, but did not alter the meaning of the subsequent paragraph; and I hold—and trust that a majority of the Council hold—that it would be highly unconstitutional that the Colonial Treasurer should appropriate any sum from the Treasury. I think that should be borne in mind in the event of any future attempt to come to an understanding as to the terms on which the substance of this Bill is afterwards to be dealt with.

Bill laid aside.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the Chairman do report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 19.

Acland	Holmes	Peter
Bonar	Johnson, G. R.	Pollen
Brandon	Kenny	Stevens
Brett	Mantell	Walker
Dignan	Menzies	Wigley
Fraser	Miller	Williams.
Grace		

NOES, 16.

Barnicoat	Peacock	Shrimski
Bathgate	Reeves	Swanson
Buckley	Reynolds	Taiaroa
Johnston, J.	Scotland	Whitaker
Lahmann	Shephard	Wilson.
Martin		

Majority for, 3.

Motion agreed to.

Progress reported.

The Council adjourned at five minutes to five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, 30th July, 1886.

First Reading—Third Reading—Purchase of Stark's Property—Pomahaka Goldfield—North Island Trunk Railway—Otakia Telephone—Unconvicted Prisoners—Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Bill—Beer Duty Bill—New Zealand Loan Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Sheep Bill.

THIRD READING.
Deceased Persons' Estates Duties Bill.

PURCHASE OF STARK'S PROPERTY.

Mr. MOSS.—I have to bring up the report of the Public Accounts Committee on the purchase of Stark's property, Auckland. I wish to explain that, as an Auckland member, I have a personal opinion on this matter, but that, as Chairman of the Committee, having only a casting-vote, I was not called upon to exercise it. Had I been so called upon, I wish to state that I should have voted against the report. I move, That the report and evidence be laid upon the table, and printed.

Major ATKINSON.—I wish to make a personal explanation with regard to the report which has been presented. Unfortunately, one of the members of the Committee, who had carefully attended to the evidence given in this case, and was very anxious to vote upon it, met with a serious accident before the Committee met to decide upon its report: he was therefore unable to be present and to vote. Under these circumstances, I thought it would be only fair, as I held views opposite to those held by the honourable gentleman, that the decision of the Committee should not be reversed in consequence of his absence, and therefore I paired with him. But if the honourable gentleman had been there the report would have been just as it is now. It is desirable that the House should know that the Committee was absolutely divided into two upon the question: seven were on one side, including the Chairman of the Committee, and seven were on the other side, including two Ministers of the Crown.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I presume that all this will appear in the minutes of proceedings of the Committee.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Hear, hear.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I move, That the report be read.

The CLERK read the report, as follows:—

"The Public Accounts Committee, having carefully considered the papers referred to them on the above subject, and taken the fullest evidence which they could obtain (appended hereto), have the honour to report—

"1. That the Government were justified in paying for the property the price they did:

"2. That the weight of evidence goes to show that the property could not have been obtained for a less amount in the Compensation Court."

Report and evidence ordered to be printed.

POMAHAKA GOLDFIELD.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON asked the Minister of Mines, Why the Government recently proclaimed a goldfield on the Pomahaka River? The settlers on this river thought that they had been unfairly treated by this goldfield having been proclaimed, the greater part of the land being freehold land, while the reserves along the river-bank were mainly used as a road, and, where they were not so used, it was feared that, if destroyed by mining, the low-lying freehold, now protected by the reserves, would be in serious danger of becoming injured by the action of the water. He therefore wished to know the causes that had led to the Government making this Proclamation.

Mr. LARNACH said that frequent representations had been made to the department to offer facilities for mining in the neighbourhood of the Pomahaka River, because it was known that the district adjacent was highly auriferous, and there were a number of men anxious to mine in the locality of the river, but they were unable to do so. One large landholder had gone so far as to claim freehold down to the river's edge; but it was known, although not to mining people, that there was a chain reserve along the bank of the river. On hearing the representations which had been made, and having made himself acquainted with the district, he thought it desirable to recommend the issue of this Proclamation. Since the issue of the Proclamation, dredging operations had been commenced in the river, the bottom of which was very rich in auriferous deposits, and he believed that these works would lead to very good results. The miners also were taking advantage of this chain of reserve on the river-bank, now that they knew of it, and that it had not been sold to private individuals. For these reasons the district had been proclaimed within the goldfield.

NORTH ISLAND TRUNK RALWAY.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Government, Whether any, and, if any, how much, land has been given for the track of the North Island Main Trunk Railway—(1) by Wahanui, (2) by other Maoris?

Mr. BALLANCE, in reply, said that Wahanui was not yet in a position to give any land, as the Board had met for the first time on the previous day for the purpose of meeting his claims.

OTAKIA TELEPHONE.

Mr. FULTON asked the Commissioner of Telegraphs, Whether he will establish a telephone-station at Otakia, in the County of Taieri, on the main telegraph line? A similar question had been asked last session, and the answer given to it was that there was some difficulty in finding a suitable person to take charge of the building. The only expense involved was simply the erection of the telephone, because there was a line to bring it down. He hoped the Government would be able to give a favourable answer.

Mr. TOLE said, in reply, that he had been asked by the Postmaster-General to say that there was not sufficient evidence in the office at present to give a definite answer, but inquiries were being made now.

UNCONVICTED PRISONERS.

Mr. MOSS asked the Minister of Justice, What provision is made for special regulations for unconvicted prisoners, in accordance with section 14 of "The Prisons Act, 1882"? In asking this question, he had only to point out that

the 14th section of "The Prisons Act, 1882," read as follows: "In order to mark the difference between the treatment of persons unconvicted of crime, and in law presumably innocent, during the period of their detention in prison for safe custody only," certain distinct regulations might be made. Then it enacted that such regulations might provide for—

"Generally regulating the confinement of such prisoners in such manner as to make it as little as possible oppressive, due regard only being had to their safe custody, to the necessity of preserving order and good government in the place in which they are confined, and to the physical and moral well-being of the prisoners themselves."

He found, on looking over the regulations of the 26th April, 1883, that they made no distinction in the 31st clause, but that the term "prisoners" was applied to all alike, and it was declared that such "prisoners" should not be allowed the use of tobacco. He wished to point out that in that regulation the term "prisoners" was applied to all alike—to those who were convicted and to those who were merely detained for safe custody. It had been again said that, in moving in this matter, he had desired only to take action because there were certain Maoris in prison. He wished to state again that that was very far indeed from his idea, though it was true that, in going to see those Maoris, he had learned for the first time that the same regulations were applied to convicted and to unconvicted prisoners. He should be extremely sorry if the House supposed that he was moved by any other motive than a desire to benefit all persons of all races who were detained simply for safe custody. He stated this to prevent harm being done by exciting prejudice against the cause he had taken in hand.

Mr. TOLE said there was no use in going into this tobacco question again; and, as the honourable gentleman had evidently given some study to the regulations, he was probably already in possession of such information as he (Mr. Tole) could give him. He might simply state, however, that special rules had been made for distinguishing between convicted and unconvicted prisoners in the 31st, 32nd, and 33rd regulations, which regulations had been published in the *New Zealand Gazette* in 1883.

Mr. MOSS said the honourable gentleman had not answered his question. He could only again call his attention to the fact that in the 31st regulation the term "prisoner" was applied, without distinction, to those convicted of crime and to those who were detained for safe custody only.

Mr. TOLE said they were all prisoners, because they were there in safe custody, whether they had been convicted or not.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Constitution of districts.

Mr. DARGAVILLE moved the following amendment: "The First Schedule of the said Act is hereby amended as follows: In the description of the North of Auckland District, after the words 'Bay of Islands' omit the word 'and;' and after the word 'Hokianga' add the words 'Whangarei, Hobson, and Otamatea.' In the description of the District of Auckland omit the words 'Hobson, Whangarei.'"

The Committee divided.

AYES, 45.

Allwright	Hatch	Rolleston
Atkinson	Hislop	Smith
Ballance	Ivess	Steward, W. J.
Barron	Joyce	Stewart, W. D.
Beetham	Lake	Stout
Bevan	Lance	Sutter
B.-Bradshaw	Larnach	Thompson, T.
Bruce	Levestam	Tole
Buchanan	Macarthur	Trimble
Cadman	Mackenzie, M.	Walker
Conolly	McKenzie, J.	Whyte
Cowan	Mitchelson	Wilson.
Duncan	O'Callaghan	*Tellers.*
Fulton	Peacock	Dargaville
Garrick	Richardson, E.	Moat.
Grace		

NOES, 13.

Brown	Moss	Thomson, J. W.
Buckland, W. F.	Newman	
Dodson	Ormond	*Tellers.*
Guinness	Reese	Fraser
Montgomery	Richardson, G.	Pearson.

Majority for, 32.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. WHYTE moved a new clause constituting the County of Piako a separate district.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 33.

Atkinson	Hislop	Russell
Beetham	Hursthouse	Steward, W. J.
Bruce	Ivess	Stewart, W. D.
Buchanan	Lake	Thomson, J. W.
Buckland, J. C.	Lance	Trimble
Buckland, W. F.	Levestam	Wakefield
Conolly	Macarthur	Walker
Dargaville	Mitchelson	Wilson.
Dodson	Moat	*Tellers.*
Fulton	Richardson, G.	Pearson
Grace	Rolleston	Whyte.
Hirst, H.		

NOES, 34.

Allwright	Larnach	Seddon
Ballance	Mackenzie, M.	Smith
Bevan	McKenzie, J.	Stout
Brown	McMillan	Sutter
Cadman	Menteath	Taylor
Cowan	Montgomery	Thompson, T.
Duncan	Newman	Tole
Garrick	O'Callaghan	Vogel.
Guinness	O'Conor	
Hakuene	Ormond	*Tellers.*
Hatch	Reese	Fraser
Joyce	Richardson, E.	Peacock.

Majority against, 1.

Motion negatived.

Mr. BUCHANAN moved a new clause constituting Wairarapa a separate district.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 29.

Atkinson	Hislop	Steward, W. J.
Bruce	Hursthouse	Thomson, J. W.
Buckland, J. C.	Lake	Trimble
Buckland, W.F.	Macarthur	Wakefield
Conolly	Mackenzie, M.	Walker
Duncan	Moat	Whyte
Grace	Parata	Wilson.
Grey	Pearson	*Tellers.*
Hakuene	Richardson, G.	Beetham
Hatch	Russell	Buchanan.

NOES, 34.

Allwright	Larnach	Smith
Ballance	Locke	Stewart, W. D.
Bevan	Macandrew	Stout
B.-Bradshaw	McKenzie, J.	Sutter
Cadman	McMillan	Taylor
Cowan	Montgomery	Thompson, T.
Dodson	Newman	Tole
Fraser	O'Conor	Vogel.
Garrick	Ormond	
Hobbs	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Ivess	Richardson, E.	Barron
Lance	Ross	O'Callaghan.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Mitchelson	Johnston
Pyke.	Reese.

Majority against, 5.

Motion negatived.

Mr. WALKER moved a new clause constituting Ashburton a separate district.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 28.

Atkinson	Grace	Mitchelson
Beetham	Guinness	Richardson, G.
Bevan	Hislop	Russell
Bruce	Hursthouse	Steward, W. J.
Buchanan	Ivess	Trimble
Buckland, J. C.	Lake	Whyte.
Buckland, W.F.	Lance	
Conolly	Macarthur	*Tellers.*
Duncan	Mackenzie, M.	Pearson
Garrick	McKenzie, J.	Walker.

NOES, 30.

Ballance	Newman	Sutter
B.-Bradshaw	O'Conor	Taylor
Cadman	Ormond	Thompson, T.
Cowan	Parata	Tole
Dodson	Peacock	Turnbull
Fraser	Reese	Vogel
Hatch	Richardson, E.	Wakefield.
Hobbs	Rolleston	*Tellers.*
Larnach	Ross	Allwright
McMillan	Stout	O'Callaghan.
Montgomery		

Majority against, 2.

Motion negatived.

Major STEWARD moved a new clause constituting Waimate a separate district.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 10.

Beetham	Lake	*Tellers.*
Buckland, J. C.	Macarthur	Pearson
Buckland, W.F.	Walker	Steward, W. J.
Duncan	Whyte.	

NOES, 36.

Allwright	Menteath	Ross
Ballance	Montgomery	Russell
B.-Bradshaw	Newman	Stout
Cadman	O'Callaghan	Taylor
Cowan	O'Conor	Thompson, T.
Fraser	Ormond	Thomson, J. W.
Garrick	Parata	Tole
Hatch	Peacock	Turnbull
Ivess	Reese	Vogel.
Joyce	Reid	*Tellers.*
Lance	Richardson, E.	Fulton
Mackenzie, J.	Rolleston	Sutter.
McMillan		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Conolly	Wakefield
Guinness	Barron
Moat.	Larnach.

Majority against, 26.

Motion negatived.

Mr. GRACE moved a new clause constituting the County of Ohinemuri a new district.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 11.

Beetham	Lake	Whyte.
Buchanan	Pearson	*Tellers.*
Buckland, J. C.	Richardson, G.	Buckland, W.F.
Guinness	Walker	Grace.

NOES, 40.

Allwright	Lance	Smith
Ballance	Larnach	Stewart, W. D.
Barron	McKenzie, J.	Stout
B.-Bradshaw	McMillan	Sutter
Cadman	Menteath	Taylor
Conolly	Montgomery	Thompson, T.
Cowan	Newman	Thomson, J. W.
Duncan	O'Callaghan	Tole
Fulton	Ormond	Turnbull
Garrick	Peacock	Vogel.
Hatch	Reid	
Hobbs	Richardson, E.	*Tellers.*
Ivess	Rolleston	Fraser
Joyce	Russell	O'Conor.

Majority against, 29.

Motion negatived.

Bill reported, with amendments.

BEER DUTY BILL.

On the question, That the Beer Duty Bill be recommitted, to consider a new clause and the amendment in clause 7,

Mr. BUCHANAN said,—As I understand the Treasurer's intention is to recommit this Bill in order that a new clause to the same [illegible] as clause 6, which was struck out by [illegible] mittee, should be inserted, I str[illegible]

the provisions contained in that clause, as being of such a character as this House ought not to consent to for a moment. At that time I pointed out to the Committee that there were numbers of small brewers throughout the country who had invested a large amount of capital—that is, a large amount for them — in the industry of manufacturing aërated and cordial waters, and that it was very unjust that such a clause as that should be put in, as it would have the effect of confiscating a large amount of their property. Since that sitting I have received further information on the same subject; and in the district which I represent the facts are these: A brewer there has embarked capital to the extent of £300 in this particular industry—that is, the manufacture of cordials and aërated waters; and if a clause similar to that which was struck out is again put in the Bill, it will mean a loss of £150 to this brewer. As the clause was explained by the Colonial Treasurer, it enacted that no manufacture of cordials or aërated waters should be carried on in a brewery. A "brewery," according to the interpretation clause of the Beer Duty Act, comprises the brewery and the buildings immediately adjacent to it: in fact, the interpretation clause defining what a brewery means is of a very comprehensive nature; and the new enactment would actually mean, to this brewer of whom I am speaking, the dismantling of the whole of the machinery which he employs in the manufacture of cordial waters, and the shifting of all such machinery into a new building at a cost of £150. Now, I am well assured by other honourable members that this is only one of many cases that exist in various parts of the colony; and I am satisfied that the Colonial Treasurer, although, perhaps, unwittingly, is being made the instrument of the larger brewers in the colony in this matter. I believe we have the fact on record that, while the honourable gentleman was sojourning at Waiwera last year, he was interviewed by one or more influential brewers from Auckland; and, whatever may have been their representations, whatever may have been the pressure brought to bear upon him, I am given to understand that a promise was extracted from him which he is now endeavouring to fulfil, quite regardless of the interests of a great many deserving persons throughout the colony. We had the fact the other evening, when the Bill was before the House, of a gentleman in this House who is known to be a large brewer giving, from his point of view, very cogent arguments indeed in favour of the clause that was struck out. His arguments, summed up, amount to this: that these small brewers who carried on the manufacture of cordials under the same roof did not, as a matter of fact, know their own business—that the manufacture of beer within the same building could not be carried on to advantage if cordials were also manufactured. Well, I do not profess to know very much about brewing. I think I could tell what constitutes good beer if I were asked to drink a glass of it; but I am not going to argue the question with the honourable gentleman as to the proper mode of manufacturing either beer or cordial waters. I think, however, the House might very well leave these small brewers to know their own business, notwithstanding the dictum attempted to be laid down by the honourable member for Wairau. I am sure the House will agree with me that that honourable gentleman's opinions are entitled to the utmost respect: but that does not at all involve absolute agreement with anything he may think fit to lay down in this House. On this ground, and on other grounds which I have attempted to give, I hope the House will not consent to the recommittal of the Bill. The session is now drawing very fast to a close. The Premier has brought before us the strongest arguments he possibly can bring against delay, and led us almost to believe that some catastrophe might take place if the House delayed bringing the session to a close in a very short time. I do not think the Treasurer has given us sufficient reasons to commend the recommittal of the Bill to this House; and, despite what he has been saying, I urge that this Bill should not be recommitted.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND. — We threw this clause out in Committee after a good fight, and it is not the way to expedite matters to bring it up again and try to pass it. I have no doubt that the Treasurer, in the meantime, has found out that he can carry it, and so there is no use in trying to do anything now; but I would suggest to those who think with me that we may as well take a division upon it, and, if we are not strong enough to reject it, matters may not be expedited, because it may cause long discussion in Committee.

Mr. PEACOCK. — When this clause was under discussion in Committee I took up the position that I thought it would not be necessary to force small brewers who engaged in the manufacture of cordials to keep a separate establishment, on the ground that the bottles in which ginger-ale was usually put were of different shape and construction from the bottles used for beer; and that, if beer were put into bottles of that character, the brewer would be at the mercy of any informer, who would easily find out the deception. Since then, I have had it brought to my attention that ginger-ale is frequently put into bottles of the same kind as beer is put in, so that possibly such a substitution of beer for ginger-ale might take place, and there might be evasion of the stamp duty; but I think that that difficulty might be overcome in some other way than by the clause proposed by the Colonial Treasurer—that is, by insisting that ginger-ale and other cordials not connected strictly with brewing should be put only in bottles of a certain shape.

Mr. DODSON.—When this Bill was under discussion before, I expressed the opinion that it would be a useful Bill, and would not injure the trade in any way. After further consideration in all its bearings, including how it will bear on the smallest of brewers as well as on

the large ones, I am still of opinion that it is a very desirable Bill, and will also afford protection to the revenue. It is important, in legislation affecting trade, that no advantages should be given to one class of manufacturers over another; and, undoubtedly, as the law now stands, persons conducting their business in a small way and working with their own families, as is sometimes the case with brewers, can evade payment of the revenue; and that is not desirable in the interests of fair-play and good management of the law relating to trading operations. The honourable member for Wairarapa South took exception to my remarks, and said that this Bill affected the small brewers as against the large brewers. Now, in New Zealand we have no large brewers—they are only "large" comparatively speaking, and the argument did not hold good in the way the honourable gentleman put it. As a matter of fact, this Bill is favourable to the smallest brewer. As the law now stands no single small brewer can send out bottled beer unless he takes out a license costing £20. That will not be the case under this Bill. I would repeat that no single brewer, little or big, who understands his business at all would carry on those two different sorts of business in one and the same building. If a man wants to carry on the two branches of trade he should do as is done in England and everywhere else, and have separate and distinct rooms at some distance from his cellar, so that the acids arising from the cordial-making process should not affect the beer while in a state of fermentation.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—The honourable member for Wairarapa South said he knew a case where a brewer would have to incur an expenditure of £150 if this Bill became law. Now, if he had paid £150 under this provision he would be done with it. But if this Bill does not become law he will have to pay an annual license-fee of £20, which is 15½ per cent. on £150. Then, the honourable member for Newton says that the difficulty might be overcome by people providing themselves with bottles of a particular kind. I hold that that would cost a man far more than to shift his bottling-plant elsewhere. It is well known that the chief trade of small brewers is the bottle business, and if they do bottle they must have a separate place in their brewery for bottling, and, having that, there would be no extra expense in finding a building for the purpose of bottling cordials, as they could do it in that place. I have heard of no valid objection to this clause. Every one must admit that it would be a great advantage to the small brewers to have the £20 restriction removed.

Captain RUSSELL.—This is a matter on which only experts can give an opinion worth having. Since the Bill was introduced I have had letters from a brewer in my own district, a respectable brewer, who carries on a business which, unfortunately for himself, is only a small one. Under the same roof is contained an aërated-water factory, and he writes to me to say that the attempt to compel him to dissociate the business would be fatal to his enterprise — that in small districts it might be impossible to carry on a brewing business by itself, or an aërated-water business by itself, but when the two things are combined a fair and reasonable profit can be made. He points out that in his own particular instance he would be compelled, at very considerable cost, both for management and plant, to separate the businesses, which up to this time have caused no dissatisfaction to anybody. It does seem to me that you have no right to assume that the small brewer will defraud the revenue, unless there is very clear evidence brought to prove it.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—The position I take up with regard to this Bill is that it will be fatal to the small businesses. It has been stated that there are no large breweries in New Zealand. But there are comparatively large breweries; and, although we may laugh at a man being subjected to hardship because he has to spend £150 on plant or a building, it is no laughing matter to the poor man who has to find the money. But, much as I disapprove of the Bill from the point of view of hindering the very small men, I disapprove more of again bringing forward this Bill after it had been substantially withdrawn. At this period of the session, it seems to me, we have quite enough to do to gather up the threads of our work and complete it; but if we are to go on with a Bill which is in no sense a party Bill, in no sense a measure on which the Government would stand or fall, time in and time out, there need be no end to the session, and we shall never finish the real business. I venture to say that not one member who wishes to oppose the Bill desires to embarrass the Government. I believe the Government is making a mistake; and, if this is to be the type of measures brought before us, I venture to say that the business will be greatly impeded, because the temper of the House will be too much tried. I do think that, for all the advantage to be gained by the revenue from this Bill, it would be very much better if it were at once withdrawn.

Mr. REID.—I wish to offer a few remarks because of the attitude I took up when the Bill was last in Committee. It will be remembered that this clause 6 was struck out by desire of the Treasurer with a view to inserting another clause. On that new clause being read I was rather struck with the phraseology, and, without due consideration, I expressed my intention of opposing it, on the ground that it would levy a tax on the smaller brewers. Since then I have looked into the matter, and I have come to the conclusion that this clause is really a clause in favour of the smaller brewers. By the Act of 1880, proposed to be amended by this Bill, a brewer cannot legally carry on any other business than brewing in his brewery. I therefore hold that, if it is so, those who make cordials in a brewery are infringing the law.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I consider that is so.

An Hon. MEMBER.—If it is so, why bring in this Bill?

Mr. REID.—I understand the main object of the Bill is to put a stop to the practice of bottling in a brewery, and to exempt brewers from the payment of an annual license-fee of £20. From my interpretation of the Act I believe a brewer has now to pay a license-fee of £20—at all events it has been so held in one of the Resident Magistrates' Courts—and, for that reason, I say that, in the interests of the smaller manufacturers, we ought to pass this Bill. I admit there is a hardship in the case put by the honourable member for Wairarapa South, that a man who has established an industry, and gone to the expense of erecting buildings, machinery, and other plant, should be made to [illegible] the Treasurer [illegible] to object [illegible] from the [illegible] make cordials in [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

business of brewing in the more isolated parts of the colony. It seems to me that this Bill must have been brought in solely in the interest of the large brewers. It is with these people, as with large capitalists, people in a large way of trade, and dwellers in large towns, that the sympathies of the Colonial Treasurer mostly are; he has no sympathy with men in a small way of business who are earning an honest living in the more scattered districts of the colony. I do hope that, even yet, this Bill will not be allowed to be recommitted; and, for my part, I cannot understand why the Colonial Treasurer—who appeared to show a little temper in the matter on the previous evening—should have considered that the Bill must be withdrawn [illegible] was struck out. With[illegible] that clause it is a perfectly [illegible] and will no doubt re[illegible] both large and small, of a [illegible] their own bottled beer. I [illegible] will not go back on the de[illegible] ago, but will [illegible] into Committee on the Bill.

Sir J. [illegible].—I cannot help thinking that [illegible] of this case are not understood. [illegible] members who voted the other [illegible] in the House during the dis[illegible] I think, listen to [illegible] I will try to put the mat[illegible] The whole thing [illegible] honourable members [illegible] will see that there is [illegible] in the matter—that it is [illegible] The facts are [illegible] which occurred [illegible] Beer Duty Act it is [illegible] are liable to pay a £20 [illegible] Instead of that bearing [illegible] larger brewers it falls rather [illegible] and I have seen [illegible] of the smaller [illegible] that payment of £20 [illegible] with his [illegible] remedy this; and [illegible] so as to relieve [illegible] the Customs [illegible] what [illegible] for two or three [illegible] operations [illegible] a brewery. It was [illegible] Act to prohibit any [illegible] but owing to an over[illegible] in charge of the Bill [illegible] the manufacture [illegible] waters and cordials [illegible] operation, that affords [illegible] of evading the Cus[illegible] and defrauding the revenue. [illegible] to the inter[illegible] cannot be unreasonable [illegible] of such a business in [illegible] Unfortunately, when the pre[illegible] proposed [illegible] of any other business [illegible] brewing in a brewery [illegible] was desirable, and the [illegible] to the clause [illegible] have stopped malting and

other operations incidental to brewing being carried on under the same roof as that which covered the brewing plant. Now, the course proposed is simply to prohibit the carrying-on in the brewery of a business which facilitates an evasion of the law. I put it plainly to the honourable member for Wairarapa South—who has told such a piteous tale about a constituent of his who is a brewer and has expended £300 to enable him to carry on the cordial business — does that brewer bottle ale? The honourable gentleman says, "Certainly he does." "Then," I say, "what is the meaning of your objection? If he bottles ale he must, under the present law, have a separate building to do it in, and there is no great hardship in providing that he should carry on his cordial business, not in the brewery itself, but in the same building as that in which he bottles ale." Honourable members will see that, if the manufacture and bottling of cordials and the brewing of beer are allowed to be carried on under the same roof, it will be the duty of the Customs authorities to be very strict in their surveillance of such a business, as it would, at any rate, afford great facilities for evading the Customs regulations and defrauding the revenue. If I understand the honourable member for Bruce rightly, as the Act stands now he thinks it prohibits brewers from carrying on the bottling of other beverages as well as beer under the same roof as the brewery. Whether that be so or not, at any rate the Customs authorities are entitled to exercise a very strict surveillance where persons have a brewery and use it for cordial-making and bottling. If a brewer must have a separate establishment for bottling ale, it is at least very suspicious that he should object to carrying on the bottling of cordials in that establishment instead of in the brewery. I do not cast reflections on one or two or any brewers. All I say is that the Customs Department have reason to believe that the revenue suffers through the business of cordial-making and bottling being carried on in the same building as brewing operations are carried on in. That is foreign to the intention of the Act, which prohibits the bottling of ale in breweries; and I cannot see how we could deal with the tradesmen interested more tenderly than by saying that we will give a year for the removal of cordial-bottling plant into a separate establishment. But I have to say this: that, if the Bill cannot be carried with the 6th clause in it, then the law must be left as it is. It is very hard upon the brewers that they should have to pay this heavy and unintentional tax of £20 a year. If the honourable member for Wairarapa South will permit me to say it, before the House met to-day he asked me to adjourn the consideration of this question until Monday, to enable him to look further into it. I do not wish to press the House to affirm a hurried opinion, and therefore I propose to go into Committee now and make the amendment in the 7th clause. At present the clause is retrospective, and I wish to alter it so that it shall only apply to convictions which take place after the measure comes into law. Then I will move that we report progress, and we can consider the other clause on next sitting-day. That will give honourable members time to consider the matter.

Bill recommitted, and progress reported.

NEW ZEALAND LOAN BILL.

A message was received from the Governor recommending the appropriation of £175,000 for railway-lines in the Middle Island.

The message was referred to the Committee on the Bill.

The House went into Committee on the Bill.

IN COMMITTEE.

Major ATKINSON moved, That progress be reported, for the purpose of obtaining the direction of the House as to reporting the debate in *Hansard* on the proposal to allocate the sum of £175,000 to railway lines in the Middle Island.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 33.

Atkinson	Hislop	Ormond
Barron	Hobbs	Peacock
Bruce	Johnston	Russell
Bryce	Lake	Stewart, W. D.
Buchanan	Locke	Sutter
Buckland, J. C.	Mackenzie, M.	Thomson, J. W.
Buckland, W. F.	Mitchelson	Trimble
Conolly	Moat	Whyte.
Dodson	Montgomery	*Tellers.*
Fergus	Moss	Beetham
Hakuene	Newman	Wakefield.
Hirst, H.		

NOES, 38.

Ballance	Joyce	Smith
Bevan	Kerr	Steward, W. J.
B.-Bradshaw	Larnach	Stout
Brown	Levestam	Taylor
Cadman	Macandrew	Te Ao
Cowan	Menteath	Thompson, T.
Dargaville	O'Callaghan	Tole
Fraser	O'Conor	Turnbull
Garrick	Parata	Vogel
Grace	Pearson	Walker.
Guinness	Reid	*Tellers.*
Hatch	Richardson, E.	Duncan
Ivess	Samuel	McKenzie, J.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Lance	Fulton
McMillan	Rolleston
Pere	Wilson
Reese	Macarthur
Seddon.	Richardson, G.

Majority against, 5.

Motion negatived.

Sir J. VOGEL moved, That the following words be added to the schedule: "To be appropriated to railways in the Middle Island, £175,000."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 32.

Ballance	Cadman	Dargaville
Bevan	Cowan	Duncan

Fraser	Levestam	Stout
Gore	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Grace	McMillan	Tole
Guinness	Menteath	Turnbull
Hatch	Parata	Vogel
Joyce	Reese	Walker.
Kerr	Richardson, E.	*Tellers.*
Lance	Seddon	Ivess
Larnach	Steward, W. J.	O'Callaghan.

NOES, 34.

Atkinson	Lake	Samuel
Barron	Locke	Stewart, W. D.
Beetham	Macarthur	Sutter
Bruce	Mackenzie, M.	Thompson, T.
Bryce	Mitchelson	Thomson, J. W.
Buchanan	Moat	Trimble
Buckland, W.F.	Montgomery	Whyte
Conolly	Moss	Wilson.
Dodson	Ormond	
Fulton	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Hakuene	Richardson, G.	Newman
Hobbs	Rolleston	Reid.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Brown	Buckland, J. C.
B.-Bradshaw	Wakefield
Coster	Hurst, W. J.
Holmes	Hirst, H.
Harper	Russell
Macandrew	Johnston
O'Conor	Hursthouse
Pere	Fisher
Ross	Hislop
Smith.	Grey.

Majority against, 2.

Addition negatived.

Bill reported, with amendments.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I beg to move, That the amendments be agreed to. I shall not repeat all that I stated in Committee, but will merely say that the striking-out of the amount of £175,000 from the loan will have a very serious effect upon the expenditure this year, and on the future finance of the colony.

Major ATKINSON.—Is that all the honourable gentleman is going to say? Is he not going to give any reason for making such a statement?

Sir J. VOGEL.—I have been trying to give the honourable gentleman reason all the evening, but I have not been able to succeed.

Major ATKINSON.—I am afraid the honourable gentleman has got no reason for it, and that that is why he gives us none. I should like, if he has any reason for saying what he has said, that it should be placed on record, for then we shall be able to answer it, and I shall have some remarks to make on the subject.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Although the honourable gentleman is not in the habit of treating me with courtesy, I will not follow his example; but, if he will tell me what he wants to know, I shall be happy to answer him if I can do so.

Major ATKINSON.—I wish to know the reason why the honourable gentleman says the striking-out of this amount will seriously affect the finance.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I say that, inasmuch as the striking-out of this amount affects the expenditure of next year, and will make it lower than we might wish, it will be requisite for us to consider whether it will not be necessary for us at once to determine that we shall contract the expenditure this year, unless we determine to make use of the North Island Trunk Loan, or to raise another loan next year. I explained in Committee that these were the alternatives; but there might be some more. That I cannot say at a moment's notice, as I am not in the habit of expecting to be defeated.

Major ATKINSON.—I am obliged to the honourable gentleman both for the example he has set me in the matter of courtesy and for the information he has given me. I do not know whether I might not really leave his reasons unanswered, they will be so convincing to the public; for I am sure that I could not possibly put them more forcibly than he has done. Still, it is always desirable that, on such an occasion as this, the matter should be looked at from different points of view, and therefore I wish to make a few remarks. The honourable gentleman tells us that striking off £175,000 from this loan will have a serious effect upon the expenditure next year: that is to say, he means that this money was intended to be expended next year. Now, we have been repeatedly told quite a different tale by the Premier. He has said, all through, that this money was not intended for expenditure at all. The honourable gentleman, too, said that it was only intended to survey these two lines struck out of the schedule, and that it was quite problematical whether the money would be expended at all or not. Not only that, but, further, they bring down from His Excellency a recommendation that the money should not be spent at all, but that it should be kept in the Treasury till the 31st March, 1888, for the purpose of having a working-balance. I do not know how we are to reconcile those two statements. The honourable gentleman appears to think that no one in the House knows anything about finance but himself—that I am quite "a baby" in finance.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I am glad to hear the honourable gentleman acknowledge it.

Major ATKINSON.—I am only quoting the honourable gentleman. He says that I am a baby, and that no other honourable member in the House has yet been born in finance; and it may be so, for I must acknowledge that it is impossible to reconcile the three different versions which have been given of this very important subject. The honourable gentleman tells us, with a serious face, and in tones that seem intended to carry belief, that this reduction will very seriously affect the expenditure next year; and not only that, but that it will also affect this year's expenditure, because, he says, as it was allocated for next year's expenditure, he must see that the expenditure this year is lowered, so as to provide for the deficiency which we have made in the means for expenditure next year. So accurately has he gauged the expenditure over the two

years that, as we have saved something under £90,000 out of the expenditure for this year from the £1,500,000 which he is going to raise, it will throw out all their finance. But the Premier tells us he is only going to expend £1,400,000. The whole thing is ridiculous and absurd. And now I will tell the honourable gentleman this, on behalf of the Opposition: that, if he wants a working-balance—if he has forgotten to provide for that, as he forgot his liabilities, if he finds that he has so allocated this loan and tied it up that he has no working-balance, and if he will tell us what he wants to give him a working-balance, I am sure this House will grant him the money.

Sir J. VOGEL. — Another death-bed repentance.

Major ATKINSON. — A death-bed repentance! I do not know to what death-bed repentance the honourable gentleman refers. Does he refer to the Opposition or to himself? I wish it were his death-bed repentance. If it were I should be very well satisfied indeed. But I am speaking very seriously. I have no desire to embarrass the finances of the colony.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I hope that will apply to the future.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes, Sir; to the future, as to the past. But my ideas of embarrassment and the honourable gentleman's are very different. The honourable gentleman thinks that, if we refuse to give him half a million of money to spend just as he chooses, he is being embarrassed; whereas I think if we give him plenty of money to meet his engagements, if we give him money enough to reasonably carry on the public works of the colony, we do all that is necessary; and it is not necessary to give him a large sum in addition, under pain of being told that, if we do not do so, we shall create embarrassment in the finances of the colony. The honourable gentleman is bound to tell us what he wants the money for—the purposes for which he intends to use it. It is not right for him to pretend that he wants money for the Tophouse-Inangahua line, meaning, at the same time, that he does not want it for those works at all, but for the purpose of a general working-balance. That is what the honourable gentleman's statement amounts to now. He really tells us that he never meant this expenditure which was proposed in the Loan Bill, but what he wanted was to get that money into his hands for a working-balance. That was the first point the honourable gentleman made. The second was that he never meant to spend the money at all, but that he wanted to have it in hand at the end of March. Then the honourable gentleman says, "If I am not allowed to have the money in hand great difficulties will arise to the country." But how can we seriously believe any proposition which the Government make, when they are so blown about by every wind? We have so many different statements made to us, we have so many changes presented, that really, although we are trying to follow the finances of the country pretty closely, we are beginning to think that we do not know anything about them. The honourable gentleman is so full of shifts and changes that we do not know when we can rely upon his statements. The proposals of the Government have been changed so perpetually that we do not know when to take them in earnest. I am very sorry to have to say this; but I venture to say that it is the case. And we have had a most glaring instance of that to-night. Then, I wish to say a word or two with regard to this North Island Railway Loan. The honourable gentleman told us that if we cut out this £175,000 he would have to use the North Island Railway Loan. Now, I wish to enter my strongest protest against that, and I certainly shall endeavour to put such a limitation upon his action when the North Island Trunk Railway Loan Bill is before us as will prevent him using it. I am certain that the House will not consent to that loan being used for any such purpose. Let the honourable gentleman ask for what he wants in a straightforward way, and he will get it. With regard to this loan, I am not in the least satisfied with the statements contained in the memorandum which the Treasurer read to us. I am perfectly certain—and now I speak with real knowledge upon the subject—that, notwithstanding the memorandum which the Treasurer has read, the money can be used as I have described; for the latter part of the clause only governs the appropriation by the Governor—it does not affect it at all. The whole thing can be put, and will be put, into one common fund; and the only control that the House has is that the Governor may not make a recommendation; but, if the recommendation is made and the votes are taken, I tell the House distinctly that the money can be used. I venture to say that the Controller would also tell the honourable gentleman the same thing: at any rate, the Treasurer would be able to fight him successfully in applying the money to general purposes, as he told us he intended to apply it. The Minister for Public Works shakes his head; but is it possible that the Treasurer can want this £175,000 for general purposes if he could not use it?

Sir R. STOUT.—It is not to be applied to general purposes.

Major ATKINSON.—I mean, applicable to general purposes under this loan, as set forth in the schedule. The Treasurer says he must have this working-balance: what is the meaning of his remarks but that he can use that if this clause is effective? I hope the Government will give way on that point. At any rate, I shall move to have the third reading of this Bill postponed, in order that the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown may be taken, when it will be seen that the money could be used as I say.

Mr. WHYTE.—We are often told that history repeats itself; and I cannot help thinking that that process is going on now. Last session there was a motion carried something similar to this, inasmuch as it had the effect of reducing, or, rather, preventing, a loan, and it was apparently carried by a large majority in

this House in the usual way, and in spite of the utmost efforts of the Government; but during the recess it was made to appear by speeches delivered by certain members of the House that the Government could have carried their estimates as they stood if they had pleased. We were told then that a sufficient number of members had waited upon the Government and had promised them support if they made it a Government question—quite enough to have carried the estimates as they stood; but the Government did not choose to exercise their full strength, and therefore the motion proposed by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay was carried. We know that that was stated during the recess.

Sir R. STOUT.—The Government never said that.

Mr. WHYTE.—It was publicly stated.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The honourable member for Napier said so.

Mr. WHYTE.—Well, the honourable member for Napier is here, and he can confirm the truth of the statement or otherwise. I understand also that the honourable member for Akaroa was one of the conspirators.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—No: I contradict that.

Mr. WHYTE.—At any rate, the Government certainly to some extent did not put forth their full strength, whether that strength would have been sufficient or not, and we all know what use was made of that motion during the recess in order to cast odium upon the members of the Opposition. Now, I cannot help thinking that, if they had chosen, the Government could have carried this £175,000 to-night. During the past few weeks the Government have been carrying by large majorities everything they liked to propose; and I feel perfectly certain that they could have carried this if they had pleased, and that the purpose which is really in view in making such a fuss about it is that they may make the same use of this motion which they did of the motion of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay last year. That is clear from the Treasurer's remark about this reduction of £175,000 seriously affecting the general finances of the country. That remark convinces me of the purpose to which this motion is to be put; because how can the striking-out of two items from the schedule affect the general finances of the colony? We are to have a repetition of what took place last year, when on every occasion when a request was made for some little thing, even a cattle-pen, the Minister for Public Works shook his head, and said, "Oh, no! you cannot have this, because of the effect of Captain Russell's motion, for which your member voted." A more humiliating and contemptible exhibition, I think, was never made in our political history than when Ministers went about parading their own humiliation as a reason for not going on with the work of the country. I fear that is what is going to happen again. The Opposition have all through this discussion expressed willingness to vote the whole million and a half; but they object to do so unless the full amount is definitely allocated. The Colonial Treasurer has again to-night made use of the expression he used in 1884, that the honourable member for Egmont is a baby in finance.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. WHYTE.—Do I understand that that remark was never made by the Treasurer?

An Hon. MEMBER.—The honourable member for Egmont used it himself to-night.

Mr. WHYTE.—All I have got to say is this: If he is a baby, and if it be a proof of manhood or maturity in finance to make the egregious blunders which the Colonial Treasurer has made this year in the finances of the country, then I prefer the baby.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I would point out that we have to thank the Opposition for placing the country in the position in which it now is. The statement of the Colonial Treasurer as to the effect of this reduction of the loan is quite correct, and the honourable member for Egmont may tell us what he likes, but I feel confident that the state of the country is such that the Government, whoever may be on these benches, will have to come down next session and ask for a loan greater than the amount that is proposed in this Bill, or else there will be brought about a state of destitution in the country. The leader of the Opposition knows this as well as any one. If it is patriotism to bring the country into a lamentable condition, then the honourable member for Egmont has patriotism. The honourable gentleman showed his patriotism before. His speech in 1879 created a panic, it was well known, at Home. The honourable gentleman may laugh; but no less an injury is now being inflicted upon the colony by the honourable gentleman than was inflicted upon it by him in 1879. Love of country is not a passion with him; it is love of office that is his passion. Every thinking man must know that the public works must be gone on with with greater vigour than will be possible under this Bill—I mean, the completing of works that are at present not paying, but which would pay if they were pushed on to paying points; and I say that it was the duty of the House to have assisted the Government in every possible way, instead of following the course which the Opposition have followed. I say that anything will benefit the country which will keep the present Opposition off the Government benches. Any sacrifice is worth making to secure that. And I believe that what has taken place to-night will act as a deterrent to the country from putting him on these benches: I am sure this will be made use of against him throughout the length and breadth of the country. Every one knows the condition of the country—that it is suffering from a depreciation of income, owing to the low prices that have ruled during the last few years; and, although there has been a rise in the price of wool and wheat which may do us good, there is every reason why the country should be helped as much as possible for the next two years. I say that unless we exercise great caution it will be impossible for the country to extricate itself from its difficulties.

I may be called a "croaker;" but I have told the House for years what was coming, and everything I said has been fulfilled, and so it will be again. This being the state of affairs, it is the duty of honourable members to sacrifice their feelings for the good of the country, and to refrain from throwing any difficulties in the way of the Government. The present was not an occasion when, acting from pique and from a desire to humiliate the Government, as it is called, the Opposition should have adopted the course which has been adopted.

Mr. HATCH.—I think it would be a great pity to continue this discussion much longer; but I cannot allow the same to close without saying a few words. The thing has just taken the turn that suggested itself to me in Committee. I strongly urged that the Government should allocate the money, for I must give honourable members from the North Island this credit: that many of them told me that if the Government would allow the money to be allocated there would be scarcely any opposition to it. The honourable member for Auckland West began to "chyack" me when he got his own £412,000 passed, irrespective of the allocation for permanent-way and rolling-stock; but during the latter part of the debate he was more reasonable. If the Government had accepted my suggestion I feel sure they would have had no difficulty in passing the Bill as they desired. No one will object, I am sure, to the allocation of another £75,000 to the Otago Central. The honourable member for Nelson says "No;" but whom have the Nelson and Blenheim members got to thank for the passing of the East and West Coast Railway Bill? I never voted against the East and West Coast Railway so long as the Meiggs business did not come into it. The whole House to a man was really against the Meiggs business. Perhaps I have strained my conscience a little in voting for that railway. It also strained my conscience somewhat to vote with the Government on the last division. I understood the Government to say that if the money was not allocated on the schedule they would take it off. Seeing that the North had got its proper share, I strongly urged that the Government should allocate the money in a proper manner; and if they had allocated it the proposal would have been carried, even though it was all to the South—which many North Island members distinctly stated they would support. They have themselves to blame for what has occurred. I would have given the Otago Central £75,000; the Sumner line, £20,000; the Seaward Bush line might have had £25,000; the Catlin's River line, £25,000; the Ocean Beach line, Dunedin, £10,000; the Duntroon–Hakateramea line, £20,000—making up the £175,000. The Government, however, were stubborn, and would not do what their own friends recommended, and what was fair, just, and right. I suppose the Government did not care to allocate the money because the Nelson members would have been against them. What was the fact before those amounts were struck out? The Government distinctly said those amounts were not going to be spent. I am sure the House would have gone on with the Tophouse and Inangahua lines as soon as they saw that the East and West Coast line was sufficiently far advanced. I would just as soon vote that the loan be thrown out altogether, if there is to be this fighting about it. The money could be saved in the general expenditure of the country, and out of the money thus saved we could finish the unfinished lines. I could save £2,300 or £2,500 by a stroke of the pen. For instance, the Registrar-General spent about £1,800 more in taking the census this year than he spent in taking the previous census. I do not think that increase was at all justifiable, feeling assured that many suitable men were available as sub-enumerators that were otherwise employed years ago. A saving of money might be made in that department. If the Government determine to go through the various offices with their concomitant expenditure they could save £200,000, £300,000, or £400,000 with the greatest ease. The country will have to come to the Government and say, "We must have economy." The Government now say that the striking-off of this £175,000 is going to put them to grief. I say they can save that amount with the greatest ease, if they desire to do so. As to the Redistribution of Seats Bill, I hope that those members who are asking for economy will knock off a third or a fourth of the members of this House. I hope that the report of the Legislative Expenditure Committee will show where a few thousand pounds can be saved.

Mr. MENTEATH.—Looking at this question from the point of view of an onlooker, it seems to me that the House has missed the effect of the strategy pursued this evening. It has been conceded that a million and a half was a fair amount to borrow and expend over two years. The Government brought down proposals for allocating the expenditure, keeping in view the necessity of allocating it according to the different districts of the colony: they allocated so much to the North Island, so much to Otago, and so much to the northern portion of the South Island. Two or three votes for the northern portion of the South Island were struck out. The Government propose to remedy this by bringing down an unapportioned amount on the schedule of the loan, and immediately the Opposition exert themselves to reduce the amount of the loan by this unapportioned amount, and they say, "We do not wish to reduce the amount of the loan. You are perfectly free to borrow this amount if you will only allocate it." This was a most amusing piece of political strategy to throw dust in the eyes of the country to escape the responsibility of having reduced the loan. None know better than the leaders of the Opposition that it was impossible for the Government to allocate that money without alienating a large portion of their supporters. The honourable member for Egmont may laugh, but the laugh recoils upon himself, because in that laugh we hear the rending of the veil which hides the real object of his strategy from the country. The country knows

well that all loans must bear a certain proportion to the various districts, if the Government are going to maintain themselves in office. It may be a bad principle. I say it is a bad principle, and I say therein lies the admitted weakness of our public works policy; and so long as we have a country like New Zealand—a country diverse in physical features, where one portion of the colony is sundered from another by mountain-ranges, long stretches of sea-coast, and by the sea itself, we shall always have that defect in the public works policy. We all know that, whatever Government goes on to those benches, it must conform to those lines or lose office. What is the answer to-night? By all means bring down your votes and allocate them. Then, the Opposition set to work to play upon certain members from Otago and certain members from the North Island, and say, "You must not allow the Government to bring down this unallocated amount; because, when there is money sticking out, why do you not try and get it for the Otago Central line and for the North Island?" It might have been perfectly competent for the Government to allocate that amount next session where they liked, but it would be offering a decided insult to those districts which had lost the vote this session to allocate it to other districts this session. If no important works were to be done next year in Canterbury, Marlborough, Westland, and Nelson, it would have been perfectly competent for the Government to take the money and allocate it elsewhere; but it is not competent for Government to do that when, only last night, a vote for Nelson, Westland, and Canterbury was struck out, and when the representatives of those districts are still smarting under what they considered an insult put upon them by the House. None know that better than the honourable gentlemen sitting on the Opposition benches, and they forced the Government into the position of reducing the loan or offending a large portion of their supporters. Can the Opposition escape the responsibility of having forced the Government to reduce the loan?

Mr. MOSS.—I should like to say a few words, as I have not yet explained why I voted. The honourable member for Lincoln has a very bad habit of ejaculating remarks when another member is speaking. I think it would be a very good thing if we adopted the old custom of the Government members sitting on one side of the House, and the members of the Opposition sitting on the other. I believe if we could revive the old practice it would be very much better, in which case a member would not be subject to these continual interruptions.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—When the honourable gentleman told us what his vote was to be I said, "Oh Lord!"

Mr. MOSS.—I consider that an exceedingly rude interruption. We all know the wit of the honourable gentleman; and I have no objection to his saying his prayers, even if there be a touch of profanity about it. That is his affair. What I wish to say is this: It appears to me that what we have done is simply this: We have decided that the Blenheim-Tophouse line and the Westport-Inangahua line are not to be made for the present, at all events. They were new lines, which, if voted, would plunge the country into new liabilities. The amount it would cost to construct these lines is said to be unknown.

An Hon. MEMBER.—£700,000.

Mr. MOSS.—These two new lines were not to meet. They were simply two useless pieces of unconnected line, and the Colonial Treasurer told us they were not to be made this year.

Mr. KERR.—The honourable gentleman is perfectly well aware that the Colonial Treasurer told us that the lines were only to be surveyed this year. My honourable friend, like a great many of his colleagues, wanted the plunder for himself.

Mr. MOSS.—We wanted the plunder to buy land in the North Island—is that it? In reply, I can only say that my honourable friend seems to be mourning for his lost line, and therefore some allowance must be made for his temper. As a matter of fact, with regard to the Blenheim-Tophouse line, it appeared to many of us that it ought not to be made; and it was not proposed by the Government that this and the other line should be made this year. All the Government proposed was to borrow £175,000, and to spend out of it only a few thousands for surveys during the year. At the worst, therefore, a few thousands of pounds less will be spent in surveys as the result of the vote which has just been taken. I voted in the way I did, not with any view of embarrassing the Government, but simply because I was satisfied that the colony ought not to be plunged into these two new and, as far as we could see, quite unnecessary lines. There was no necessity to put them in the schedule of the Bill. The honourable member for Inangahua laid down a new principle when he said that the Government on those benches must sacrifice the real good of the country or go out of office. I hope, on the contrary, that we shall yet have a Government on those benches which, if it is called upon to sacrifice the real interests of the country, will retire rather than do so. When we find this adopted as a principle in governing the country we shall see new energy and usefulness infused in the legislation of the country. But to hold over the House a threat that the country will be told that whatever difficulty the Government may have in meeting the distress which may prevail will be due to the House having refused the money to survey these lines is treating us like children.

Dr. NEWMAN.—Before the Treasurer replies I should like to say that I think the Government sometimes do things rather in a hurry, and especially after being beaten on a little thing they are apt to get into a "huff," if I may use the word. It has been said that a large number of members are prepared to vote £175,000 on Monday next if the Government will only bring down the allocation for it; and, if they would do that, they will find a large

majority of members in this House who will vote for them. Therefore for the Treasurer to say that he will have all his finances disarranged because he cannot get this £175,000 is a misstatement of fact. If he comes down with the sum properly allocated there can be no doubt that there is a large majority of members of this House who are prepared to support him. It must not be forgotten that a number of members supported the motion of the honourable member for Mataura, which proposed to knock out these two lines and reallot the money; and the £175,000 is there for the Government to put in if they like. For them to say, therefore, that their finances will be disarranged because the House has knocked out these two lines is a gross misstatement of fact.

Mr. REID.—I must say I am surprised at the action the Government have taken tonight. I do not agree with those honourable members who say that the Government cannot carry on the work of the country because they have not been voted the £175,000, neither do I believe that the Government will venture to say during the recess that the want of this money will be the means of hampering expenditure on public works. Such an assertion would be too ridiculous and its object too patent—decidedly so; and, as far as I am concerned, I wish to put it on record that I protest against any such statements being made. There is not the slightest doubt that the members of the Government must know that, if they had wanted this £175,000, they could have got it by bringing down a schedule with the appropriations specified. That is quite certain; we had it from the leader of the Opposition and several members of the Opposition, and also from the supporters of the Government. I have consistently supported the Government hitherto; I have voted for all their policy Bills; and I said, before this Bill went through Committee, that if they would bring down the allocations I would assist in giving effect to them, were I satisfied that the works proposed would be reproductive; and I know other members who would have done the same thing. The Government cannot possibly consistently say that the action of the House has embarrassed them at all. The honourable member who made the suggestion that the whole object of those honourable members who voted on the "No" side was to bring humiliation on the Government—the honourable member for Timaru—spoke, I think, without due consideration. If there is any humiliation at all in the situation, the Ministry themselves are responsible for it. That is my opinion. I voted as I did, not in antagonism to the Government, but simply because I object to the policy of allocating and ear-marking certain loans being frustrated by including in the Bill, which for the first time establishes the principle, a sum of money for general purposes. That would simply stultify a practice that this House and the country are desirous of establishing. The Bill provides that all money shall be applied to the purposes mentioned therein, and to no other purposes whatsoever; and yet in the face of this it is now proposed to take a slice of £175,000 out of the amount and devote it to general expenditure. The only conclusion I can come to is this: that the West Coast lines were never intended to be made by the present Ministry. We gather that from the statement of the Treasurer himself. I think I might say that the Treasurer knew that the House would not pass the votes for the Westport–Inangahua and Blenheim–Tophouse lines. If that is so, why did they put them on the schedule? If the money was there honestly for the purpose of being spent on these two lines, why did the Government refuse the suggestion of the Opposition members to bring in a new allocation for the £175,000 after they were struck out? The fact is, they hoped to get hold of this money as so much unallocated loan. Their action in this matter is totally inconsistent with their professions.

Sir R. STOUT.—I regret that the debate should have been kept up till half-past twelve, so as to prevent us getting the second reading of the Representation Bill moved. The result will be that either the session will have to be prolonged or it will be impossible to go on with that Bill this session. There was no necessity at all to have the debate on the motion, "That the report be agreed to." It does not happen once in fifty times that, when there is a motion that the report of the Committee be agreed to, a debate like this should take place. However, as there has been a debate I wish to say one or two words. The honourable member for Parnell surprises me. He got up to explain his vote. I did not think that was necessary. It was sufficient for him that the Government proposed a measure, to merit his opposition. I may say that I always looked upon him as one of the most consistent opponents that the Government has in the House. I cannot understand the honourable member who has just sat down. I understand him to say that the reason why he voted against the £175,000 was that it was not allocated. But the true position was this: Whether it was to be allocated this year or the next. The honourable member knew that the money had to extend over two years. The allocation has to be done by Act. Therefore, as far as that is concerned, it was open to allocation by the House; and, because the Government would not propose the allocation this year, therefore the money was to be opposed, and they would not allow the matter to be dealt with next year. Honourable members who have voted in the way they have done find that, to use an expressive phrase, they have "put their foot in it," and now they wish to explain their conduct. If this money was proposed to be so voted that the Government could apply it to any line they pleased, the honourable member's argument would have been right; but, as this simply amounts to a question whether it should be allocated this year or next year, what harm was there in that? Why should not the allocation have been left to next session? There could have been no harm or wrong in that. I

can only say this: This is the first Bill that ever proposed specific allocation, and, because we propose the first Loan Bill providing for specific allocation, therefore honourable members who, year after year, voted for Loan Bills without any allocations whatever get up and accuse us of not allocating a portion of it. The thing is absurd; it will not stand argument. The fact is that some honourable members voted because it was against the Government—like the honourable member for Parnell, to whom that was a sufficient excuse—while others voted against it, I believe, not knowing how they voted.

Mr. REID.—May I make a personal explanation? I assure the honourable gentleman I knew how I voted and why I voted as I did. He is quite mistaken in supposing I have "put my foot in it." I voted after due consideration, and am quite prepared to accept all responsibility. I will now favour the House with my opinion of the conduct of the Premier.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member is confined to making an explanation.

Mr. REID.—That is a pity. However, I wish him to understand that I did not rise to explain my vote, but to express my surprise at the action of the Government.

Mr. KERR.—I believe the honourable member for Bruce has put his foot in it in this way: He said just now that if the Government had allocated the money he would have voted for it; but he wanted that money allocated in a particular manner, and for the Otago Central to get the biggest part of it.

Mr. REID.—I did not say so.

Mr. KERR.—You did not say so? I heard you say so much for the Otago Central, and so much for this, and so much for that.

Mr. REID.—It is a mistake.

Mr. KERR.—At all events, I believe the whole Opposition have put their foot in it. The honourable member for Egmont said if the striking out of the unallocated amount would embarrass the Government, and they could show him how it would do so, he would pledge not only himself, but the whole of the Opposition members, not to embarrass the Government—that he would not embarrass any Government if they wanted the money. But how has he put his foot in it? He thought he would get this money for buying up this land. It was made up, as I said the other evening, in a certain place in this House, and the Opposition made sure they were going to carry it; and, because the Government come down here and stick to their friends, as they always do, the Opposition find they cannot secure what they were striving for. I feel sure that at this time twelve months, when we meet here again, the Opposition will say that they have now made the greatest mistake they ever made in the House. It has been stated by the honourable member for Waikato that the Government went round the country and stated that they could not do this and could not do that because £500,000 had been taken off last year. Well, was not that true? When £500,000 was taken off, they could not do all they had said they would do, for the House would not let them do it. I conceive there was nothing wrong in that. This year they need not say it; but they can say truthfully next year that they have not got the money, and cannot do the work that is wanted. This does not make the slightest difference to me in the world. As I told the House the other night, I have a clean sheet—there was not a penny to my province; but I like to see fair-play. Though I have not been long in the House as a member, I have read *Hansard*, and have watched how former Governments have treated different parts of the colony; and after I came into the House I went round the whole country to see for myself, from one end of the Middle Island to the other, and from this end of this Island to the other; and I went through Taranaki—the "Garden of Eden," as they call it. I know for a fact that people have gone there from Nelson and Christchurch and Dunedin; knowing they would get good land they sold good farms and went there. Everybody said that the honourable member for Egmont, when in office, took jolly good care that they had roads all through their country, and railroads as well; and there is no doubt he has done that for the country. It is notorious that during the time the Roads and Bridges Construction Act was in operation the Districts of Wanganui, Wairarapa, and Taranaki secured quite two-thirds of the money allocated under that Act. They got two-thirds of the money for their roads and bridges, and railroads wherever they wanted them; but they have run the country at such a rate that many of the best settlers from the other Island, as good men as any of the Taranaki men, cannot live there. The honourable gentleman has run them into such taxation with this Harbour Bill and one thing and another that they will break down altogether, or have to leave the province. I say, again, I am not interested in the railways at all—my province is not interested: but I do say that these railways struck out of the schedule, one of them in particular, had more right to be made, and would have paid more money to the country, than the whole of the lines of the Middle Island. It goes through one of the best coal districts in the whole country, and the coal is wanted, and is the best in the Southern Hemisphere. Now, I want to know this: Honourable gentlemen struck that line out of the schedule and said it would not be reproductive: I want to know if any one of them has seen that country or knows anything about it. If they know anything about it they must know that the whole of it is coal country. They come here howling into this House and knock those lines off the schedule because, they say, they will not be reproductive; but the true cause was that they did not know anything about it. I venture to say there was not one who voted against those railroads that knew anything about what he was voting for. I am not pleading for myself, but for my neighbours, men that I know well, and for the whole colony—the whole colony would be benefited if that line were made; and there was not much of it. It would have benefited Otago,

for it would have given them cheaper coal, and they are begging for it at the present day. I say that it is perfect nonsense to say that if the money were allocated for that district honourable members who have voted against it would have voted for it. They would have voted for it if it had been allocated to the North Island Trunk line or to the Otago Central—they would have voted for it then without a murmur.

Mr. LAKE.—The Premier has told us that the honourable member for Bruce has put his foot in it; and another honourable member has told us that not only the honourable member for Bruce, but the Opposition has put its foot into it as well. All I can say is this: If we have put our foot in it in exposing the utter rottenness of this schedule,—if we have put our foot in it by making the Colonial Treasurer show that the Inangahua–Reefton and Blenheim–Tophouse lines were mere shams, put there to lead two or three of the Government supporters to think that they would get this expenditure, while he desired to have it to meet expected liabilities and to provide a working-balance,—if that is putting our foot in it, then we have put our feet in a position in which we need not be ashamed to stand before this House or the country.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—The Premier asks why this debate should be got up on the motion to agree with the amendments made in Committee. I wish to put on record why the debate has proceeded upon this subject instead of on the Bill that the Premier intended to read a second time to-night. As soon as we entered into Committee it was found that, although the subject-matter of the debate was entirely new, the debate would not be reported. We moved that progress be reported, in order to ask you, Sir, to put it to the House that the debate on this matter in Committee should be reported; but we were defeated: hence it is that that which ought to have been put in *Hansard* while the Bill was passing through Committee, has now to go into *Hansard* after the Committee has reported. It was the Premier himself who was the cause of that, so that he, of all men, certainly did not require to ask why this debate was got up. Then, he says we opposed the allocation of loans this year. I should like to ask the Premier, if he were present, whether this was not a fundamental part of the policy as professed by the Government—whether the policy of the Government, as professed, was not this: that lines which we had been spending money upon should, in the first place, be finished, and that new works should not be proceeded with until these lines had reached profitable points, or their terminations. But when we come to the carrying-out of that principle we find that the Government have run away from that principle—that the Premier denied it, and did everything he could to strangle it. We, on the other hand, believe in the principle, and we tried, first of all, to put out the new lines; and, succeeding in that, begged the Government to allocate the spare funds to those lines which would be most profitable to the country, and we offered—not an unconditional offer, as some honourable members seem to have thought—that, if the allocation were made to lines that the House would approve of, the whole of that £175,000 should go to those lines. Of course, there would have been a debate, necessarily, upon those lines, but that debate could have been reduced to a minimum and the opposition reduced almost to *nil* by the Government looking to those lines that had been indicated in the course of the debate by members of the Committee. There would have been no difficulty in that. Now one word in regard to some of the phrases made use of by the honourable member for Inangahua. Sir, I heard with very great pain the speech of that honourable member. He reduced politics to high-sounding phrases; but mere high-sounding phrases will be treated with the contempt that high-sounding phrases, meaning nothing, deserve. I venture to say that, if the young men of the colony come forward in politics with the idea that their business is to frame high-sounding phrases and not to follow great principles, they will never make their mark in the colony or in the world. I say the colony will not progress if those who are the hope of the future take such a low view of politics as that. I hope the honourable gentleman will reconsider his course. A great many of us did hope, and still hope, that he will be a leading man in the colony. He has great talents; but I say that, if he goes to work under the idea that politics are simply high-sounding phrases, he will mar his future, and that grand career which may be open to him will be closed for ever.

Mr. BEETHAM.—I am induced to rise by the remarks that fell from the honourable member for Inangahua. He "let the cat out of the bag." It was not the want of money that the Treasurer was suffering from—it was the want of support from the West Coast members. That was the whole secret of the course taken by the Government in this matter. It could not be said that it was want of support from the honourable member for Wairau or the honourable member for Picton, for I understand that they voted for the excision of the vote. The honourable member for Inangahua stated distinctly that the Government could not, after the striking-out of that railway, reallocate that money in any way without insulting those members. If that position was put before the Government, if they listened to it and acted upon it, it was degrading to the Government and to those members as well. The responsibility does not rest with the Opposition for the reduction of the loan schedule by the £175,000. It rests upon the Government themselves primarily, and upon those honourable members in a secondary degree. I was perfectly willing to vote for any fair allocation of that money in the South Island. I did not want it for the North Island. We had a fair share. The Government had plenty of time to allocate it; and if any fair allocation had been brought down I should have been glad to vote for it.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I recognize that it

is necessary, in the raising of loans and the distribution of the money, that there should be no question of parties, but all should unite in the interests of the State. I regret that this schedule has not been further reduced, because I am deeply sensible of this: that our public works have already outrun our population to a very great extent, and that this colony is burdened with a large number of unproductive works, which might be very proper in course of time, but which are far ahead of the population we now have. I cannot help deeply regretting that the whole of this evening should have been wasted on a matter which I think might well have been averted, and which I think is probably not altogether creditable to this House. I have no hesitation whatever in saying that the two reasons which influenced me in voting were, first, that I recognized the other evening there was a distinct and emphatic understanding come to that this schedule should be taken as the basis of our operations, and that whatever was struck out of the schedule should go in reduction of the amount of the loan. I, at all events, had no doubt whatever about that. This is a matter on which differences of opinion may arise through infirmity of memory; but, so far as I am concerned, that was the distinct understanding I had before I withdrew my amendment the other evening. The other reason which influenced me in voting was that I thought, looking at the principle underlying this Bill, and the new departure which this House is apparently desirous of entering upon, that we ought to provide that any money borrowed should be strictly allocated; and, that not having been done, I could very easily see the mischief that would arise through allowing money to be raised in a general schedule of this sort, without any allocation whatever. I do not apprehend that there will be any real difficulty in consequence of what has been done, and I should have liked to see one or two more of these lines struck out, and I should be prepared to take the whole responsibility of doing any such thing. I have a very strong conviction that we have reached a limit when we require to consider our position most carefully, not only in the interest of present colonists, but having regard to the future prosperity and condition of this colony. I think we are only getting alive to the critical condition in which this colony is placed, and it will require very careful engineering to steer clear of a catastrophe, which may be approaching more rapidly than we suppose. We are discounting the resources of this colony too rapidly. I recognize that the resources of this colony are great, that its people are energetic, industrious, and brave; but, if we go on discounting, year by year, the resources of this colony at the rate we have been doing, I do not hesitate to say that the future of the colony will not be a happy one. I feel that the attractions which this colony would have had under other circumstances do not exist now. Any person who has travelled over part of the world will see the many disadvantages which our position places us in. If this colony would avoid excessive taxation a very desirable class of people would come out and settle here with the greatest readiness. I know that the position of this colony is not only talked about at Home, but amongst a class of people who can influence the welfare of the colony very materially. Those people are getting shy of having much to do with the colony. In fact, I know, for various reasons, that the colony is not inspiring confidence amongst a large number of people who would be most desirable colonists. We must bear in mind that this is not the only colony in the world: there are other parts of the world holding out inducements to persons quite as satisfactory in many respects as and more satisfactory in other respects than this colony; and the one great rock we should try to avoid is the overburdening of the inhabitants of this colony with excessive taxation. We are a very small people. We have not the population of the City of Chicago. We have not the population of Brooklyn; and, although we may be stronger—that is, each man here counts, probably, for more than one man does in those cities—still, when you compare the heavy debt which this colony is under, and the disadvantages it is under in many ways, we ought to exercise the utmost caution and judgment in every movement we make in this Legislature, and we ought not only to look to the present, but to the future; otherwise that future will not be a very happy one.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—In listening to the remarks of the various speakers I was rather struck with the manner in which they exposed themselves to answers which may be given to them. The honourable member for Egmont commenced by saying that no reasonable man would place reliance upon the finance of the present Government. Now, if no reasonable man would place reliance on the finance of the present Government, I would ask, what reasonable man would place any reliance upon the finance of that honourable gentleman? Is it not a fact that he from year to year placed money on the estimates, pledged and promised most faithfully to spend it in certain localities, and never did so? Is it not a fact that he made those promises in writing? I refer back to the year 1879, when he, and the Premier of this colony, gave an undertaking that a certain railway in the Provincial District of Nelson—the only one there—should be carried on at the rate of ten miles per annum; and I ask him, did he ever carry out that pledge? No; he never did. When the honourable member for Inangahua spoke just now he pointed out that if the Government had done anything different from what they have done they would have alienated a number of their supporters in the House; and this expression was received with a derisive laugh by the honourable member for Egmont. Now, I would just call to the recollection of honourable members what took place in 1883, and in the preceding session. A three-million loan had been granted, and there was a schedule attached to the Bill showing how the various sums should be allo-

cated. At that time there was a motion brought forward by the honourable member for Akaroa against centralization. The honourable member for Egmont spoke very strongly on that subject, and he said, among other things, that his Government were strong enough, and need not wish for any further support. But a few hours previous to saying that, he had tried his very utmost to get that support which he said he did not require, and he did a thing which, I am sure, this Government would not be guilty of doing. In the Public Works Statement which was brought forward that session these lines occur: "and a colonizing scheme, to aid which the credit of the colony was pledged, would be looked upon as a gross injustice if it did not provide for due consideration of every province." The members from the Provincial District of Canterbury brought pressure to bear upon the honourable gentleman. They interviewed him and asked him to allocate certain money out of the loan. They said, "We cannot trust your word: we must have it in writing." This is what he told them then: "Out of the £180,000 scheduled for the continuation of the main trunk line as far as the East Coast, only a small portion will be required in the meantime"—that was, to carry it as far as Red-post. And then he went on to say, "So the remaining portion of the £180,000 will be intact until dealt with by a future Parliament." The honourable member now says it is an enormous offence to tamper with a loan schedule; but I will read some words he uttered in 1883: "I have stated once to the honourable gentleman that the meaning of that is that the Government will not consent to an alteration of the schedule at all. I have stated that publicly; and I now state it again." That the honourable gentleman said during a speech delivered by myself. But, though he had said that, the moment pressure was put on the honourable gentleman by the Canterbury members, whose votes he valued as highly as his seat on the Treasury benches, he was willing to break the pledge he had given both in the House and publicly outside. He at once said, "Oh, gentlemen, do not be uneasy; because, although £180,000 is scheduled for the main trunk line northward, it will not be spent this year, and we are quite ready to allocate it elsewhere if Parliament wishes." Now, in the Public Works Statement of that year it was distinctly stated that the East and West Coast Railway was not required, and there was no necessity to borrow any money for it; but the moment pressure was brought to bear upon him the honourable gentleman put down votes to get the line surveyed. The honourable member should have recalled this before he laughed so derisively at what was said by the honourable member for Inangahua. Now, the honourable member for Invercargill made a statement which, as the honourable member for Wairarapa North has put it, "let the cat out of the bag." The honourable member for Invercargill said the Auckland and Otago members combined could have compelled the spending of the £175,000 on the Otago Central and other works had Government proposed it. That was "letting the cat out of the bag" with a vengeance. Because certain districts have not sufficient voting-power, justice is to be denied to them, and money justly due to those districts is to be spent elsewhere—by the mere force of numbers. Of course the North Island members would have kept to a compact to give money to the Otago Central, having got what they wanted for the main trunk and other northern lines. But that shows clearly the value of the provision that votes for works can only be proposed by the Government; and I never saw the value of that so fully before that cat was let out of the bag. That provision is the only thing that saved us from having the extra amount put on the Otago Central. It is always being dinned in our ears what a wonderfully-great work the Otago Central is; but the Commissions have invariably reported against it, and the maps issued by the Rabbit Nuisance Committee show the country to be so infested with rabbits that sheep cannot live there for want of feed. The honourable member for Egmont, twitting the Government the other day, said they must feel very small indeed because they had been obliged to abandon the measures announced in the Governor's Speech. Did it not strike the honourable gentleman that he was in office longer than the present Ministers have been, and that his record is longer than theirs in that respect? Why, in 1881 his Government brought forward measures which they never could carry. Finding they could not carry them, they went round to members and pledged themselves that, if they would vote for the second reading, the Bills should then be dropped.

Mr. TURNBULL.—They all do that.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—If it was fair for those honourable gentlemen to do, surely there can be nothing wrong in it. What became of the Charitable Aid Bill the late Ministry brought forward? We have been told by honourable members, one after the other, that they would be quite willing to throw out more items of the schedule of the Loan Bill; and if I were in the place of the Government I would invite them to do so. I would say, "Let us throw out the whole of the loan;" and if any other honourable members will go with me I will lead them to vote against the whole Bill, even yet. Let us test their sincerity. They say, "We cannot afford to borrow money." Well, let them vote against the Bill, and let us see what their constituents will say to them. I can vote against the Bill with a clear conscience, because there is not a single shilling in it for my district; and my constituents would say I had done perfectly right, because it is a Bill under which they are asked to pay interest on money all of which is to be spent elsewhere. That has been the way with Nelson ever since the public works policy was initiated; and therefore I, for one, can go with a clear conscience against the whole Loan Bill, and when the time comes I will call for a division against the Bill, and see how many have been honest

in what they have said. Now, the honourable member for Invercargill found great fault with the Registrar-General because the expense of taking the last census was greater than that of the previous one, and the honourable member told us that labour was cheaper now than it was five years ago. But, even admitting that clerical labour may be cheaper, the population being larger and wider-spread the amount of work to be done is considerably larger. The honourable member for Taranaki told us this debate had been got up because the subject was new, and he thought it was a great hardship that the speeches delivered in Committee were not reported in *Hansard*. But there is nothing new in the matter; the whole Bill was fully discussed and reported in the House, and the only thing done in Committee was the striking-out of some items, and the discussion on that was not reported. The honourable member said a fundamental part of the policy of the Government was that every part of the loan should be allocated so as to leave none of it unappropriated. Well, was not the proposal of the Government as to the £175,000 in accordance with that? The £175,000 was specially allocated to railways in the South Island. It was not an allocation by which the money could be spent on roads, nor could the money be spent during the next recess; but the money was allocated to railways in the South Island, and it could only be spent on votes of this House in a future session. The honourable member for Taranaki said he heard with pain the honourable member for Inangahua use a high-sounding phrase about adhering to high principles while yet the honourable member supported the policy of the honourable gentlemen on the Treasury benches. The honourable member for Taranaki says he had had great hopes of the honourable member for Inangahua, but that those hopes had gone; but, still, he has always expected that the honourable member for Inangahua would be one of the shining lights of the colony because he is a man of great ability. The honourable member for Taranaki prides himself on having adhered to principles instead of coining high-sounding phrases; but that honourable gentleman is not one of our shining lights, and I question very much whether he ever will be. The honourable member for Wairarapa North went so far as to say that the Government had made the proposal which has been negatived simply to slight the West Coast members, and because he said the Marlborough members did not care for this expenditure. But it was the honourable member for Wairau himself who called for a division on this very question.

Mr. DODSON.—No.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—At all events, the honourable gentleman voted against everything in the schedule except the Blenheim-Tophouse line. If he did not call for a division, he——

Mr. DODSON.—I voted against nothing in the schedule. I voted with the Government all through the schedule.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—The honourable gentleman voted for every item on purpose to get his own carried, no doubt. Then, the honourable member for Wairarapa North turns round and says that he would have voted for the money if it had been allocated in a just cause. I say the money could not have been allocated for a juster purpose than continuing the main trunk line. That line would have run through a district for which money has been voted by this House time after time; but none has been spent in it, and therefore there is no district in the whole colony which has a more just claim for expenditure than this one.

Mr. HATCH.—I wish to correct the honourable gentleman in two particulars. I may distinctly say that under no circumstances had there been any idea amongst honourable members of making a compact with regard to the allocation of the remainder of the loan. And, again, a large number of southern members assisted those gentlemen in getting their East and West Coast Railway Bill passed; therefore they should not have objected to having the remaining portion of the loan allocated.

Mr. DODSON.—I wish merely to say that, so far as I understand the proceedings to-night, they are only the logical sequence of what took place in Committee last night. The House, in refusing to allow the Government to borrow this £175,000, is merely following the lines of last night when it struck out the Inangahua-Westport and Blenheim-Tophouse lines, not for the reason that we did not deem that those districts required railways, but that we thought that the time had not yet arrived when these railways should be commenced, in consequence of the uncertainty that overlay the Midland Railway-line. While saying that the time had not come for these two lines to be made, the House, this evening, in refusing to vote this money is only following out what it has already done. I take it, therefore, for granted that the House, by the course it has taken, has shown that at some future time it will recognize the rights of the West Coast district and of my own district to lines which it would certainly have voted last night had it thought the time had arrived for beginning them. As to the Treasurer saying that the refusal to add the £175,000 will embarrass the finances, I do not think that needs an answer. Indeed, they are words which he should not have spoken, for no person can think that it would be an embarrassment, or that any embarrassment was intended by those who voted against the amendment. The honourable member for Nelson says that I voted with the Government in the hope of getting something for my own district. Of course it is open to him to impute motives like that if he chooses; but I have only to say that I supported the Government because I thought the lines of railway proposed necessary.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I believe the question is, "That the amendments made in Committee be agreed to;" and I wish to offer a few remarks on the Bill. I believe the real reason why the amendment should be necessary is, that

some honourable members who have pretended very strongly to their constituents that certain railways should be gone on with are not very desirous of having them made. It is well known that certain Otago members have been declaring, both before their constituents and in this House, that they are very anxious that the Otago Central Railway should be made. I am not the least interested in that line, and my constituents have no interest in it; but I know the country well, and I have not the least hesitation in saying that there is no railway in the country that will pay better than this one when it is finished to a certain point. When it is finished to that point it will land on the run of an honourable member of this House, and it will have gone through two runs belonging to another honourable member, and when it reaches that point the country there will no longer be occupied by sheep, but by population. I know, as a fact, that two years back a man in that district ploughed his land with a single furrow, and raised thirty bushels of wheat to the acre off it; but it is impossible for the people there to get their produce to the markets of the world unless they have railways. It is well known throughout the district that when the railway is completed it will open up two million acres of the best land now left in that part of the country, and I am only sorry that some of those who have made such pretences of being anxious to have the railway constructed are not more earnest in the matter. As I have said, the railway will go through two large runs held by the honourable member for Waikouaiti, and will land on a run held by the honourable member for Mount Ida; and of course, when the line is completed, these runs will be occupied by people and not sheep, and I cannot understand how those honourable members should pretend to their constituents and to this House that they are so anxious to have the line made, and should then, by their action and votes on this Loan Bill, show that it is quite the other way, as it is impossible to have railways without money, and that money must be borrowed.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—They wish to have the leases cancelled.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Sir, in my opinion they do not. The honourable member for Mount Ida had a chance three months ago—when one of his runs was offered in Dunedin for sale—to get out of it; and he gave twice as much, or more than twice as much, as the upset price put on the land by the Waste Lands Board. He had to do so in his own interest. Another opposition to this railway arises from a financial company in Dunedin which has a large interest in a portion of the country that that line would open up; and what do we find? We find the manager of that company—Mr. J. Ritchie—writing letters time after time to the newspapers saying that, even at the sacrifice of the Otago Central Railway, there should be no more borrowing. Why? Simply because he does not want that railway made and the country opened up. But the fact of the matter is that if the railway is not made the people of that district will have to give up their holdings to the great injury of the district and of the colony at large. Settlers have gone to that district in the belief that this railway would be pushed on, and that it would have been completed long before this. I say those people should be made acquainted with the fact that one of the reasons why the railway is not pushed on is that some of those who pretended that they are so anxious to have it are not in earnest: at least it appears so to me from their actions.

Mr. HOBBS.—I think every allowance should be made for the feelings of disappointment of the honourable member for Nelson, who has throughout been so consistent a supporter of the Government, to find that at last his hopes are blighted, and that he is now left out in the cold. His continual attacks on the honourable member for Egmont, and his persistently snapping and nagging like a little terrier, put me very much in mind of the celebrated picture by Landseer entitled "Dignity and Impudence."

Mr. SPEAKER.—These remarks are of altogether too personal a character, and must not be indulged in. I hope the honourable gentleman will see the propriety of at once withdrawing them.

Mr. HOBBS.—Then I will withdraw them; but I feel very strongly on this constant nagging, and think that if we confined ourselves to the important question before us it would be far better. The remarks that have been made regarding the action of the northern members are, to my mind, most unbecoming. We all know what a paltry sum has been put down in this schedule for the railway north of Auckland—£50,000, of which only £6,000 is to be expended this year. That is paltry in the extreme. I do not wish to make comparisons, but when we see £140,000 devoted to the Otago Central Railway and only £50,000 given to Auckland one cannot help feeling that it is rather curious. I do not begrudge the £140,000 to the Otago Central Railway, but I cannot understand on what principle the Government has allocated the money, when I find only £50,000 given to the North of Auckland line. The Minister for Public Works has over and over again stated that this is a line which will pay; and yet, when we hear the Premier saying, as he did a night or two ago, that in two or three years we shall have to stop all borrowing, I should like to know how far this railway will be carried in that time.

Sir R. STOUT.—Up to the Bay of Islands.

Mr. HOBBS.—Not for the next fifteen years, at the rate now proposed. I wish the Government would say whether they will consent to this line being carried out by a syndicate. I have a telegram in my pocket stating that a syndicate is ready to be established in Auckland to carry out the work, if the Government will not do it. I am not acting as an agent in this matter, or going to receive any commission, and am only doing what I think is good for my district. I would much rather the Government undertook the work, and if they would engage to do it in four or five years I should

be satisfied. There should be some finality to their proposals, and they should complete all existing lines before they begin new ones. That is the reason why I voted against the Westport-Inangahua Railway. If the Government had taken up a proper position and said that they wanted these railways carried out because they were good and paying lines, they might have expected some of us, at all events, to follow them. The Premier may laugh; but I would point out that directly it was stated that the Fortrose-Edendale Railway was a good and paying line I followed him into the lobby in favour of it. I was prepared to vote for any lines which the Government would say would be remunerative lines; and I want members who follow the Government faithfully, I might say servilely, to remember that if any of these lines were likely to be productive I should have supported them if they could have proved it. I wish to say, further, that, if the Government had brought down an allocation at all fair and reasonable to put into this schedule as a means of making the loan up to the amount originally intended to be borrowed, I would have supported them. The Government and their supporters have therefore no reason to turn round and say that this is the fault of the Opposition. Then, I wish to say, in the strongest terms possible, that I am astounded that the Treasurer should have said here, after the resolution of the Government was defeated, that it would cause a lamentable amount of misery or destitution by throwing a number of men out of work.

Sir R. STOUT.—He did not say that.

Mr. HOBBS.—He said something of that sort. I know he used the word "lamentable," because I took a note of it. I hope that the Treasurer will reiterate that during the recess, for I am sure that the public will laugh the thing to scorn. It is merely an assertion, and the veriest child can understand that there is nothing in it at all. If one or two lines are struck out of the schedule, that does not affect the rest of the works. There is any amount of money to be expended on the other works, and no one with common-sense would seriously make the statement that, because certain lines are struck out of the schedule, for which money will not then be required, therefore there is going to be distress. The House and the country will ridicule the thing; and I feel sure that in his calmer moments the Treasurer will regret having made such a statement. If the Government would only carry out the works that are scheduled, and for which the money is voted, and not delay expenditure, we would not complain. I will not detain the House longer. The Premier keeps calling "Question," and the hour certainly is late; but I thought it my duty to make these few remarks, and show the position that I take up.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—This is the first time that the Government have proposed to "ear-mark" loans, and I understood from the speech of the Treasurer that the system of "ear-marking" was something like the process employed in regard to sheep; but it seems in this case to be applied to wild beasts or lions. However, I think that we have succeeded in "ear-marking" the money so that it shall not go in a certain direction. I was sorry to hear the remarks made by the honourable member for Nelson. He seems to think that because his district has none of the money he would be justified in voting against the loan altogether. Why, what do we come here for? I thought we all came here for the good of the colony. I know this: that, though the district I represent gets nothing—certainly, I admit that we have got our railway, but if the district got nothing I should vote for the loan all the same, because I recognize that the loan is needed in the interests of the colony as a whole. If honourable members all came here with the ideas which the honourable member for Nelson has expressed, how could the colony get on? Honourable members like him would see the colony ruined because they did not get something for their own districts. That is a policy that I am sorry to hear expounded in this House. There was something said about a compact having been entered into to throw out certain lines. I have only to say this: that I know nothing about it—that I have not been addressed by any member of the House on the subject; but I told the honourable member for Invercargill that I would support him in his desire to have the money allocated. There is one thing that we have overlooked in discussing this matter, and that is that for years the North Island has been hampered by the Native difficulty, of which the South has known nothing. The whole of the Native lands are now locked up by an Act passed this session. Members from the South voted for that, and they have put the North in this position: that it cannot get hold of the Native lands except through the agency of the Government, for, although some Natives may sell their land through the Land Boards, I believe that it will not be a success, and that the only way of dealing with the Natives will be for the Government to buy their land. I feel convinced of that; and I also feel convinced of this: that it is good policy to buy the land from the Natives, if it can be got at a reasonable price. The probability is that within the next few years three or four million acres of that land might be bought very reasonably, but we have made no adequate provision for the purchase of that land. Now, I think that we ought to do so. This is really a colonial question in the fullest sense of the term, for if the interior of the North Island could be opened up it would be a grand thing for the whole of the colony; and I say that we ought to appropriate a large sum for the purchase of these lands, and I am very sorry to see that more provision is not made for that in connection with this Loan Bill. Then, there is another point. I think that we should not omit, this session, to make provision for additions and improvements to the lunatic asylums. The unfortunate inmates of those institutions are treated more like beasts than human beings, and, as a civilized people, it is our duty to make pro-

vision to meet such demands as are made upon us; and I should like to know whether the Government can do that unless they obtain money out of this loan for the purpose. It would be a good deal better to apply some of this money to that purpose than to building railways which cannot pay for years. I am not going into all the arguments which have been advanced about the effect of striking off this £175,000; but we have had a distinct assurance from the Premier that this loan was to last us for two years—that he hoped to have something in hand out of it in 1888; so that, if what he said was correct, the reduction in expenditure cannot amount to £100,000 a year, and it is clear, to my mind, that such a reduction as that will not cause any suffering. As to the allocation, I have to say this, very distinctly: that, while I should have liked to see some of the money applied to the purchase of Native lands, yet, if there had been brought down any fair and reasonable scheme for allocating this money, I would have voted for it. But I did object strongly to this money being handed over to the Government in the manner that they proposed. We cannot tell but what the idea was a revival of the East and West Coast Railway scheme. In fact, I say at once that I believe it was intended, if the East and West Coast Railway Company should not go on, to apply this money to making a start with that line. That is the idea I have, and I may as well mention it. We do not want to have that line commenced by a side-wind like that. There is another thing: the elections are coming on shortly, and it would have been very nice for the Government to have that sum in hand. We can easily imagine what use would be made of the money in the Middle Island. Under all the circumstances, I am convinced that the House has done right in refusing to give the Government this money unless they will schedule it. I should like to say a word or two regarding what the honourable member for Moeraki said about the honourable member for Waikouaiti—my brother—and the honourable member for Mount Ida. I am sorry the honourable gentleman made those statements when those honourable gentlemen were not here.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I shall repeat them on the third reading of the Bill.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—I am glad to hear it; and in that case it will not be necessary for me now to refer to the matter. They will be here then to defend themselves, and, as I shall have an opportunity of speaking on the third reading, I shall not go into the general question any further to-night, except to say this: that I have no doubt that the Government will make the same use of the decision of the House in this matter as they made of the resolution of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. They accepted that resolution, and afterwards said it was forced upon them. This cutting-out of the £175,000 is entirely their own fault, because if they had scheduled it in a proper way they would have been granted the money. The Government are responsible for what has taken place, and it will be useless for them to try and put the blame on to the Opposition.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I do not intend to prolong the debate by replying. I had intended to say something in reference to the remarks of the honourable member for Egmont, but I shall take another opportunity of doing so.

Amendments agreed to.

The House adjourned at fifteen minutes past two o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Monday, 2nd August, 1886.

First Readings—Second Readings—Settled Land Bill—Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill—Civil Service Reform Bill—Harbours Bill—City of Christchurch Municipal Offices Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Maori Suits Bill, Deceased Persons' Estates Duties Bill, Public Trust Office Bill.

SECOND READINGS.

Administration Act Extension Bill, Port Chalmers Fire-Brigade Site Bill, Auckland Harbour Board Loan Bill, Oamaru Harbour Board Loan Bill.

SETTLED LAND BILL.

On the question, That the Hon. the Speaker leave the chair in order that the Council may go into Committee on the Settled Land Bill,

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON said,—Before that question is put I should like to say a few words. I was not present at the close of the debate on the second reading, but I understand that the honourable gentleman in charge of this Bill—the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker—in his reply to the observations that had been made by various honourable members with regard to this Bill, criticised a good many of the speeches very severely, and wanted to know, amongst other things, so I understand, whether those who objected to this Bill were prepared to make any amendments in it. I, for one, do not profess to criticise this Bill in opposition to the honourable gentleman; but I cannot help thinking it a very unfortunate thing—although, I have no doubt, it is according to the rules and practice of Parliament—that a Bill of such importance as this should be in the position in which we find it at the present time. I would much rather have seen it introduced by the honourable gentleman whose name stands at the head of it—the representative of the Government. We should then have the honourable gentleman who now has charge of it in opposition, as it were, and the Council would have felt more security in the passing of a measure which, in my opinion, is second to none in importance of any that have come before the Council this session. I would ask if there is any honourable member in this Coun-

cil who is really able to stand up in his place and say that he understands this Bill. Some honourable members may deliver themselves of a great many remarks, and lead the Council to suppose they understand it; but I doubt very much if any honourable member really understands this Bill, or what the effect of it will be. I am not quite certain that the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill understands it, great as his legal abilities undoubtedly are. He has told us that this Bill is a copy of an English Act. Surely the honourable gentleman will not tell us that this is so. It is not a copy; it is only a part of it, and that in a much-mutilated form. He has told us that the Bill has been brought down here for a special purpose. I agree with that, and if that intention will be fulfilled we shall be satisfied. But I doubt that very much indeed. We are told that the Bill is brought down as a means of relief to tenants for life who are suffering in a pecuniary sense from the position of their property at the present time. It is urged that it is desirable they should have power to sell such property and invest the money to much greater advantage. So far, that is all very well in its way; but we do not get all that good without some little injury to others. It may be that the tenant for life may have a successor in the shape of an infant, and the testator might think he was providing a means of livelihood for some young person who was not likely to be able to make his way in the world in the future. Now, it is true that by giving this relief to tenants for life, by allowing them to sell property that may be bringing in £100 a year for a sum of money which if put out to interest would bring in a considerably greater income, you benefit the tenant for life; but still the successor would be placed eventually at a disadvantage. The testator might be reaping the benefit that the successor was intended to reap. The honourable gentleman tells us that in this Bill there is no power to mortgage; but if the honourable gentleman looks the Bill over carefully he will find that there is power to mortgage. I think, moreover, it would have been desirable to have left in the Bill a number of clauses which have been cut out. Take the case of a give-and-take fence to divide the boundaries of properties. It is absolutely necessary sometimes, not only in order to get a line where a fence may be erected at a moderate cost, but also to make a secure fence, to give and take land. There might be a great deal of difference in the values of the land: if so, a mortgage would be required to arrange that. In the 2nd clause it might have been better to have stuck to the definitions of the English Act. In the 6th clause it will be seen clearly that there is power to mortgage. Here are the words—"mortgage and charge," and so on. Then, again, there is another thing. In the case of sale, the tenant for life becomes a trustee. The mode of security is entirely changed. The testator sets forth in the will, for instance, how the capital arising from the sales is to be invested; but this Bill itself sets forth how the money is to be invested. This Bill, I suppose, has been carefully and fully discussed. It is now getting very late in the session, and I think it would have been a great deal better, seeing the late stage of the session, if the Bill had been laid aside for the present in order to give people an opportunity of understanding it. A good many people may imagine that they already understand it; but I am not unwilling to confess that I do not; and in Committee I shall not lend my voice to say whether any amendments shall be made or not. That is beyond my power; it requires a legal mind. Under any circumstances, however, I hope, if the Bill passes through Committee, the honourable gentleman in charge of it will give one clear day between the committal and the third reading, in order that members may have an opportunity of consulting their legal advisers on the subject. It is necessary we should make ourselves acquainted with it. I do not suppose we have a greater legal authority in the country than the honourable gentleman in charge of this Bill. At the same time, the Council ought not to be guided simply by one of its members; and I wish to impress on honourable members that we ought not to give our voices on this Bill until we can perfectly understand it.

The Hon. Mr. BRANDON.—The honourable gentleman need be under no feeling of alarm in regard to this Bill. It is a Bill carrying out principles which have been acknowledged in England. Of course, after the Bill has gone through Committee, there is nothing unreasonable, I think, in allowing a clear day to elapse before the third reading takes place. I have gone carefully through the Bill, and I have compared it with the English Act, and I see no reason for being afraid in regard to it. When I heard the speech of the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker I must say I was rather afraid of it myself; but, after going carefully through the Bill, I think it is one that the Council need not fear to pass.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON. — Does the honourable gentleman quite understand it himself?

The Hon. Mr. BRANDON.—Yes, quite. I did not at first, or on the introduction of the Bill by Sir Frederick Whitaker. But I have compared it with the English Act, as I have already said; and I do not see that it gives any powers that would make it undesirable to pass.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER. — I understand my honourable friend Mr. Robinson is of opinion that if I had not charge of this Bill I should have been opposed to it. I am not, however, in the habit of doing inconsistent things, and——

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—I do not want the honourable gentleman to misunderstand me. I did not mean that the honourable gentleman would have been in opposition to the principle of the Bill, but that, if he had not charge of it, he would have been sure to see that it should pass in such words as that no mistake would ensue.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—This is a copy of a Bill which was introduced in the

other House three years ago by the Government of which I was Attorney-General. The matter has been under consideration of the Legislature for the last five years. The Bill has been on the Order Paper now for the last six weeks, and the Bill, as printed, has been in the hands of honourable members for ten days or a fortnight. Therefore it is quite hopeless, if honourable gentlemen fail to understand the Bill now, to expect them to understand it by allowing a clear day before the third reading. My honourable friend seems to have been in a great terror about this Bill. I put the committal off, specially at his request, from Thursday last till to-day, in order that he should be present when it went through Committee. In reply to my honourable friend I may say I am satisfied the Bill is in the right direction, and that it will work good. With regard to any amendment, if I had had the original drawing of the Bill I might have endeavoured to shorten some of the clauses; but, the Act from which these are copied having been at work in England for four years, I should not venture to take upon myself the responsibility of making any serious alteration. It is desirable especially on a Bill of this description that we should have the benefit of the decisions of English Courts from time to time, and therefore I think the Bill had better pass in the form in which it is at present. I should be sorry to see any important alteration made in Committee, because the Bill has been so well considered and been in operation at Home; and, on the whole, I think it is adapted to the circumstances of the colony. In the original Bill there were leasing clauses, and other clauses which are not applicable to us; and the Act of 1865 is still in force, and if leases are required they can be made under that.

Motion to go into Committee on the Bill agreed to.

GOVERNMENT LOANS TO LOCAL BODIES BILL.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I have received the following message from the House of Representatives:—

"MR. SPEAKER,—The House of Representatives have appointed a Committee to inspect the Journals of the Legislative Council with relation to any proceedings upon the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill, and to make a report thereof to the House; and they request the Legislative Council to appoint a time and place for such inspection."

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I beg to move, That this Council assents to the inspection of the Journals of the Council by the Committee of the House of Representatives with relation to any proceedings in connection with the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill, and appoints to-morrow, at twelve o'clock noon, and the Clerk's room, Legislative Council, as the time and place for such inspection; and that a message be transmitted to the House of Representatives accordingly.

Motion agreed to.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS moved the substitution for clause 9 of the following new clause: "All appointments to the Civil Service shall be made by selection in rotation from amongst the permanent residents within the several electoral districts of the colony, each such electoral district being selected by lot by the Colonial Secretary as the one from which candidates shall be first selected, and so on in turn, in such manner that no candidates from any one electoral district shall be invited a second time until candidates have been invited from all other such districts."

The Hon. Dr. GRACE moved, That all the words after "be," in the first line, be omitted, with a view of inserting the following: "by competitive examinations, which shall be held periodically in the chief centres of population; and from the most successful competitors, in their order of merit, shall be selected candidates to fill all vacant cadetships in the Civil Service."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the proposed new clause."

AYES, 10.

Bathgate	Reynolds	Swanson
Buckley	Shephard	Taiaroa
Peacock	Shrimski	Wilson.
Reeves		

NOES, 22.

Barnicoat	Johnson, G. R.	Pollen
Bonar	Kenny	Stevens
Brett	Mantell	Walker
Campbell	Martin	Whitaker
Dignan	Menzies	Wigley
Fraser	Miller	Williams
Grace	Peter	Williamson.
Holmes		

Majority against, 12.

Amendment agreed to.

Bill reported, with amendments.

HARBOURS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS moved, That the amendments made by the House of Representatives in the Harbours Bill be agreed to. He said the House had altered the 16th clause by inserting the words "or from carrying Her Majesty's mails, or from acting as a ferry-boat." The Bill as passed by the Council provided that the Boards' tug-boats should not be allowed to work for hire; but in open roadsteads, such as Westport, Hokitika, and Greymouth, they might be allowed to carry passengers from the ship to the port. Clauses 22, 23, and 24 were new clauses. According to the present Harbours Act any one bringing an action against a Harbour Board and not substantiating his case was liable to pay triple costs. These costs did not go into the Board's treasury, but into the pockets of the solicitors, which by plaintiffs had been found to be a great hardship. Another amendment provided that the maximum rate of port charges to be collected should not exceed 2s. per ton for

the half-year, which, to his mind, seemed ample. Then, by another amendment, goods consigned to the Government were not to be treated as ordinary goods. Clauses 26, 27, 28, and 29 were all new clauses. These provided that the sum of £1,500 standing at the credit of the Moeraki Harbour Board should be handed over to trustees, to be expended in the erection of baths in the district.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS asked the Government to be good enough to have the amendments printed, for the information of the Council, and that time should be given for their consideration. The changes seemed to him to be of a more or less important character. Certainly the amendment specially mentioned by the honourable gentleman in regard to the Moeraki Harbour Board might fairly be a subject for consideration. He was not sure that the proposed expenditure in erection of baths would be at all a judicious one. It seemed to him it would be better to hand the money over to the County Council, or do something else with it.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR trusted that the amendments made by the House of Representatives would receive careful consideration at the hands of the Council. They were very much more important in their character than might at first appear. They altered in many respects the intention of the Bill as originally introduced. He was surprised at the honourable gentleman saying that he agreed with the amendments. He dissented entirely from the alteration that had been made. In clause 16 they would find that the amendment that had been made would have the effect of causing the Harbour Board tugs to come into conflict with private enterprise; and another amendment allowed a rate of 4s. per ton per annum to be charged, notwithstanding that in the schedule of the original Act the rate mentioned was not exceeding 6d. per ton per half-year. This was a very serious alteration, and should not be allowed by the Council. He was of opinion that every effort should be made by the Harbour Boards to keep the ports as free from taxation as possible. Very good reason should be shown why such a thing should be tolerated by the Council. Nor could he understand why thousands and thousands of tons of goods should be allowed to be landed free at the wharves simply because they were consigned to the Government. This matter had been before them for a long time, and he saw no reason why such goods should be admitted free. As to the matter of the baths, he did not know much about it.

The Hon. Captain FRASER did know something about the baths, and thought that surely his honourable friend Mr. Reynolds could not be in earnest in proposing that baths should be erected at Moeraki. There were only two houses and one publichouse in the vicinity, and there were no people there. The only people who were there were Maoris, and for these he claimed the money, for they were the only Maoris in the Middle Island who had no school, and therefore their children were untaught. When he was there there were about thirty or forty boys and girls, some of them being almost adults, and not one of them could read or write. The proposal to put up the baths was a ridiculous one, and he hoped the Government were not in earnest in making it.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI could not help saying that he was surprised at the honourable gentleman who last spoke. Surely he did not know the district, or he had not been there for a long time. There was no publichouse there, but a large number of people from Canterbury and other places were in the habit of resorting to Moeraki during the summer season. The only want of the district at the present time was the erection of baths, and he thought it would be a great benefit if baths were put up. He knew several families who usually visited this place in the season for the benefit of the sea air. There was no other similar place in Otago, and he did not think the money could be spent to greater advantage than by devoting it to the purpose indicated.

Debate adjourned.

CITY OF CHRISTCHURCH MUNICIPAL OFFICES BILL.

On the question, That the City of Christchurch Municipal Offices Bill be read a third time,

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES said there was one point which it would be desirable to have put into a proper form before the Bill was read a third time and passed. He did not happen to be present at the time of the second reading or of the committal of the Bill; consequently he did not hear what occurred then: but he was led to believe that no debate took place on the second reading, and, as the question he referred to had not been raised in Committee, he thought something should be said about it before the Bill went any further. The Council not long ago passed a Bill called the Municipal Corporations Bill, which authorized Corporations in various parts of the colony to borrow money after having received the consent of the ratepayers by taking a poll, the decision to be by a majority. This was a repetition of a principle that had been previously enacted, except that the proportion of majority at the poll was different. This, in fact, had been the rule for a number of years. In the Bill now before them it was proposed to authorize the Corporation of Christchurch to raise a loan without consulting the citizens. It might certainly be said that this did not take the ratepayers by surprise, inasmuch as the notice necessary to be given with reference to the intention to proceed with this Bill as a local Bill had been given. But he thought some explanation was necessary, and he hoped the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill would give the Council some explanation of the reasons that had led the Corporation to take this unusual course. The machinery provided in the Municipal Corporations Bill would perhaps be too cumbrous to bring into operation for so small a sum; but, before they assented to a departure from a principle which they had

deemed so salutary that they had considered it expedient to re-enact it, they should be placed in possession of some reasons and explanation by the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS thought he could give the information that the honourable gentleman desired. The position was this: The case was not the same as one where a poll of the ratepayers was required, because if his honourable friend would look at the clause referring to the point he would see that the power to repay was based on the general rate, and not on the special rate, which would require the authority of the ratepayers. This imposed no additional rating-power on the locality, nor did it authorize any additional burden to be placed on the local body or the ratepayers. As he understood the case, it was simply this: The Borough Council, unfortunately, forgot to consult their lawyer before they engaged in a contract to put up new buildings to cost £6,000, which were very much required. The building was begun, and afterwards they consulted their lawyer, and found out that they had not the power to do this without special authorization to let the contract and to anticipate their general rate. They did not require a special rate at all, as he had already observed, and it was believed that the general rate would be quite sufficient to enable them to pay off this loan without any further increase. Of course it was unfortunate that the Borough Council did not take a legal opinion in the first instance. Had they done so, no legislation would have been necessary at all. He supposed honourable members were aware of the usual results of acting without the advice of a lawyer: such results were proverbial. The ratepayers of Christchurch had no possible objection to this Bill: in point of fact, he had no doubt that it would meet with their general acquiescence.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS dissented altogether from what the Hon. Mr. Stevens had said. A poll was required for ordinary loans, according to the Municipal Corporations Act of 1876.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I pointed out the distinction there was between the two cases.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said even for ordinary loans it was necessary to have a poll. He was not, however, going to take any objection to the Bill, because he believed it was necessary, owing to a mistake that had been made by the Christchurch Corporation. But this was a very dangerous sort of thing to do, because they might have other bodies making wilful mistakes, and coming there to obtain legislative sanction for them. On a previous occasion a Bill was introduced for the City of Auckland quite contrary to the terms of the Municipal Corporations Act, and it was passed by the Council without any opposition, except on the part of one or two. But he held that, if they had a Municipal Corporations Act to govern the whole of the colony, there should be no deviation from that at all, except in very special cases, one of which, he admitted, the present was.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK concurred that this was a special case. It belonged exactly to the class of cases to which the honourable gentleman had referred. He quite agreed with all that the Hon. Mr. Stevens had said on this subject. A mistake had been made by the Corporation of Christchurch, which was quite unintentional. The buildings in question were erected by general consent, the former ones having been a disgrace to the city.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT, as Chairman of the Local Bills Committee B, to which this Bill was referred, and which had recommended that the Bill should be allowed to proceed, said the Committee were induced to take this course not only for the reasons assigned by the Hon. Mr. Stevens, but because the resolution to authorize the step taken was required to be adopted at a special meeting, and to be afterwards confirmed at a special meeting, the notice of which was to be advertised for four weeks beforehand. Seeing that the sum was a small one, and that there had undoubtedly been a mistake on the part of the Christchurch City Council, these were additional reasons for the Committee recommending that the Bill should be allowed to proceed.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD would like to add to what had already been said that he, being in charge of the Bill, was exceedingly indebted to the Hon. Mr. Stevens for the clear explanation he had given. The only effect of not passing this Bill would be that the money expended in this way would have to be paid out of the ordinary revenues in one year. He believed the rates of the Corporation were £20,000 a year; consequently they were ample for this purpose: but if the money were paid in one year it would be a serious inroad on their income, and interfere with their power to carry on improvements and keep the city in order. He would like to add that it would have been more gratifying to him to have had this debate take place on the second reading, but the Council would bear in mind that there was no opportunity for it, nor even on the motion to go into Committee.

Bill read the third time.

The Council adjourned at twenty minutes to ten o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Monday, 2nd August, 1886.

W. Millar—Native Land Administration Bill—Native Land Court Bill—Deeds and Instruments Registration Bill—Public Trust Office Bill—New Zealand Loan Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

W. MILLAR.

On the motion of Mr. ROSS, it was ordered, That the report on the petition of William Millar, of Dunedin, be referred back to the Public Petitions Committee, in order that fur-

ther evidence—which is immediately available—may be taken in reference to the subject-matter of the said petition.

NATIVE LAND ADMINISTRATION BILL.

Mr. BALLANCE.—In calling attention to the amendments made in another place in the Native Land Administration Bill I will offer the House some explanation upon the amendments that are of a vital character. There are a number which are purely verbal, and which do not affect either the principle or the details of the Bill, except to render it more workable, the most of them having been inserted at the instance of the draftsman in the Select Committee of the Legislative Council, where they were adopted. I do not intend to go over all the amendments. It will be obvious to honourable members that they are simply to make the Bill more workable and its provisions more clear. The first amendment to which I will draw attention is that which refers to the signatures of witnesses, and will be found in clause 8. There is an addition made to the clause in these words: "or of any class of persons to be named in the rules." People who could attest signatures were Justices of the Peace, licensed interpreters, or Postmasters: now any persons who may be defined by the regulations may do so. The object of the clause is to give greater facilities for the signing of these papers in districts where there may be no Postmaster, no Justice of the Peace, or licensed interpreter. I think that that addition to the clause is entirely unobjectionable, and will afford greater facilities for the action of Committees. Then, the next amendment to which I would call the attention of the House is in clause 17; and I may say that the amendment is that assent, having once been given to a sale or lease by the Committee, cannot be revoked. I may say the Bill was intended to effect the same object; but it is put clearly here that if the consent to sell or lease be once given it shall not be revoked.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Is that understood to be consent in writing?

Mr. BALLANCE.—Yes; so that the Committee, having once consented to sale or lease, cannot go back—action must take place. The next amendment to which I would direct the attention of the House is in clause 21. Here a strange error crept into the Bill. This provision is to allow the Natives to purchase land from Natives. But in the punitive clause which prohibits sale this provision was excepted, and the effect would have been not only to allow Natives to purchase from Natives, but to allow Natives who had purchased from Natives to sell to Europeans. It was purely an error. Now I come to an important provision of the Bill, in clause 25. This enables a person who has obtained a share in a lease or a share in a sale to go on acquiring shares up to the 1st July next. Under the Act as it stood he could only purchase shares up to the 1st January. The question, of course, arises whether there should be this extension of time. I may explain that the purchase of shares in land that has passed the Land Court is not illegal: that is to say, the only way a European can obtain a title to such land would be by purchasing from the Natives share by share. That process was not illegal, but it did not give a valid title till the last share was purchased; and we recognize the fact that a man has some claim and ought to be allowed grace. I think the provision is not at all unfair, and I am prepared to accept it. I now come to the next important amendment, which is new, in clause 27:—

"Where a person has acquired from owners a valid lease for a term one-third of which shall have expired on the first day of July, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, and such person is in actual beneficial occupation of the land demised, it shall be lawful for him to obtain a renewal of his lease for the whole or part of the land the subject thereof for a further term not exceeding fourteen years, upon such terms as may be agreed on between the owners and the lessee, and be approved by the Commissioner."

It will be remembered that in the debate which took place in the House the question was raised as to the improvements which had been effected in a very large number of instances by lessees of Native lands, with the expectation that at the end of the term there would be a renewal. It was maintained that the effect of the Bill would be to sweep away improvements made on reasonable expectation that the Natives, at the end of the term, would keep the promise made at the beginning of the lease, that there should be a renewal for another term. There was another way of meeting this, by allowing valuation for improvements; but it seemed probable that if this were adopted a lessee would virtually be in the position of obtaining his own terms, because he would, in the first instance, put on improvements which would raise the valuation to a very high figure, and he would make them in such a way as to prevent the land being obtained by any other person. There seemed, therefore, to be a grave objection to adopting that course, and the difficulty has been met in this way: Where one-third of a term has expired there may be a renewal at the end for half the original term, not in any case to exceed fourteen years. Looking at all the circumstances, I do not think that is a clause that we could reasonably object to, and therefore I propose that the amendment be agreed to. In clause 30 there is an amendment which is intended to enlarge the powers of the Commissioner in the way of granting titles. It enables the Commissioner to convey a more complete title than could be given under the provisions of the clause as it originally stood to any purchaser of Native land under the Act. It simply carries out the original intention of the clause, but in a legal point of view makes the power of the Commissioner more complete. There is another amendment, in clause 46, and it seems rather a curious one. It says, "'The Native Lands Frauds Prevention Act, 1881,' shall be read as if the

ast five words of section two were erased herefrom; and the said Act shall not apply o any alienation under this Act." The osition is this: The Native Land Act of 1882 epealed this portion, and, as the Native Land ct is repealed by the Native Land Court Bill, we have to re-enact the provision in this Bill; and it means that the Frauds Commissioner's powers shall extend, not only to Native and that has passed through the Court, but to ll Native land. It simply carries out the intention of the Act of 1882. In the interpretation clause the term "land" has been rather nlarged in its scope. It was at first provided hat it should apply to all land that had not gone through the Court, and to all land that had gone through the Court. But I am informed that there was land held by Natives individually, before the Land Court was established; and it was necessary to alter the interpretation clause in view of that fact. Most of the amendments are of a verbal character, and I have gone through all the amendments that appear to be important. The principle of the Bill remains precisely as when it passed through this House. The clauses put in are remedial, and make concessions to individuals who might otherwise have had to suffer considerable hardship if the Bill stood exactly as it was. I move, That the amendments made by the Legislative Council be agreed to.

Mr. BRYCE.—The Native Minister, in the first place, referred to an addition made to clause 8, and was pleased to express his entire approval of that alteration. I do not myself agree in that approval. It is a matter that was considerably discussed in the Native Affairs Committee, and the fear that appeared to be in the minds of members of that Committee was this: that in the election of Committees—who will have very great power indeed under this Bill—which is done by nomination-papers signed by the owners, abuses might arise; and great anxiety was expressed in the Committee that the signatures to those nomination-papers should be duly and properly attested. Now, the clause as it passed confined the attesting class to Justices of the Peace, licensed interpreters, and Postmasters. There was no objection in the Committee to extend that to other classes of highly-responsible persons—Judges and others; but there was a very great objection to lower, as it were, the class of persons who could attest those signatures. I need not waste time in pointing out the manner in which abuses might arise, and the object of those abuses; but I would point out to the House that this alteration will enable the Government to extend the classes who can attest these signatures to an indefinite extent, and so permit abuses to arise. I object to that, and cannot at all understand how it is the Native Minister expresses his entire approval of it. The honourable member next referred to clause 17, to which I have no objection to offer: it merely puts in clearer terms what had already been determined upon in the matter by the Native Affairs Committee of this House, and by this House. With respect to clause 25, I may say that the amendment made in it is rather a serious matter; and, although I am not wholly opposed to the alterations made, yet no doubt those alterations are of a serious character, and I am rather surprised that the Native Minister has agreed to them. I readily admit, with him, that they do not affect the principle of the Bill; but I fear they will work out somewhat unfortunately in the way of creating dissatisfaction. As to the amendments extending the power of purchase in transactions which are not complete, the Native Minister has truly said that in the case of a purchaser who has not completed his purchase the transaction is not illegal. That is true; but, at the same time, it is not legal—that is to say, the transaction is not recognized by any law; and, if incomplete-purchase transactions are recognized now, it will be for the first time. But I point out this: that, if any of these transactions are allowed to go on after the passing of this Act, it is very likely indeed to create dissatisfaction in the minds of the Maoris, because the completion of transactions which are now incomplete will be confined to those people who have already acquired an interest, and therefore they will go on endeavouring to complete their transactions absolutely without competition, and thus place the owners of the land at a much greater disadvantage than they are at at the present moment. Therefore it is that I feel that there is considerable objection to this amendment; and therefore it is, also, that I am more than surprised that the Native Minister has agreed to accept the amendment, for I should have thought, although I feel it to be objectionable, that the honourable gentleman's objections would have been very much stronger than mine. As to the amendment in clause 37, enabling persons holding a lease to obtain a renewal for fourteen years, the honourable gentleman accepts that also, and no doubt the reasons he has given have cogency in them; but, at the same time, there is still that objection that there will be no possibility of competition with the lessee, and the owners of the land are, in that way, placed at a decided disadvantage. The honourable gentleman urged no strong objection, and I am surprised that he did not object more strongly than I myself am prepared to do; but in this clause 37 there is introduced something new, to which I think very serious objection does exist. The renewed lease is not only to be granted by the Native owners, but is to be approved by the Commissioners. Now, the Commissioner is a servant of the Government, holding office during pleasure. We all know that in former years in this House the most serious charges, mostly without foundation, were made against the Government of the day—no matter what Government it was—as to unfairness and favouritism in Native-land dealings. Now, by this clause there will be an opportunity given for those charges to be again made, because the Government, through a Commissioner, is given an enormous power of approval or dis-

—a power under which they may ruin a man or make his fortune. I feel certain that under this clause the charges that were made in former times will be repeated, and with an appearance of much greater force. It is also to be observed that in clause 30 an amendment has been made to which the same objection applies, to my mind, with still greater force. The words added in that clause are these:—

". . . for the purpose of completing the title or right of purchasers, lessees, and contracts under any such writings the Commissioner shall be deemed to have been, at the time of such sealing and signing, the owner in fee-simple of the land the subject of such writing."

Now, in that case also, although there is some slight ambiguity of expression, it does appear that the Commissioner is to have a power which may confer on the Government a power of showing favour to those persons it is desired to show favour to. I shall make no further objection, but I think it right to say why, in these matters, I do not quite agree in the view taken by the Native Minister.

Mr. BEETHAM.—I must express my approbation of the lucid explanation of the amendments given by the Native Minister. Those amendments—at least so far as I can understand them—are all decided improvements in the Bill. I do not quite follow the honourable member for Waitotara in his saying there would be no competition for a renewal of a lease. I think there must be competition, as on the expiration of the term of a lease the Natives are not likely to re-lease to the original lessee unless there was some understanding previously arrived at: if there were, of course we can understand that there would be no competition. Otherwise, I do not see why there should be an absence of competition. As to the Commissioner approving of the lease, when I first saw that, I did not like the provision; but, on reflection, I take it that, as now no transaction can take place without the approval of the Trust Commissioner, so this will be merely a change from one officer to another, to give approval. Both under the present law and under this amendment the provision is to see that some officer shall see that any transaction is conducted in a proper and *bonâ fide* manner. That, I think, was the intention of the Native Minister, and that I accept. Though not agreeing with the general provisions of the Bill, I gladly support the amendments, and I have to thank the other branch of the Legislature for making them, and the Native Minister for so lucidly explaining them.

Mr. HOBBS.—I do not consider the alteration made in clause 8 is any improvement—that is, giving the Government power to make rules as to who may attest documents under this Bill. I consider it gives the Minister power to frame a law himself pretty much as he pleases. The 43rd clause also gives the Minister, through the Governor, power to make regulations. This is a dangerous power to give to any Minister, and it would almost be better to have no Act at all. This House only should decide in all these matters, and the Minister should not be given a discretionary power, which is certain to be abused very much. I think, as with the Land Act, this proposal gives a power which the House never intended to give. If the Government is given power to make regulations they should not operate until they had received the sanction of this House. I agree with the Native Minister that the alterations made by the Council in the Bill do not alter its principle—I think they are improvements: but, at the same time, I think the whole principle of the Bill is vicious; and it is altogether unfair to the Natives. Clause 27 is utterly indefensible, and I hold that after the Natives have been given a title to their land they should be allowed to sell or lease it to whom they please. Of course we all understand to whom the alteration as to giving extended leases applies. I think the Natives should have full power to do as they think proper with their property. I do not approve of the Bill, and I know that the day is not far distant when the Natives throughout the length and breadth of the land will ask that it shall be repealed: of that I am confident.

Mr. SMITH.—I should like the Native Minister to state distinctly if the principle of the Bill has been altered by the amendments which have been made. I ask because throughout the Hawke's Bay District there is a report current that the amendments entirely destroy the best principle of the Bill. In the *Hawke's Bay Herald* of the 26th July there is an article to this effect: that the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Native Land Administration Bill have, to a great extent, knocked the bottom out of the measure and removed the objections made by the member for Napier, and will have the effect of hanging up the Bill in Hawke's Bay for twelve months. I should not for a moment think of allowing the House to agree, without a division, to amendments which I thought would have the effect of hanging up the Bill for twelve months. I should like the Native Minister to state explicitly if these amendments affect the principle of the Bill, and that it will not allow the purchase of Native land to go on in the same way as it has gone on in the past, after the Bill has come into operation. I know these amendments have, to a great extent, been brought forward by the honourable member for the East Coast, whose district is largely interested. He has taken a great deal of trouble to get alterations made, in the interest of the district he represents; and I am sure he does not wish it to be said—and I should not like the opponents of the Bill to be able to say—that they had carried amendments which had virtually killed the measure, so far as its principles are concerned. I therefore hope the Native Minister will, when replying, say if the principles of the Bill are at all affected by the amendments made, and, if they are, I hope he will reconsider the matter, and not agree to the amendments.

Sir G. GREY.—I would ask the Native

Minister what is the meaning of the term "valid lease," in the 37th clause. Does it mean a lawful lease, such as the law allows to be taken?

Mr. BALLANCE.—My reading of it is that it means a legal lease. Members of the legal profession may put a different interpretation on it. I think that part of the Bill stands as it passed this House.

Sir G. GREY.—Will the honourable gentleman have some words put in to show that it does mean a legal lease?

Mr. MOSS. — I think what fell from the honourable member for Waipawa must satisfy every northern member, at all events — I do not suppose that it is possible to satisfy southern members on the subject—that it is very difficult in the same Bill to suit the interests of different provinces, such as Auckland and Hawke's Bay. There is no doubt that the honourable gentleman has in his mind particular circumstances which should be provided for: he argues from the particular to the general, and asks for a law which will seriously injure Auckland while suiting particular conditions that may exist in Hawke's Bay. I do not know anything of those particular conditions to which the honourable member refers, but it seems to me that this Parliament, in passing an Act to meet particular cases, has been careless of the interests of the Province of Auckland, which has hundreds of thousands of acres affected for every one that is affected in Hawke's Bay. Indeed, this Bill affects the Province of Auckland almost exclusively, if I may use that term in a broad sense. It is there that the Native land mostly exists, and, so far as I am aware, there are very few incomplete transactions in Native land, and such an Act was not required there at all. I believe that if the Native Minister had, instead of passing this Act, amended the regulations, if proper precautions had been taken to see that the Natives knew what they were signing, and that the deeds were written in Maori as well as in English, if proper provision had been made for witnessing the signatures of Natives, and if we had put an end to the wretched practice of Justices of the Peace being carried about to do the thing by contract or by the job—I say if we had made regulations to rectify these things there would have been no need of any new Act at all. We should, by that means, have struck at the root of the practices which have caused the evil in the past in the Province of Auckland, at any rate. All that was wanted was not a change in the law, but a proper administration of the law. The only amendment that seems to me to be of any consequence is that which has been made in the 17th section, and sets forth that assent, once given, shall not be revoked—that is to say, that, whenever a Native assents to his land being brought under this Act, he has parted with all control over it for ever.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. MOSS. — Well, I take that to be the meaning of the amendment, notwithstanding my honourable friend's objection to my interpretation; and I shall be glad to be shown that I am wrong. What I fear is that the Natives will take advantage of this Act to lock up their land altogether, and I understand that they contemplate doing so. They will use this Act to get rid of the European purchaser, and then will only have to deal with the Government, whose efforts to get land they vainly think it will be easy to defeat. I am afraid that one result of the Bill will be to create a struggle in this sense between them and the Government, to stop settlement, to stop colonization, and to stop the settlement of Native land altogether for a time in the Auckland Province.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—With most of these amendments I agree, because they go somewhat in the direction of removing the objections that I previously took to the Bill. The amendment to section 17 removes a doubt which I pointed out existed. No doubt it was the intention that assent, once given, could not be withdrawn. That has been made clear; but under clause 20 Natives may sell to the Government whether the assent is final or not. I look upon the Bill, as it now comes before us, as an improvement; but the improvements do not alter my opinion as to the general undesirability of passing such a Bill. There is one rather peculiar thing about clause 21. It is an illustration, to my mind, of the old adage, "Too many cooks spoil the broth." It is there provided that Natives who have any interest in a block of land may sell to one another, so long as the purchasers are not Committeemen; but land that has been so sold can only be dealt with under clause 29, so that, if the Natives want to prevent the purchase of land, they have only to interchange with one another, and then the Government cannot buy it. I fancy that that clause requires a little amendment. Generally, the amendments go in the direction of my views; and I hope the measure will work. If it does not work well, if it has the effect of stopping settlement, then the sooner we repeal it the better.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—When this Bill was previously before the House I stated my objections to it in detail; and, though there have been considerable improvements made since, my objection to the principle of the Bill still exists. However, I am not going to detain the House upon it at this stage; but I wish to state my agreement with the opinion of the honourable member for Parnell that the effect of the Bill will be to seriously prevent the settlement of Native land which otherwise would be rapidly taken up. I can only express my regret at the Bill being passed.

Mr. HAKUENE. — I will not make many remarks about the present Bill. I will, however, refer to clause 27. I approve of that clause entirely. The reason I approve of that clause is that many Natives have appeared before the Native Affairs Committee and prayed the Committee to give effect to their petition asking that their leases might be renewed for a certain number of years. Some honourable members have said the Commissioner will be accused of fav-

and that charges will be brought against him; but I do not think that there need be any fear about that, because the opinion of the Maoris will have to be given in the first place. Of course, if the Commissioner takes advantage of the Maoris, it will be right that charges should be made against him; but, if he carries out the will of the Maoris, that will be a very good clause indeed. Some honourable members have stated that the power given to the Government is too great. I cannot reply to that objection at all. I cannot take objection to the Bill on that account, because if the whole power were given to the Natives this House would not pass it. That rests with the House. I heartily approve of what the honourable member for Franklin North said: "It will be well to give this Bill a trial and see what the effect will be." I said when the Bill was first brought before the House that I did not think that it would be a means of bringing great prosperity to the Natives; but I am perfectly willing to give it a trial. If it is found hereafter that there are objectionable clauses they can be repealed, and we can improve the Act. I also say that I do not think that this Bill will bring trouble upon the Natives. If the Bill fails in its object the fault will be that of the Native people, because it is provided that greater publicity shall be given to all transactions, whether the land is being leased or sold. In the present state of affairs the Maoris are too fond of hiding their transactions in land from their own children and relatives, so that they can draw the money for themselves. It is because the Maoris are fond of doing this that they will raise objections to this Bill. We know that land-purchases, as they have been carried on hitherto, have enabled single individuals to take the money and spend it themselves; and very often the land has actually been sold and all the money spent before the owners knew what had become of it. The reason why I support this Bill is that it will give the greatest publicity to all transactions in Native land.

Mr. ORMOND.—The amendments made by the Legislative Council do not, in my opinion, alter in any way the objections of members who, like myself, disagree with the principle of the Bill. I have the same objection now that I had when speaking on another occasion against this Bill and its principles. It is a Bill which will practically stop settlement in the North Island for a considerable time, and will eventually have to be repealed. The only way, I believe, in which this Bill will be used will be really in conferring pre-emptive right on the Government; and so, in that way, possibly, some advantage may be gained by the colony. I do not at all agree with the quotations which have been made from a newspaper to the effect that these amendments upset the principle of the Bill. All that the amendments do is to give concessions to individuals who have acquired certain rights—which rights were not recognized in the Bill as it passed this House. As now amended I think it gives reasonable concessions in that respect. I think the Native Minister has been wise in agreeing that those concessions should be allowed.

Mr. BRUCE.—I voted against this Bill, although I recognize in it an honest effort on the part of the Native Minister and this Government to deal with a very difficult question. But, from my point of view, I do not think the measure is calculated to promote the settlement of the Native lands in the North Island, for this reason: In the first place, it appears to me to be a measure which is incomprehensible to the Native mind; and, in the second place, I do not think the experience of those Natives who will bring their land under the operation of the Act will be at all calculated to induce others to do so.

Sir G. GREY.—I think that in the 27th clause the House is making a great mistake. The Native Minister told us that the amendments in this Bill had been, in part, framed for the advantage of individuals. I think that to legislate for individuals is a most dangerous proceeding; and when I find that the House is asked to enable, in fact, leases to be made for an additional fourteen years—for, perhaps, enormous properties—very likely we have no conception what we are doing. I think, therefore, that returns should be laid before us to show what these leases are, and what extent of land they involve. The Minister ought to have given us some intimation of what the real effect of our legislation would be; and I think it is a most unwise thing to try to lock up for fourteen years perhaps an immense extent of territory against the occupation of the inhabitants of New Zealand at large. I think this is legislating in the dark—to unduly and to an enormous extent favour certain individuals. Therefore, as far as I am concerned, it is on those grounds that I have a positive and strong objection to the Bill. I think the House would be acting wisely in asking for a return of what these leases are. We ought to know the extent of each lease, and be perfectly satisfied of the extent of injury we are inflicting on the colony; because it is certain that we are going to give some individuals a right which must injure the rest of the community for many years. I should like to know these particulars before I acquiesce in the proposed amendments.

Mr. BALLANCE.—In replying to the objections which have been made to the amendments in the Bill, it is not my intention to answer the speeches made by honourable members with regard to the merits of the Bill itself: that question has been sufficiently discussed in the various stages which the Bill has passed through, and it would be only repeating what has been said before. I will confine myself to the amendments which have been made in another place. With regard to the objection taken by the honourable member for Auckland East—that clause 28 gives a renewal of lease for a term not exceeding fourteen years, with the consent of the Native owners and the approval of the Commissioner—I think that is not an inequitable provision. I think the House will agree

Minister what is the meaning of the term "valid lease," in the 37th clause. Does it mean a lawful lease, such as the law allows to be taken?

Mr. BALLANCE.—My reading of it is that it means a legal lease. Members of the legal profession may put a different interpretation on it. I think that part of the Bill stands as it passed this House.

Sir G. GREY.—Will the honourable gentleman have some words put in to show that it does mean a legal lease?

Mr. MOSS. — I think what fell from the honourable member for Waipawa must satisfy every northern member, at all events — I do not suppose that it is possible to satisfy southern members on the subject—that it is very difficult in the same Bill to suit the interests of different provinces, such as Auckland and Hawke's Bay. There is no doubt that the honourable gentleman has in his mind particular circumstances which should be provided for: he argues from the particular to the general, and asks for a law which will seriously injure Auckland while suiting particular conditions that may exist in Hawke's Bay. I do not know anything of those particular conditions to which the honourable member refers, but it seems to me that this Parliament, in passing an Act to meet particular cases, has been careless of the interests of the Province of Auckland, which has hundreds of thousands of acres affected for every one that is affected in Hawke's Bay. Indeed, this Bill affects the Province of Auckland almost exclusively, if I may use that term in a broad sense. It is there that the Native land mostly exists, and, so far as I am aware, there are very few incomplete transactions in Native land, and such an Act was not required there at all. I believe that if the Native Minister had, instead of passing this Act, amended the regulations, if proper precautions had been taken to see that the Natives knew what they were signing, and that the deeds were written in Maori as well as in English, if proper provision had been made for witnessing the signatures of Natives, and if we had put an end to the wretched practice of Justices of the Peace being carried about to do the thing by contract or by the job—I say if we had made regulations to rectify these things there would have been no need of any new Act at all. We should, by that means, have struck at the root of the practices which have caused the evil in the past in the Province of Auckland, at any rate. All that was wanted was not a change in the law, but a proper administration of the law. The only amendment that seems to me to be of any consequence is that which has been made in the 17th section, and sets forth that assent, once given, shall not be revoked—that is to say, that, whenever a Native assents to his land being brought under this Act, he has parted with all control over it for ever.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. MOSS. — Well, I take that to be the meaning of the amendment, notwithstanding my honourable friend's objection to my interpretation; and I shall be glad to be shown that I am wrong. What I fear is that the Natives will take advantage of this Act to lock up their land altogether, and I understand that they contemplate doing so. They will use this Act to get rid of the European purchaser, and then will only have to deal with the Government, whose efforts to get land they vainly think it will be easy to defeat. I am afraid that one result of the Bill will be to create a struggle in this sense between them and the Government, to stop settlement, to stop colonization, and to stop the settlement of Native land altogether for a time in the Auckland Province.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—With most of these amendments I agree, because they go somewhat in the direction of removing the objections that I previously took to the Bill. The amendment to section 17 removes a doubt which I pointed out existed. No doubt it was the intention that assent, once given, could not be withdrawn. That has been made clear; but under clause 20 Natives may sell to the Government whether the assent is final or not. I look upon the Bill, as it now comes before us, as an improvement; but the improvements do not alter my opinion as to the general undesirability of passing such a Bill. There is one rather peculiar thing about clause 21. It is an illustration, to my mind, of the old adage, "Too many cooks spoil the broth." It is there provided that Natives who have any interest in a block of land may sell to one another, so long as the purchasers are not Committeemen; but land that has been so sold can only be dealt with under clause 29, so that, if the Natives want to prevent the purchase of land, they have only to interchange with one another, and then the Government cannot buy it. I fancy that that clause requires a little amendment. Generally, the amendments go in the direction of my views; and I hope the measure will work. If it does not work well, if it has the effect of stopping settlement, then the sooner we repeal it the better.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—When this Bill was previously before the House I stated my objections to it in detail; and, though there have been considerable improvements made since, my objection to the principle of the Bill still exists. However, I am not going to detain the House upon it at this stage; but I wish to state my agreement with the opinion of the honourable member for Parnell that the effect of the Bill will be to seriously prevent the settlement of Native land which otherwise would be rapidly taken up. I can only express my regret at the Bill being passed.

Mr. HAKUENE. — I will not make many remarks about the present Bill. I will, however, refer to clause 27. I approve of that clause entirely. The reason I approve of that clause is that many Natives have appeared before the Native Affairs Committee and prayed the Committee to give effect to their petition asking that their leases might be renewed for a certain number of years. Some honourable members have said that the Commissioner will be accused of favouritism,

character. I may say again now, as I said on the second reading and on the third reading, that I believe the measure will be hailed with pleasure by the Natives throughout the whole country, and that they will largely avail themselves of its provisions. I therefore beg to move, That the amendments be agreed to.

Amendments agreed to.

NATIVE LAND COURT BILL.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I will explain the amendments that have been made by the Legislative Council in this Bill on the same principle that I adopted in explaining those that were made in the Native Land Administration Bill. The amendments of a verbal character which have been made seem to me to improve the working of the Bill, and to make its provisions more clear; so I will say nothing about them. But there are one or two of a more important character, which go much farther, and modify the law as it at present exists, and these I will explain. Honourable members have heard of "a lawyers' clause." Now, in this case the "lawyers' clause" has had a very strange experience. It was not in the Bill as originally introduced, but it was inserted in the Native Affairs Committee of this House. The Committee struck out another clause giving power to the Court to admit lawyers to practise. That clause was as follows:—

"It shall not be lawful for any person to appear or be assisted in Court by counsel or agent without the assent of the presiding Judge first obtained, and which assent may be at any time withdrawn.

"With and during the continuance of such assent such appearance and assistance may be had."

Instead of that clause the Committee inserted another, providing that no lawyer should be admitted to practise in the Court; but, by some curious error, both clauses came down to the House, the Bill passed through Committee, and the error was not even then seen, nor was it noticed until the Bill had passed. I called attention to this fact when the Bill went to another place; and, strange to say, the Bill passed there with both the prohibitory and the permissive clauses in it. They are clauses 64 and 65. I, of course, felt bound to have this rectified, and requested that the Bill might be recommitted; but, instead of striking out clause 65, which permits lawyers to practise, the Council struck out clause 64, which prohibited their practising. The question now arises whether we should accept that amendment or not; and I will give my reasons why it should be accepted. Were it not that we have passed the Native Land Administration Bill I should think differently; but I think we can now accept the provision in question. The Natives, I admit, have almost unanimously objected to lawyers appearing in Court; but lawyers do quite as much mischief outside the Court as they do in it, because inside the Court there is a certain amount of responsibility attached to their action. But, since the Administration Bill has passed, there will not be the same European influence behind these purchasers; and therefore I do not think there will be much harm in allowing lawyers to practise in the Court. I am, consequently, prepared to accept the amendment made by the Legislative Council, the effect of which is that the Court shall have discretion to admit lawyers to practise. I now pass on to clause 114, which means this: Under the Act of 18[illegible] the Court was supposed to have power to subdivide land where Crown grants had been issued, but the Supreme Court decided that the Native Land Court had not that power. That we brought in the Act of 1882, which was supposed to confer the power; but, even then, it was found, on the matter being referred to the Supreme Court, that the provision did not give the Native Land Court power to subdivide the land. The object of this clause is to validate the decisions of the Court in certain cases. There is another clause at the end of the Bill which says,—

"A conveyance or lease of land not held under Crown grant, or of any estate or interest therein, except and until prohibited by law, shall be as effectual to vest in a grantee or lessee the estate purporting to be so assured as it would if such land were held by Crown grant."

This is to enable titles to be given pending the bringing into operation of the Native Land Administration Bill. In clause 115 there is a provision which brings the Act into force at once; and this is of some importance, because it at once repeals certain clauses of the Act of 1883, which provide that you shall not deal with the land for forty days after it has passed through the Court. The question is, whether this provision should come into force at once; but it appears to me that, as the most valuable blocks of land which have passed through the Court are now under proclamation, there is no serious objection to the amendment. I therefore beg to move, That the amendments made by the Legislative Council be agreed to.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I should like to raise my protest against the action of the Minister in relation to the amendments in clauses 64 and 65. If there has been one abuse greater than another in the Native Land Court there is no doubt that it has arisen from the presence of lawyers; and the reason given by the honourable gentleman for accepting the amendment is of a most singular description. The Native Land Administration Bill has nothing whatever to do with the matter of bringing lawyers into Court. The honourable gentleman says that the evil which arose from lawyers appearing in Court arose from the fact that Europeans were inspiring lawyers in relation to cases before it. Now, that is not the case at all. The fact is that the Native claimants in the Court directly paid these lawyers, and were directly cheated by them. There is no doubt about it. There is a petition now before the House to which I might refer. I do not say that the statements in it are true with regard to that particular lawyer or with regard to that particular case, but I have no doubt

y represent a whole class of cases. Here lawyer got £750 to obtain the rehearing of case, and to pay the expenses; but the earing was never applied for and never took ce, and the Natives, having paid the money, nothing for it. And yet, I understand, re is no way of getting at such lawyers and king them disgorge, or striking them off the ls. There is nothing in this Bill or in any er to enable punishment to be meted out to h transparent offenders. The Native Affairs mmittee was very particular with regard to s clause. They went into the whole case, th the Minister present, and deliberately ck out the clause which had been proposed, d which we now find in the Bill, enabling yers to be employed. I am astonished that e Minister should agree to accept this amendnt. It means absolute robbery of the Nae race, and the absence of Europeans to h land through the Court in no way modifies e evil under the clause as it stands.

Mr. TE AO.—I wish to draw attention to uses 64 and 65. I made an objection to at provision before—I mean with regard to tting the lawyers practise in the Land Court. hope the lawyers will not be allowed to apar in the Court. They bring a great deal of uble upon the Natives when they appear in urt. The honourable member for Taranaki s said that he heard of one case where e legal gentleman got £702 to take steps cbtain a rehearing, but that he never ade the application, and the rehearing had ever taken place. That is a very serious harge indeed. I often have charges to bring gainst people of our own race, who sometimes act as counsel for Natives. I mean eople who set up to act as counsel, although hey have no interest in the land. I think hat cases in Court should be conducted only y the people who are claimants. Some of the eople of our own race are in the habit of deeiving the Maoris, and getting them to hand o them the conduct of their cases; and the eal owners of the land are put to great exense in paying those people. I approve of an xception being made in cases where women re claimants, or in the case of people suffering from any infirmity, who are not able themelves to conduct their cases. I am very sorry hat, when I had the opportunity previously, I did not move for the insertion of a clause in this Bill providing that all applications for rehearing should be dealt with by an independent tribunal—I mean, to have it taken entirely out of the hands of the Chief Judge; because the House is well aware that constant complaints are brought to this House from Natives, where Natives have prayed for rehearings; and this House can give them no redress whatever. In the Native Affairs Committee I found that we had no power to grant the prayers of such petitions. I hope the Government will bear this matter in mind, and see if it is possible to set up some independent tribunal to deal with questions of rehearing.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Of course I may say I know little about this question; but I see in new clause 114 a provision that would be considered very extraordinary if it applied to anything else but Maori land, and the Minister has not explained it. It is to this effect:—

"The several orders for division of lands granted under 'The Poverty Bay Grants Act, 1869,' made by Judge Halse, without opposition, at the time of hearing by the Native Land Court, under the provisions of 'The Native Land Act, 1873,' and amendments thereto, and by Judges O'Brien and Williams when acting under section eight of 'The Native Land Acts Amendment Act, 1882,' shall be, and be deemed to have been from the date of such orders, as valid and effectual as if the Native Land Court had at the time of the making of such orders full jurisdiction to divide or award land so granted as aforesaid."

It seems, according to that clause, that there was not full jurisdiction to make these grants; and this clause is put in to validate that which has been done without the authority of law. It may be quite right, and I take it for granted the Native Minister looked into it, and that those who brought it forward in the Upper House have also given it consideration, and understand it; but we are here to give our votes on this and to approve of it, and how can we know anything about this? It is retrospective in its operation, and makes valid that which really was not valid. I think the Minister should explain that to us, because it is very questionable whether members of this House should not pay more attention to the measures affecting Native land than they have generally devoted to them. We have Bills on the subject, refer them to the Native Affairs Committee, that Committee brings down amendments to the House, and we take it for granted that those amendments are right; but members generally know nothing about it. It appears that now we are going to make legal that which is not legal at the present time, and we do not know to what extent we are doing that. I would ask the Minister to give us some explanation of this.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I shall be happy to do so; but I thought the explanation I had already given was satisfactory. There were provisions in the Act of 1873 and 1882 which were supposed to do this very thing—to give power to the Native Land Court to subdivide the lands; but the Supreme Court ruled that the sections did not give that power.

Mr. J. W. THOMSON.—I quite agree with all the remarks made by the honourable member for Taranaki regarding the introduction of lawyers into the Native Land Courts. The matter was often brought before this House some years ago, and the law was altered in order to remedy what was felt to be very injurious to the Natives. We have heard that the Native Land Court Judges themselves state that the Courts are much better without lawyers, and that they would be very sorry indeed to see lawyers again admitted into the Courts. I would therefore move, by way of amendment,

That all the amendments be agreed to, with the exception of that in clause 64.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Sir, I will continue my explanation. I may say that in 1882 the attempt was made to remedy a defect that was found to exist in the Act of 1873, and to give power to the Court to subdivide the land. Strange to say, the section which was intended to supplement the Act of 1873 missed its point, and power was not given, although in both Acts it was intended to give power to subdivide Crown-granted land. This provision is simply to remedy that defect. Now with regard to the lawyers' clause. I would like to say, in reference to what has been said by the honourable member for Clutha as to the Judges objecting to lawyers being in the Courts, that I distinctly put the question to the Chief Judge as to whether this was so or not—because it had been so alleged; and his answer to me was that the business of the Court would be very much better conducted in the interest of all parties if lawyers were allowed to appear in Court, subject, of course, to the discretion of the Court; and that is exactly the power clause 65 confers.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—At what date?

Mr. BALLANCE.—Quite recently. I have asked within the last fortnight, and that was the opinion the Chief Judge gave me—an opinion I am sure he is prepared to repeat. The clause provides,—

"It shall not be lawful for any person to appear or be assisted in Court by counsel or agent without the assent of the presiding Judge first obtained, and which assent may be at any time withdrawn.

"With and during the continuance of such assent such appearance and assistance may be had."

Sir, as I have said before, I think the Court must be and ought to be the guardian of its own proceedings. I admit that where Europeans were concerned in Native titles enormous pressure was brought to bear, and I am inclined to think the prohibition was then advisable; but the law has been altered in that respect, and, since Europeans cannot interfere with Native titles, I think the Court should regulate its own proceedings. I do not think that any other objection has been raised. I was not at all inclined to object to the clause when the honourable member, in the Native Affairs Committee, moved that it be inserted. My own impression is that no harm will be done by it.

Mr. BRYCE.—I do not want to "draw" the honourable gentleman, because I recognize that the Minister, in a case like this, ought to have the right of reply. I simply wish to say that this matter was discussed at considerable length by the House when I was in the unfortunate position of having to conduct a Bill through the House against the legal profession, and I am not at all inclined to rediscuss it just now. I wanted to say, however, that the Chief Judge, unless my recollection fails me altogether, did say, in his evidence, that the Court could get on perfectly well without the assistance of lawyers, and better, in than with that assistance. I give that as recollection. If the evidence has been corded, I am willing to abide by what report of the evidence says.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I said nothing ab what was contained in the evidence. I not hear it. The honourable gentleman have misunderstood me. I said nothing ab what the Chief Judge said to the Native Af Committee; but I said that the Chief Ju told me, within the last fortnight, that agreed with clause 65, and could see no ha in it.

Mr. BRYCE.—Perhaps he said that in vi of the change of the law. If so, of course th accounts for it.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I hope the honourable me ber for Clutha will not press his amendme It will be noticed that the clause introduced another place gives power to the Judge to pr hibit the appearance of counsel or to autho it: in fact, it is framed in such a way as make it somewhat exceptional to authorize th appearance of lawyers. I do not know, pr bably, much more of the effect of the appea ance of professional men in such Courts tha does the honourable member for Clutha o the honourable member for Taranaki, or o much as the honourable member for Waitota does; but it seems to me that the Judge wh presides over the Court, who has invested h him such great powers—especially in such a peculiar Court, where, necessarily, the report are very imperfect, and where the Judge wh presides is able to decide various delicate poin without any possible efficient provision for ap peal—it does seem to me that such a Judg should have the power of regulating the pro cedure of the Court on such a point as that, and to decide whether or not to allow lawye to appear before him. The honourable mem ber for Taranaki has spoken very strongly on the subject. He is in the habit of speaking strongly; and during the last session he ha spoken in a somewhat intemperate manner in respect of dealings with regard to Native lands. I think, however, that, bad as has been the manner in which some members of the legal profession have dealt with the Natives in the past, it never has been worse than the manner in which many of the Native agents, Maoris themselves, have dealt with their fellow-countrymen; and if the Judge exercises proper discretion, and prevents persons who badly conduct themselves from appearing in those Courts—lawyers who have misconducted themselves and treated the Maoris unfairly—I am sure the employment of educated, trained men, accustomed to the sifting of evidence and the interpretation of Acts, must greatly facilitate the transaction of the business that comes before the Court. I hope the honourable member for Taranaki will not draw his conclusions as to the manner in which business should be transacted in such proceedings from his experience in the Native Affairs Committee. There is no analogy between the investigations of the two tribunals; and I can well believe that the

they represent a whole class of cases. Here the lawyer got £750 to obtain the rehearing of the case, and to pay the expenses; but the rehearing was never applied for and never took place, and the Natives, having paid the money, got nothing for it. And yet, I understand, there is no way of getting at such lawyers and making them disgorge, or striking them off the rolls. There is nothing in this Bill or in any other to enable punishment to be meted out to such transparent offenders. The Native Affairs Committee was very particular with regard to this clause. They went into the whole case, with the Minister present, and deliberately struck out the clause which had been proposed, and which we now find in the Bill, enabling lawyers to be employed. I am astonished that the Minister should agree to accept this amendment. It means absolute robbery of the Native race, and the absence of Europeans to push land through the Court in no way modifies the evil under the clause as it stands.

Mr. TE AO.—I wish to draw attention to clauses 64 and 65. I made an objection to that provision before—I mean with regard to letting the lawyers practise in the Land Court. I hope the lawyers will not be allowed to appear in the Court. They bring a great deal of trouble upon the Natives when they appear in Court. The honourable member for Taranaki has said that he heard of one case where the legal gentleman got £702 to take steps to obtain a rehearing, but that he never made the application, and the rehearing had never taken place. That is a very serious charge indeed. I often have charges to bring against people of our own race, who sometimes act as counsel for Natives. I mean people who set up to act as counsel, although they have no interest in the land. I think that cases in Court should be conducted only by the people who are claimants. Some of the people of our own race are in the habit of deceiving the Maoris, and getting them to hand to them the conduct of their cases; and the real owners of the land are put to great expense in paying those people. I approve of an exception being made in cases where women are claimants, or in the case of people suffering from any infirmity, who are not able themselves to conduct their cases. I am very sorry that, when I had the opportunity previously, I did not move for the insertion of a clause in this Bill providing that all applications for rehearing should be dealt with by an independent tribunal—I mean, to have it taken entirely out of the hands of the Chief Judge; because the House is well aware that constant complaints are brought to this House from Natives, where Natives have prayed for rehearings; and this House can give them no redress whatever. In the Native Affairs Committee I found that we had no power to grant the prayers of such petitions. I hope the Government will bear this matter in mind, and see if it is possible to set up some independent tribunal to deal with questions of rehearing.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Of course I may say I know little about this question; but I see in new clause 114 a provision that would be considered very extraordinary if it applied to anything else but Maori land, and the Minister has not explained it. It is to this effect:—

"The several orders for division of lands granted under 'The Poverty Bay Grants Act, 1869,' made by Judge Halse, without opposition, at the time of hearing by the Native Land Court, under the provisions of 'The Native Land Act, 1873,' and amendments thereto, and by Judges O'Brien and Williams when acting under section eight of 'The Native Land Acts Amendment Act, 1882,' shall be, and be deemed to have been from the date of such orders, as valid and effectual as if the Native Land Court had at the time of the making of such orders full jurisdiction to divide or award land so granted as aforesaid."

It seems, according to that clause, that there was not full jurisdiction to make these grants; and this clause is put in to validate that which has been done without the authority of law. It may be quite right, and I take it for granted the Native Minister looked into it, and that those who brought it forward in the Upper House have also given it consideration, and understand it; but we are here to give our votes on this and to approve of it, and how can we know anything about this? It is retrospective in its operation, and makes valid that which really was not valid. I think the Minister should explain that to us, because it is very questionable whether members of this House should not pay more attention to the measures affecting Native land than they have generally devoted to them. We have Bills on the subject, refer them to the Native Affairs Committee, that Committee brings down amendments to the House, and we take it for granted that those amendments are right; but members generally know nothing about it. It appears that now we are going to make legal that which is not legal at the present time, and we do not know to what extent we are doing that. I would ask the Minister to give us some explanation of this.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I shall be happy to do so; but I thought the explanation I had already given was satisfactory. There were provisions in the Act of 1873 and 1882 which were supposed to do this very thing—to give power to the Native Land Court to subdivide the lands; but the Supreme Court ruled that the sections did not give that power.

Mr. J. W. THOMSON.—I quite agree with all the remarks made by the honourable member for Taranaki regarding the introduction of lawyers into the Native Land Courts. The matter was often brought before this House some years ago, and the law was altered in order to remedy what was felt to be very injurious to the Natives. We have heard that the Native Land Court Judges themselves state that the Courts are much better without lawyers, and that they would be very sorry indeed to see lawyers again admitted into the Courts. I would therefore move, by way of amendment,

ledge of the Native Land Acts and Native customs, it is indispensably necessary, in order to do a large amount of business among the Natives, that a lawyer should be familiar with the Native language. The only lawyers who have hitherto done any business to any extent in the Native Land Courts have been those perfectly familiar with the Native language. It has been a monopoly, and, like all monopolies, it has been attended with evils. The language used by the honourable member for Taranaki with regard to the conduct of certain lawyers practising in certain Native Land Courts has not been in the slightest degree exaggerated. I would give another reason why I think the amendment of the honourable member for Clutha should be adopted: in adopting that amendment we should really be following out the deliberate opinion of the Committee of this House. In the Native Affairs Committee this clause, which was struck out by the Legislative Council, was put in, after much consideration; and merely by an error of the Clerk of the Native Affairs Committee the subsequent clause, 66, was not marked as struck out. When measures come on for consideration in Committee of the whole House the custom is that new clauses and clauses which have been altered are considered; but the other clauses are only mentioned by their numbers; and not even the side-notes are read in the case of consolidation Bills. Now, when this Bill was in Committee, clause 64 was read a second time, and the whole clause was carefully considered, and after that full consideration it was passed by the Committee. But when we came to clause 66 the Chairman put the question "That clause 66 be a clause of the Bill," and nobody looked at the clause, because all thought it was an old clause that had been there from time immemorial, and there was no attempt to alter it. Therefore there are three strong arguments in favour of the amendment: first, that it is an admitted evil to allow lawyers to practise in these Courts; secondly, that that is the deliberate opinion of the Native Affairs Committee; and, thirdly, that it is the deliberate opinion of this House. I am sorry that the Native Minister should have allowed any influence to be brought to bear through which the other House agreed, or his colleagues agreed, and he appears inclined to agree in this House, that the clause should be altered. I do not think that alteration represents the feeling of this House, and I certainly hope the honourable member for Clutha will push his amendment to a division, and that the House will carry it.

Mr. PEACOCK.—I shall support the amendment. The decision to exclude lawyers from practising in the Native Land Court was only arrived at after very careful deliberation by the House, and it seems to me that we should require very strong representations to be made against that course before we consented to go back to the old practice. Some honourable members have spoken as if there was a restriction as to the employment of lawyers in the Court before. I am not aware of any restriction existing before the passing of the present Act. The old practice simply resulted in the that several lawyers who devoted special attention to Native-land matters got virtually a monopoly of the business. The general body of the profession were not prevented from practising in the Courts; but, on account of their devoting special attention to it, a very few got practically, the whole of the business. It has been suggested that the Judges would naturally be averse to the appearance of lawyers in the Court; but I am inclined to think it is quite the other way. It seems to me that the Judges would be very willing to accept of the assistance of lawyers in the Court, and would be likely to follow their advice. If once the clause now proposed were passed, the Court would never think of taking exception to the employment of lawyers. Considering the evils which have arisen in the past through the admission of lawyers to the Native Land Court, I think the only course for us to adopt is to adhere to the Act now in force, which has operated, as far as I am aware, in a proper manner. I have never heard any real objection to it, or that through it justice has been less truly rendered by the Court than before. I shall therefore vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Clutha.

Mr. PARATA.—I wish to make a few remarks with regard to the employment of lawyers in the Native Land Court, and I hope no legal member of this House will take exception to what I say. In the Native Affairs Committee the clause authorizing the employment of lawyers was struck out on my motion, after very careful consideration; and I am very sorry indeed that it has been reinserted in the Upper House. I have seen it stated in reports in former years that the Chief Judge has expressed his opinion that the Court would have gone on much better without the employment of lawyers, and it has been proved by petitions sent to this House that great trouble has been brought on the Natives by lawyers. I know of cases where the lawyers employed prolonged the proceedings because they were paid so much a day. Cases would drag out to such an inordinate length that, when judgment has at last been given, it has been found that the lawyer has, in point of fact, swallowed up the whole of the land. I hope the House will bear this in mind, and reject this clause. I have heard of a case where a Native in this Island employed a lawyer to attempt to get a rehearing for a certain block. The lawyer said, "I can get it done for you;" and the Native paid him £750 to get it done; and, having done so, he waited a long time, and was then told by the lawyer that the three months within which a rehearing must be applied for had elapsed, and therefore nothing could be done; and the unfortunate Native lost his £750. I am afraid if this clause becomes law we shall have these things occurring again. I have heard of another case where some Natives paid a lawyer £300 to get them a rehearing, and did not get it; and another case

Chief Judge would find his duties very much lightened, and find the risk of error very much lessened, if he were assisted by legal practitioners in the Court over which he presides.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—It is a pity the honourable member for New Plymouth cannot forget another debate. Whether I am in a good temper, or speak strongly or not, has very little point in this case. We have the opinions of several Judges of the Native Land Court before this law was passed, a year or two ago; and we had only one opinion from all who gave any evidence—that the admission of lawyers to the Court was a serious blot. Whether it arose from the class of men who went there, or from the nature of the cases, certain it was that the lawyers simply robbed the Natives. I was particular in asking whether the Court could be conducted as well without lawyers as with lawyers; and one Judge said this: "Originally we had no lawyers in the Court, and justice was done then as easily as now." That was one of the oldest Judges of the Court. The present Chief Judge stated it as his opinion that allowing lawyers to practise in the Court would probably save the Judge some trouble, but that there was no difficulty whatever in arriving at the truth, by the machinery of the Court as it then existed and now exists, without the presence of lawyers. Since the law was changed more than one Judge of the Native Land Court has stated to the Committee that the conduct of cases in the Court has improved without lawyers being present. There is no doubt that, if you admit lawyers, there is nothing in the Native Land Administration Act to lighten the burdens that were thrown by the old Act on the Natives. Now, it is stated that it will be optional with the Judges to give or withhold liberty of pleading to lawyers. But that was the case under the old law. Then the Judge had the power to forbid the lawyers to come in; but the power was never exercised except in a case on the West Coast, when the Court became such a bear-garden that it had to be closed and the lawyers turned out. I asked some of the Judges why this power was not more frequently exercised, and they stated that to do so was considered invidious; and practically, therefore, the law was a dead-letter.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I think it is very much to be regretted that so much energy should be displayed on a subject of this kind, because the real safeguard of these Courts would be to have no monopoly such as has been the case in the past, when two or three favoured lawyers had a monopoly of the whole business. If the Courts were thrown open to all lawyers there would be fair competition as to charges, and attention to duty; and, instead of the chaos that has prevailed in many of these Courts, there would be a better system of practice established, and much fewer applications for rehearings. A great deal of the dissatisfaction that has existed in reference to this Court has arisen from its administration. Many persons have been appointed who have not been Judges, who have had no experience of the rules of evidence, and who possess no knowledge of the law except a very limited acquaintance indeed with the ordinary principles of law; and the result is that these men dread the appearance of lawyers: they go by some rule-of-thumb, which is satisfactory in some cases, but which, I venture to say, produces no general feeling of confidence in those Courts. The same objection prevailed on the goldfields in the early days to lawyers appearing there. It was thought that mining agents should have the monopoly; but the Wardens have come to realize that the best friends they have in eliciting facts and in getting an exhaustive knowledge of the whole surroundings is to have men trained for the purpose. I scarcely know how to characterize the imputation that persons so trained cannot render much better assistance than persons wholly untrained, who will resort to all the devices that inexperienced and incompetent men resort to. The greatest safeguard of every Court in the colony, from the highest to the lowest, is to have efficient men practising—men having a character at stake, and subject to control. The knowledge I have gained of these Native Land Courts has convinced me of this: that two or three men who have devoted themselves to this class of work have got a monopoly of all the knowledge in connection with it; and the great danger has been that, where these men have gained the advocacy of a particular side, any one else is at a great disadvantage, because these persons have devoted themselves not only to Native customs, but to the history of those blocks of land. I admit that in the past they have contributed to a certain amount of injustice; but all that would have been averted if there had been a fair field and no favour, and a large selection would have been available for the Natives. It is an exceedingly short-sighted policy, and one injurious from every point of view, to say that a clause like this should not be agreed to. I go further, and say that a Judge should have no discretion in allowing particular lawyers to practise. Every person connected with the profession should have a right to go to the Court and plead the cause of persons employing him. That is the only safeguard you have. Of course we know that abuses have crept in in the way indicated by the honourable member for Taranaki; but those abuses have arisen from this monopoly and want of supervision. I would give the Native Land Court Judges power to report to the Supreme Court any member of the profession who was guilty of misconduct, and let proceedings be taken against him accordingly. You would then have a much better class of practitioners before the Court than in the past.

Mr. CONOLLY.—I entirely disagree with the conclusion of the last speaker, principally for a reason which he has brought forward in favour of it. He says the admission of lawyers would do a great deal of good if the business did not become a monopoly. But I contend that it will always be a monopoly if lawyers are admitted to practise in the Native Land Court at all; because, in addition to a know-

DEEDS AND INSTRUMENTS REGISTRATION BILL.

Sir J. VOGEL, in moving the second reading of the Deeds and Instruments Registration Bill, said,—The object of this measure is to remove difficulties which now exist in the way of deeds and papers being presented to proper officers in small towns for transmission for registration to larger towns where registry offices exist. It has been introduced at the instance of several members, including the honourable member for Timaru and the honourable member for Gladstone. The 3rd clause enables deeds to be sent from one place to another for registration without special personal attendance at the registration office. Clause 7 is to remove an anomaly that arose in consequence of the passing of the Westland and Grey Education Boards Act of 1885. It provides for the reserves being registered in Westland, though some of them are situated in the Provincial District of Nelson. Clause 8 is to enable land held under perpetual lease for village-settlement purposes to be brought under the Land Transfer Act. Clause 9 is to meet an obvious mistake in a clause in the Land Act, from which the word "not" was omitted. The Bill is mostly of a technical character. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I confess I cannot see that much is likely to be gained by the operation of this Bill. I understand it has been introduced on the recommendation of certain honourable members, who have perhaps not had much experience on the subject, and who, no doubt, have taken action at the request of some of their constituents. The object of the Bill is stated to be, to allow the registration of deeds by the hands of some agent of the Registrar to be appointed in localities where no such Registrar is stationed.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. SAMUEL.—If that is not the object, I cannot read the Bill aright. That is the object, at any rate, of the first few clauses. I think all those who have had experience on this subject will bear me out when I say that the duty of registering a deed is by no means an unimportant one. It is the duty of the person who presents a deed for registration to see that no deed has been registered subsequently to investigation of title. A month frequently elapses between the date of the original investigation of title and the completion of the transaction concerning the property. The deed is then sent to the head office to be registered. In the meantime another deed may have been registered; and, if we have registration by such an agent as is proposed by this Bill, there is very little chance of such subsequent deed being discovered, it may be, for months or years; and the person who has perpetrated the fraud may have had ample opportunity of departing from the country, or otherwise escaping the consequences of his fraud. I have known instances of this sort which have come within my own practice. I know of a case in this city where a person went into the office of a solicitor, raised a sum of money, and signed a deed; and when, two or three days afterwards the deed of mortgage was presented for registration, the solicitor discovered that the property had in the meantime been conveyed away, and the purchase-money received by the mortgagee. Of course the mortgager was at once prosecuted, and punished severely, and a large part of the money was recovered. Under this Act it would be impossible for such a fraud to be discovered until a long time had elapsed, because the agent certainly would not have imposed upon him the duty of searching the register. This would also encourage false security in the minds of clients, and it would encourage wrong-doing on the part of such members of the profession as might not have the interests of their clients at heart. It would probably make those members of the profession who are not careful but are thoughtless say, "Here is a deed. I shall not investigate the title; I will leave it to the agents. It seems to be all right. I will just prepare the deed and send it to be registered." Some persons would be very likely to carry on business in such a manner as would result in a loss on all sides; and it might be that the practitioner who had done this wrong might cease to be a responsible person before the wrong was discovered. I have had a considerable amount of experience in this matter, and I say that I am sorry to see this Bill brought in. I am afraid it will result in a very large amount of bad conveyancing in some parts of this country. With regard to the last few clauses of the Bill, I deprecate the introduction, in a Bill dealing with one subject, of clauses referring to other Acts. It seems to me that the 7th clause really amends "The Westland and Grey Education Boards Act, 1885;" and no layman would ever think of looking in the Deeds and Instruments Registration Act for such a provision as this. The same remark applies to subsequent sections in the Bill, which amend the Land Act; and these clauses seem to me to be out of place in this Bill.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I look upon this Bill as a very mischievous one, and one which will result in a great deal of injury to the public. The theory of our system is priority of registration. So much is that the case that, in large transactions, people are beginning to resort to settling those transactions in the registry office itself. That is to say, a person will not hand over his money, where he is perhaps lending £10,000 or £15,000, until he goes to the Registrar's office and sees the deeds lodged there for registration, to avoid the possibility of any other deeds being registered between the times the money is paid over and when the deed is lodged for registration. Honourable members may see the very great danger that evil may be caused by the Bill under the present system, where deeds are executed to-day, perhaps, and in the meantime perhaps a memorial of judgment is brought in against the land, or a transfer made, and the person finds that the land has already been transferred, or that his mortgage is subject to some judgment. Those who have sug-

where a lawyer was paid £5 a day and a commission of 3d. an acre, the total cost to the Natives concerned being over £1,000, for which they received no benefit whatever. I hope the House will bear in mind all the abuses and evils that have taken place in the past through the admission of lawyers to the Court, and will try to prevent them happening in the future. I shall support the amendment of the honourable member for Clutha.

Mr. BRUCE.—So far as my knowledge of these matters goes—knowledge derived almost exclusively from the Natives—I can indorse every word that has fallen from the last speaker. I ask the Native Minister if he does not know that a perfect atmosphere of iniquity surrounds the Native Land Court owing to the proceedings of a very few lawyers, who, as the honourable member for Newton says, have a monopoly of this branch of business owing to their knowledge of Maori; who, we are all very well aware, are able to make money through their knowledge of that language; and who are thus able to gather wealth that their abilities would not enable them to acquire in any other way. I have heard from Natives of cases in which it has cost so much to get blocks of land through the Court—mainly through the delays brought about by lawyers who gain through these delays—that they have had to sell other blocks to pay those costs: that is to say, the cost is greater than the value of the land. I have never given a vote in this House with more pleasure than I shall have in giving my vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Clutha, to exclude lawyers from the Native Land Court.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—The honourable member for Rangitikei must be labouring under a delusion. The whole state of things is altered; and what took place formerly, to which the honourable gentleman referred, cannot now occur. Under the Native Land Administration Bill which has been passed, the lawyers could only protect the Maoris, and could not do them any harm. I am sorry to hear my brothers in the law so badly spoken of. No one is compelled to employ a bad lawyer, and one who had been once found out would not be employed again. The whole trouble with lawyers in the past has been through private persons being allowed to deal in Native land. That will now be impossible, and therefore a lawyer employed by Natives would have no interest in the land. He would have to be paid in money—he could have no lien over the land; and his only interest would be to see that justice was done to the Natives. One of the Native members has said that a lawyer should be allowed to appear for women and children and weak people; and we know there are a number of Natives in whose hands the interests of claimants to land would not be nearly so safe as they would be in the hands of a respectable lawyer. As to the opinions of the Judges, probably half the Judges in the world would say that they could get on better, and that justice could be done a great deal better, without juries; but would the honourable member for Rangitikei support the abolition of juries on that account? I admit that in the past there have been lawyers of a low class practising in the Court, who have taken large sums of money, not directly from the Natives, but from the Europeans buying the land, and only indirectly from the Natives. But now the Government will be the sole purchaser of Native land, and therefore it will be to the advantage of the Maoris to employ a respectable lawyer to see that they get justice and proper payment. I hope the amendment will be rejected.

Mr. HAKUENE.—Let us be guided by the petitions sent to this House by Natives; and I believe that all the petitions are against the employment of lawyers in the Courts. I think that the Judges are fully able to administer the law without the assistance of the lawyers. If the lawyers could tell when the Natives who go before the Court are telling the truth and when they are speaking falsely, then I would say, Employ them; for I am sorry to say that in most cases where there is a lot of land involved some Natives do not give true evidence. The admission of lawyers to the Court will not remedy that. If they were sufficiently wise to be able to tell when a man is speaking the truth and when he is not, then I would admit the lawyers; but they cannot do that, and I am afraid that the lawyers would only make confusion worse confounded, and prolong the proceedings of the Court, and do no good. I shall therefore vote for the amendment.

The House divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be added be so added."

AYES, 28.

Atkinson	Gore	Ross
B.-Bradshaw	Hakuene	Russell
Bruce	Hobbs	Seddon
Bryce	Kerr	Te Ao
Buchanan	Lake	Trimble
Buckland, J. C.	Locke	Wilson.
Conolly	Montgomery	
Dargaville	Ormond	*Tellers.*
Duncan	Parata	Mitchelson
Fulton	Richardson, G.	Thomson, J. W.

NOES, 35.

Ballance	Joyce	Steward, W. J.
Bevan	Lance	Stewart, W. D.
Brown	Larnach	Taylor
Cowan	Levestam	Thompson, T.
Fitzherbert	Macandrew	Tole
Fraser	Mackenzie, M.	Turnbull
Guinness	McKenzie, J.	Vogel
Hamlin	Moat	Walker
Harper	Moss	Whyte.
Hatch	Pyke	*Tellers.*
Hislop	Richardson, E.	Buckland, W. F.
Ivess	Smith	Samuel.

PAIR.

For.	*Against.*
Wakefield.	O'Callaghan.

Majority against, 7.

Motion to add words lost.

Amendments made by the Council agreed with.

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gested this amendment of the law made out that they had been actuated by laudable motives; but I say, if the Bill is carried, it will result in great insecurity and in ultimate litigation. Even under the present system we know that frauds have been committed. These transactions are now often completed as nearly as possible in the place where the deed is to be registered. This Bill will also establish a new local department, and there will be an increase of officers. The work is not such that it can be undertaken by Postmasters and other officers of that sort. The registration of deeds requires great care.

Mr. REID.—The Colonial Treasurer says that the object of this Bill is to remove the difficulties which exist in small towns, so that parties may be enabled to forward deeds for registration from one part of the country to the other without a personal attendance. If that is the object of the Bill, the object will never be attained. The Bill, I contend, cannot possibly do any good, and possibly may do a great deal of harm. Before it can at all be made workable many alterations and amendments will have to be made. It will not dispense with the necessity of employing private agents. Before a solicitor prepares a deed he instructs his town agent to investigate and report on the title. If the title is clear the deed is prepared and executed; and it is then ready to be handed to the Government agent, to be by him forwarded for registration. Now, before a deed is placed on the register, it is necessary to make a final search to see that no dealings have taken place since the first search was made. This is indispensable; and, as the Bill makes no provision for such a search being made by the Government, the services of the town agent must again be called into requisition. Again, five out of six deeds must be stamped before being registered; but this work must also be performed by a private agent, as it is not provided for in the Bill. To show how dangerous it would be to adopt the system proposed, the honourable member for New Plymouth gave a case which occurred within his experience. I will give a case which occurred in my practice not very long ago. I was instructed to prepare a conveyance, the consideration-money being £450. The vendor was ill at the time of the signing of the deed, and was removed to the hospital immediately afterwards. I completed the deed, and forwarded it to be stamped and registered. I received a telegram next day stating that a conveyance of the same property had been executed and registered that day. The man was interviewed at the hospital, and it was found that he had signed another conveyance for £450; so that he had received £900 for the one property. Supposing this Bill had been passed, and I had handed over the matter to the agent appointed by the Government, months might have elapsed before the fraud was discovered, and all chance of redress would then have been gone. Under such circumstances, who would have been responsible for the loss? I say the Bill is utterly unworkable. Supposing an error occurred, will the Government send back the deed to the agent? and, if so, will the agent go and find the man who left the deed with him? Under the present system we have skilled men to look after our work; and the work is always carefully and expeditiously performed. There is another section of the Act which I think is objectionable, and that is clause 5. That clause reads as follows:—

"On return of any instrument by the Registrar through a District Agent, the signature or attestation of correctness required by section forty-seven of 'The Deeds Registration Act, 1868,' shall not be necessary; but in lieu thereof the Registrar or Deputy-Registrar of Deeds shall sign and attest the recorded copy of such instrument."

Now, the object of registration, as honourable members know, is to preserve title. When a deed is recorded, the recorded copy is carefully compared with the original, and all errors rectified before the deed is uplifted. It is important that the comparison of the record should be carefully made, for, should the original deed be destroyed or lost, the title is still preserved, because you can get a certified copy of it from the register. There is no provision here for the Registrar examining the copy; but, even supposing he does do so, if he fails to detect, or omits to correct, any error in it, who is to be responsible? Would the solicitor or the Government be responsible? Certainly not. The loss would fall on the owner of the land. I say the deed ought to be examined by the solicitor, who is responsible to his client if any mistake is made. Another defect in the Bill is that there is no provision directing the Registrar to indorse on any instrument the date or time when it is handed to him. That is too important a matter to be left to regulation. Neither is the agent bound to forward the deed to the Registrar within a reasonable time after it is left with him. That, also, is a grave omission. I have been a practitioner for fourteen years, and I have always employed an agent on whom I can rely, and the charges made are always reasonable, and I know that the work is well done. It is very responsible work. There is no occasion for this Bill. If it should pass, and if it were to embrace the benefits it is supposed to confer, it would still not do away with the necessity of having agents to investigate titles, attend to stamping, and to see that the title-deeds were properly recorded. I shall vote against the Bill, not only because it is unnecessary, but because I think it would prove mischievous.

Mr. KERR.—The honourable member for Bruce says that what is done under this Bill is done every day—that he lives some forty miles up country, and sends deeds down to agents to be registered in town. Well, that is just what we want in this Bill. I know that there are parts of the West Coast which belong to Nelson that are one hundred and forty or one hundred and fifty miles away from a centre; and the lawyers there have to send all their deeds, backwards and forwards, to and from one

another; and this costs the clients a good deal. Why should it be necessary for a lawyer to do this work when there are plenty of as honest men in the country as lawyers? Who makes out the deed? The lawyer; and then he sends it to an agent. And the lawyer is responsible if any mistake is made in the deed, and not the agent. When I have deeds to be registered it is not the lawyer who does it, but a boy in his office, who is just as capable of doing it as the lawyer himself. Surely, then, the officer proposed under this Bill will be quite as capable of doing that work as the lawyer; and, as people will not have to pay so much under this Bill as they do at present, I think it certainly ought to pass.

Mr. GUINNESS.—I am glad to see the Treasurer bringing in this Bill, and I am much surprised to hear the honourable member for Bruce—who, I understand, lives some distance up country, and is a country solicitor—opposing it; because its object is to do away with heavy expenses that are thrown on residents in the country in having, as they now have, to pay a double set of charges—one to their solicitor and another to his agent in the town. It is to remedy that sort of thing that this Bill is required. It is much wanted on the West Coast, and particularly in the district which I represent. That district is peculiarly situated, for the boundary-line between the Nelson and Westland Districts runs right through the centre of the most populous part of the district; and I trust that, even if this Bill should be found objectionable to every other part of the country, it will be brought into operation in the Nelson and Westland Districts. Documents relating to land transactions in the Greymouth Electorate have to be sent to either Nelson or Hokitika to agents at each of these places to register, which entails considerable expense to the residents, especially in the case of small transactions. I admit that our transactions there are not of the magnitude of those referred to by the honourable member for Dunedin South. I say that in transactions where the consideration-money is small, and the parties are not able to pay the heavy expense of solicitors and agents, this Bill will be a great boon. The honourable member for Bruce has mentioned two or three objections to the form of the Bill; but these are merely Committee objections. The principle of the matter lies in a nutshell; if lawyers can employ agents to register these deeds and transfers, why should not the Government do so? Why cannot the Government appoint agents in the different centres of population where there are no Deeds Registry offices to do the work of receiving and transmitting deeds and other instruments for registration, at a merely nominal charge? Whether the Bill should be made compulsory in all districts is a question which we can settle in Committee. I shall vote for its being optional, so that the honourable member for Bruce and his clients may continue the practice of having agents in Dunedin, with all the attendant expenses, if they hoose; but let those of us who do not want that sort of thing have the advantage of a Bill of this kind. The objection which the honourable gentleman took to section 4 is, I think, very trivial. He said some provision should be made for indorsing on a deed the exact moment at which it is received in the Registrar's office. I believe that is amply provided for by the wording of the clause itself, for it says the Registrar is to record deeds in the order in which they are received. If that is not sufficiently clearly expressed in the clause itself we can easily amend it in Committee. As to stamping instruments, there is a way of getting over that difficulty—that is, by using stamped paper or parchment, as you may require it, especially in the case of small transactions. I admit that, in the case of large stamps being required, it would be necessary, no doubt, to have the deed engrossed before it was stamped; but where it only involves a matter of a few hundred pounds you could buy stamped forms and keep a supply of them in your office to use as you wanted. Interested persons may be very anxious to get a majority to throw out the Bill, but I hope the Treasurer will do his best to pass it into law.

Mr. IVESS.—I am highly pleased with the remarks of the honourable gentleman who has just sat down. It is somewhat refreshing to see members of the legal profession in this House divided in their opinion on a subject of this sort. I can bear testimony to the great hardship, injustice, inconvenience, and loss that have resulted through the want of a measure of this kind being in force. It is all very well for the honourable member for Bruce to oppose this Bill, and to point out that solicitors in Dunedin and other cities can act as agents for the registration of documents, as he and others are in the habit of dividing the agency fees usually charged by these city solicitors for the transmission of and for attending to register instruments; but it is certain that people generally who have anything to do with such matters do not desire that sort of thing or to have to incur the heavy charges entailed by being compelled to send deeds to centres where the Supreme Court sits, in order to have them registered. I am sure that if there were no Supreme Court office in New Plymouth we should have had the honourable member for New Plymouth standing up and pointing out as strongly as any one the great hardship of people there having to send the documents down to Wellington to be registered. But, really, all these "bogeys" which have been raised by some honourable members are of very little consequence. We know that there are large centres, like Ashburton, Timaru, Oamaru, and others, where people are put to great expense through having to send their documents to their solicitors' agents in towns where there are Supreme Court offices. It is absurd to compel a man with a small deed of nominal value to pay heavy agency-fees, when the registration could be done for a minimum sum by a person who would be appointed under the Bill. The various objections raised by the honourable member for Bruce and others

he Bill are merely Committee objections; and, f there is no more fatal objection than the bsence of a provision with regard to the officer narking the exact time at which he receives a document, they can easily be got over in Committee. This is a step in the right direction, and, though it may tend to the reduction f lawyers' business, I hail with satisfaction a neasure which will enable a large number of olonists who have, from time to time, to sell mall parcels of land to register their deeds rithout the large expense which is now attenlant on that operation. I hope the measure vill receive that consideration at the hands of he House which it deserves.

Mr. SUTTER.—I just want to say a few vords in explanation of this Bill. I am one f those who brought this before the Ministry ear after year, because of the necessity that felt for it in the place where I come from. There can be no difficulty at all in working the Bill in Timaru. We have a Land Office there nd all its officers, and, without any additional xpense, they could carry the work out. I may ell the honourable member for Greymouth that t will suit our place admirably, and if it does ot suit other portions of the colony it need ot be brought into operation in them. At the resent time deeds must be delivered at the egistry office, and it will not affect the deivery of those deeds in any way, or the apointment of solicitors with regard to them. There is no excuse for saying that the Act annot be properly worked: in fact, that is a ort of "bogey" brought up to deter members rom voting for the Bill. It does not affect the nterests of the lawyers in any way. It allows he Government simply to appoint an agent in ny of the towns, and he receives the deeds the ame as in a registry office, and sends them lown to be registered where the registry offices re. I do not see any difficulty in the matter. t will save a considerable sum of money; and can say that, because I have had a great eal to do with deeds myself. I am not a solitor, but I have been chairman of a building ociety that has had dealings very largely n deeds, and this has led me to see the difficulty that at present exists. Now 20s., 5s., or 30s. is often charged for agency in Christchurch, and it will pay the Government ery well to take charge of the deeds for 2s. 6d., nd the agent in Timaru can send them down wice or thrice a week to be delivered to the legistrar. As to the difficulty of searching, he solicitor who drafts a deed never searches he register. He sends it down to an agent, nd the agent examines, and when there is any nvestigation wanted it is sent up and investiated in the place where the deed is made. That is my experience in the matter. I ask he House to pass the second reading of the Bill, and, if there is any technical improvement equired in it, it can be made in Committee. have been fourteen years chairman of a building society, and have had a large quantity of eeds pass through my hands, and perhaps I now as much about them as many lawyers do, nd I can assure the House that the Bill is needed. No new staff and no expense to the Government will be rendered necessary under the Bill, and it will save a large amount of money to people who are getting small properties transferred—properties worth £50, £100, and £125. It will be a great saving in such cases, on which the present charges bear very heavily.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I may say that in Timaru there is a strong feeling in favour of this Bill, and, so far from the lawyers being opposed to it there, they are in favour of it. If I understand aright, one of the requests made by a deputation to the Treasurer was in favour of the introduction of a Bill of this character. It has been urged that the Bill may probably mean the creation of a new department; but, unfortunately, the gentleman who is in charge of the Land Office at Timaru has not his time so fully taken up as he could wish, and he might easily pass these deeds through, and at the same time get a small revenue for the Government. I am quite sure the Bill would be hailed in South Canterbury with great gratification: in fact, the feeling there is unanimously in favour of it.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I thought this Bill would pass without a single objection. I am therefore somewhat at a loss to meet the legal objections which have been made to it. The circumstances are these: Fourteen months ago when I was at Timaru the question was brought before me, and a strong desire expressed that a registry office should be established at that town and at others of a similar size. They have asked for the same privilege during the present session. A deputation consisting of the honourable member for Timaru, the honourable member for Hokonui, and the honourable member for Gladstone, besides other members, brought the matter before me. I referred to the Registrar-General of Lands, and his opinion upon the subject is very short. It is, "With regard to the deeds registration, the only difficulty is section 47 of 'The Deeds Registration Act, 1868,' which requires personal attendance to take out instruments. If this were repealed—and it is really of no practical utility—there would be no objection." Therefore, Sir, I ordered the Bill to be prepared; and the House must judge between the statement of the Registrar-General and the objections made by honourable members.

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be now read a second time."

AYES, 49.

Allwright	Fraser	Locke
Atkinson	Fulton	Macandrew
Ballance	Gore	Mackenzie, M.
Barron	Hatch	McKenzie, J.
B.-Bradshaw	Hobbs	Menteath
Brown	Hursthouse	Montgomery
Bryce	Ivess	O'Callaghan
Buchanan	Kerr	O'Conor
Cowan	Lake	Parata
Dargaville	Lance	Pearson
Duncan	Larnach	Reese
Fergus	Levestam	Richardson, E.

Rolleston	Thompson, T.	Wilson.
Russell	Thomson, J. W.	
Steward, W. J.	Trimble	*Tellers.*
Sutter	Vogel	Guinness
Taylor	Walker	Turnbull.

NOES, 10.

Bevan	Hislop	*Tellers.*
Buckland, W. F.	Reid	Buckland, J. C.
Conolly	Seddon	Samuel.
Hamlin	Whyte.	

Majority for, 39.

Bill read a second time.

PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE BILL.

Sir J. VOGEL, in moving the second reading of the Public Trust Office Bill, said its object was to add the Native Minister and the Surveyor-General to the Public Trust Board. Since the Bill was printed he had received a request from the Controller and Auditor-General to take him off the Board; and he proposed to add words to the clause to that effect. He had the permission of the Controller and Auditor-General to read a memorandum to the effect that he wished to be relieved from acting on the Board.

Mr. SAMUEL said no doubt this Bill would be very advantageous, as the Minister for Native Affairs should certainly be on the Board, since so many Native lands on the West Coast had been put under this office. He trusted that the Government would, during the recess, take into consideration the question of changing the whole administration of this office, and, if possible, procure for the office some local Boards or other means of obtaining local information, so that its affairs might be managed in a somewhat businesslike manner. It had been several times proposed in the past, notably by the honourable member for Auckland East, that some such system should be adopted—a central Board with local Boards of management, and a system of audit by auditors specially fitted for the task, who would audit the whole affairs of the local Boards. Whatever system might be adopted, he thought from one end of the colony to the other it was recognized that there should be some charge by which the whole of the control might be exercised in the localities where the business of this office was conducted; and that there should be some means of judging as to the local investments other than was now exercised, and also some means of realizing estates by some process which would cause less loss to those beneficially interested than was occasioned by the present system.

Bill read a second and a third time.

NEW ZEALAND LOAN BILL.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I move, That the New Zealand Loan Bill be read a third time.

Major ATKINSON.—Does the Government propose to go on with this Bill in the absence of the Premier?

Sir J. VOGEL.—Certainly.

Major ATKINSON.—I am sorry for it, although perhaps it is better in some respects that it should be so. But I shall have to make some remarks about the line that the Premier has taken, and I should have very much preferred his being present. But, still, I shall feel it my duty to make them although he may be absent. The action of the Government has been so extraordinary upon this Loan Bill, and their desire to hide from the public the reasons of their action by burking the report of the debates in Committee on the Bill was so evident, that I feel it due to myself to place before the country my views, or rather my criticisms, upon the action of the Government in this matter; and I wish also to call attention generally to the extraordinary line which the Government have taken on this question of borrowing. I shall be as short as I can, but still I must occupy sufficient time to place my views at any rate with some distinctness before the House. The one thing that this Government have insisted upon has been that they were to have borrowing for railway purposes and reproductive works. The Premier has always insisted that no other works were to be undertaken than those of a reproductive character. The Treasurer, at various times and in various ways, has kept before the country very large schemes of borrowing; and we know that during the recess the whole of the Government were very much enamoured of these large schemes; and so certain were they that this House was too conservative for their purposes that I think I am right in saying that the whole of the Ministers desired to pass over this House and refer directly to the people on some large borrowing scheme which was to "give the colony another chance." And it was not until the Opposition had spoken very plainly on this matter that the Premier, adopting their policy, made the celebrated speech at Invercargill which the Treasurer has been at such pains since to interpret in a sense which the language of that speech would in no way bear. Now, I want the House to consider and to remember what has led up to this scheme. After that speech at Invercargill the Treasurer made another great speech in Auckland, in which, although he was apparently addressing the public, he was really addressing the Premier. He then begged to be allowed, at any rate, to bring in a part of his scheme, if not the whole of that scheme, which he professed to reduce to very moderate limits. He asked then for the expenditure of only two millions a year. Well, as we know, the Premier determined that he would not have even so large a sum as that. Then we had the Financial Statement, which, as I pointed out at the time, appeared to be very moderate; but, as I also ventured to point out, it was only moderate in appearance, and not in reality. I pointed out exactly what is coming now—exactly the confession which we had from the Treasurer the other night. As to the loan he has now proposed, which the Premier has paraded before us as a tapering-off of the borrowing policy, I pointed out that it is entirely inadequate to meet the scheme of the Financial Statement, and that he must borrow largely over and above this

an if he would give effect to that Statement. Well, everything is now being gradually developed from those benches exactly as I stated. Now I want to go to the schedule of the loan itself; and I must ask the House to remember that we were told that this loan was to be earmarked—that every vote was to be for reproductive works, and that every vote was to be absolutely secured to the purposes for which Parliament voted it. And not only was this loan to be ear-marked in this way, but the North Island Trunk Loan was to be secured in a similar manner. We were told in the Financial Statement that there was plenty of money—lots of money—to last for two years, and that this new loan was to be used for railway purposes only, there being £800,000 to use for land-purchase and for general purposes, and the North Island Trunk Loan for the purpose for which it had been authorized by this House. There was no mistake at all as to the three purposes for which these three several sums were to be applied. Then we got a little further, and, curiously enough, after the Ministers have separately considered this question—they do it separately; it is not the Government that does it—they find that the amount in hand is not sufficient for land-purchase and general purposes. According to the statement of the Colonial Treasurer, it was discovered by the Ministers separately that the £800,000 would not yield them sufficient for those purposes. Then we had that extraordinary proposal made to purchase rails, rolling-stock, and sleepers, in order to put this £300,000 in funds for the purposes those honourable gentlemen required. But this was not enough, and we were also told that a portion of the North Island Trunk Loan was to be taken for land-purchase. And then, as I have already pointed out, and as I take this opportunity of pointing out again, this only provides a sufficient sum of money for this year for the purchase of land: it only provides for that purpose £100,000, all of which the Native Minister has told us he will require for the present year. So then, with these last additions to the scheme before us, no money is provided other than is voted on these estimates for purchase of land or for general purposes beyond this year. Then, the loan we are now considering was paraded before us as a loan to be applied absolutely to railway purposes only; and yet we find the very first two charges against it are for liabilities on railways, which, clearly, are properly chargeable to the £800,000. The whole of the—in round numbers—£370,000 is suddenly transferred from a charge against the £800,000 which we were told there was in hand, and made a charge against this new loan; or, in other words, instead of charging liabilities against funds in hand, those liabilities are charged against this loan, in order to allow the fund they should be charged to to be used for general purposes. Practically, £300,000 is taken out of this new loan for general purposes. I only wish to point this out; I am not saying it is wrong; but it is altogether misleading the country, the House, and the persons from whom we are borrowing in England if you say that this is in any sense a loan for railway purposes only, when at least £300,000 of it is for general purposes. Then, we have the transfer also to this loan of £290,000 for permanent-way and rolling-stock: so that something like £600,000 out of this ear-marked railway loan has, in reality, been transferred in order to cover that extraordinary oversight of liabilities amounting to £1,100,000. I say that quite £600,000 of this loan is practically not being applied to railway purposes. The Government do not attempt to answer this. They admit it at once now—not in direct words do they admit it, but they do not attempt to answer it. Very well. We then come to the loan schedule itself; and what do we find here? We had expected that the Minister for Public Works would tell us some particulars about these railways—that he would tell us that they would be payable, that they came within the class of reproductive works, for which alone the Premier said he would consent to money being borrowed. But have we had a word from those benches to show us that any one of these railways has been considered in the light of the return it will make to the Treasury of the colony? I have not heard one word; I do not know whether the departmental officers have made any calculations or not. The Minister for Public Works, in a general way, stated, "I think this railway will pay, and I think the other will pay so much;" but he has not told us that any really responsible persons have gone into the question; and I venture to think, looking at what our present railways are returning, and looking also at the nature of these proposed lines, that the percentage of return from them when made which we can venture to hope for will be very small indeed. Then, if that be so, I ask, is the Premier carrying out his pledge made to the House and the country that no works should be undertaken except those of a reproductive nature? Further, the Premier has told us the time has come when we must begin to taper off borrowing, and he has assured us that in two or three years we must cease borrowing. We know that that was, to a certain extent, a figure of speech, although the honourable gentleman certainly did not put it in that way. But I will ask any one here whether he would be prepared now to vote for this schedule as it stands if he believed that we should have to cease borrowing in two or three years. Is there one of us who would dare to do it, even the most reckless of us? I venture to say No; and I venture to say that shortly, when the country comes to see what these railways will produce, it will come to the conclusion that the Premier has not done his duty to the House and the country in proposing these works as reproductive, and that he is not justified, in the position which the colony is supposed to be entering on—tapering off borrowing—in entering on such a scheme at such a time. But, to come a little further, what do we find? We find that the Opposition, looking to these railways, and looking to the pledges of the Premier, came to the conclusion that at any rate two of

the lines were of such a nature that even the followers of the Government might be made to see that they did not come up to the standard which the Premier had announced as the one by which he wished to be judged. Therefore they proposed that resolution which the Premier also succeeded in defeating by making it a no-confidence motion; and afterwards he took [illegible], as the hands of the House, a much more severe snub, when, having brought down a message from His Excellency, it was incommunicably rejected by the House. I say the Premier only defeated that resolution by treating it as a no-confidence motion—not by meeting the Opposition on the merits of the resolution, as he was bound to do, after the pledges he had given. He would not consider it on its merits at all, but he simply had it rejected by his majority. Now, what was it the Opposition had proposed? They proposed to strike out of the schedule two lines which the House subsequently affirmed had no business there; they proposed, further, to apply the money struck out to the carrying-on of particular works in the schedule to more profitable points than the points to which the amounts put down against them in the schedule could carry them. And what did the Premier then do? He came down and addressed us in a most eloquent speech, and accused the Opposition of want of sincerity in holding him to his promises. He accused them of not desiring economy, and practically, of not wishing to carry out what they had stated they wished. Then, in great triumph, he said, "If you are sincere, how is it that, instead of proposing a fresh allocation, you have not reduced the amount by the amount of the items struck out?" He led this House to believe that his desire was if he could only get the House to do it, to reduce his loan proportionately in amount—at any rate, to the extent of those two items. His speech would [illegible] that it was an invitation to the House. We, when the House took him at his word, what did he do? When he saw that we were going to take him at his word, and that we would not give him the whole amount he asked for, he [illegible] his word. This is the interest of the country. We want money to have in hand against a rainy day. We do not want to spend it. We do not wish to spend it [illegible] as it was at first. A [illegible] was made to have some [illegible] made of [illegible] portion, and go on with the works next year. Now we have a cry that we want to have the money in the [illegible] year. This was [illegible] The Premier said, "The Treasurer [illegible] honourable gentleman [illegible] any answer to the question. But [illegible] the Treasurer [illegible] the Premier [illegible] and said, "If you are sincere, [illegible] finances of the country. [illegible] responsibility on the House. I want the House that if they dare to strike out these items,"—

Sir J. VOGEL.—I never said anything of the kind. I do not think I have used the word "dare" this session.

Major ATKINSON.—No; the honourable gentleman only looked it, and struck his hand on the table; he did not say it.

Sir J. VOGEL.—If you quote me, quote me correctly.

Major ATKINSON.—If I attempted to quote the honourable gentleman I should have to give three or four columns, to give a different quotation from almost every speech we have had before the House. It would be quite impossible to quote the honourable gentleman, he has so shifted about, first one way and then another.

Sir J. VOGEL.—That does not excuse you for quoting me incorrectly.

Major ATKINSON.—Well, shall I quote the honourable gentleman? "We must have this money"—striking his hand on the table. He did not say "dare;" but, "We must have this money; and I throw the responsibility on the honourable gentlemen opposite and on the House if they do not give us this money." That is what the honourable gentleman said. The honourable gentleman knocked his hand upon the table, and flourished his hand about, and looked over at us on this side of the House as if he would like to put his hand upon us for having dared to presume to alter the schedule which he had determined to have in the Loan Bill. I can quite understand the feelings of the honourable gentleman. It must have been very unpleasant for him to hear the Premier stating to the House exactly the opposite of what he—the Treasurer—had been saying. I can quite understand his feelings under the circumstances. But there is no question at all that the honourable gentleman stated, in substance, that he must throw the responsibility upon us if we dared to strike out the different lines to which he had allocated amounts, and he said that great confusion would result to the finances of the country if we did not give him the whole amount of the loan which he asked for. There is no getting over that fact at all. An honourable gentleman near me says that the Treasurer used the words "disastrous consequences." I am not quite sure of his language, but that certainly was the idea. Then the honourable gentleman went on, further, to say, "If you strike out this money"—I will not use the words "dare to strike out"—"I shall have to do one of two things. I shall have to have a fresh loan next session, or I shall have to use half of the North Island Trunk Loan."

Sir J. VOGEL.—There were three things. You have not mentioned the third.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; there was a third course, which the honourable gentleman reminds me of. He said he would have to contract over more this year. But this money is now wanted, according to the Premier, after March, 1888. If we are to believe the Premier the money was not wanted for expenditure this year, not even next year, but now the Trea-

urer says that if we do not give him this money he must contract his expenditure this year. I confess I do not understand it at all. The honourable gentleman found Captain Russell's motion of last session of considerable use during the recess, and it seems to me that he thought to himself he must get hold of another bugbear to use during next recess in the same way. He wanted to get hold of another stalking-horse on which he might go about the country complaining about that wretched Opposition having baulked him in his noble purposes once more. It does not appear to occur to the honourable gentleman that he has any responsibility at all. Last year he sat there after the Opposition had refused to give him what he said was wanted for the good government of the country; and, apparently, he is going to do the same thing this year, though he was very brave when the original resolution was brought down. "If this is carried," said the honourable gentleman, "and the money is not allocated as we desire it to be allocated, for expenditure on certain works, we will go out of office." But when we said that the honourable gentleman should not have the money at all, we found that the honourable gentleman was quite content to carry on, though declaring that what had been done was fatal to the best interests of the country. Well, if that is Responsible Government, it is a lesson in it that we have not learned hitherto. Then, the honourable gentleman told us that this would be disastrous to the finances. But surely this House has a right to ask him how it will be disastrous—how it will affect his finances. We have given up expecting that the honourable gentleman will leave the Treasury benches because his finances are made disastrous, but at any rate he might tell us how the disaster is to be brought about. I want to call the attention of the House to this fact: that the honourable gentleman told us that clause 16 of this Bill which we are now considering makes it impossible to apply any item of this loan to any other purpose than that for which it is set down: that is to say, there must be a special appropriation by this House for every penny expended. If that is so, how can it be disastrous to have a line struck out?—because the honourable gentleman actually proposed, by the last message sent down from His Excellency, this item: "For unappropriated sums, £175,000;" so that by no possibility could he have done anything with it until the House appropriated it next year, and that would be some months after the commencement of the next financial year; and then he would have to proceed to get votes of the House, or rather would have to let contracts, before spending a halfpenny of it. Therefore, by his own proposal, it would have been impossible for him to deal with this money until well into next year, and then he could not have applied it to genera purposes, or to any purpose except that of railways, because he tells us that this clause absolutely binds him to special appropriations. Then, I ask, how is it possible that the reduction which has been made can be disastrous to the general finances? It may be disastrous to certain lines, but it can be nothing else. The only use he could have made of the money, if clause 16 is effective, would be to invest it in deficiency bills or other securities; and that would be of no use to him. Surely his finance has not arrived at that stage yet that he is unable to float a few deficiency bills: and yet the honourable gentleman would lead us to that belief. Well, he says that it is disastrous, and I again ask him how it is disastrous. Suppose it were true, as he tells us—but it is not true, if we are to take the Premier's statement that he does not want the money until March, 1888—the non-voting of the money will render necessary a certain amount of economy, say, to the extent of half the amount—£90,000: that is exactly what the Minister for Public Works has told us that he means to do. That honourable gentleman has said that he does not mean to spend £1,500,000: he only means to spend £1,400,000. How is it possible, according to their own showing, that the striking-out of this unallocated amount can affect their finance at all? The reasons which are given by the honourable gentleman are impossible to fathom. I have looked into the matter, as far as I am capable of doing, and I confess that I can see no way in which we can embarrass our finance except to the extent of not spending that amount, and how that embarrasses our finance I cannot understand. If it be true that we are in such a position that the non-spending of a sum of £90,000 additional to an expenditure of £1,400,000 or £1,500,000 will throw our finance into confusion, it is quite time that we and the London money-lender knew our position. I venture to say that such a statement as that coming from the Treasury benches would, if it were known upon the London money-market, have infinitely more effect upon the price of our loan than any honest statement that could be made by the most gloomy of prophets either here or in London. I want to say this, in conclusion: that it seems to me—and no doubt the same has occurred to others—that the Government have never really faced this question. It is quite clear, from statements made to this House by the Premier, that he does not understand what is going on. I do not refer to the by-play that we see and hear on the Government benches. I am referring to the public statements of the Premier, from which it is quite clear that he does not understand what the proposals of the Treasurer are. The two Ministers are in direct conflict before this House. The Premier tells us that this money is wanted to be kept in the public chest; while the Treasurer tells us that if he does not get it and spend it our finance will be in great difficulty and confusion. Well, I say that I want the honourable gentleman to explain that to us, and I say that, in passing this Loan Bill, we ought to demand, though it is useless to ask the House to do it, from the honourable gentleman how he proposes to get necessary money to carry on next year. I have shown the honourable gentlemen time after

time, and they now admit it, that there is no money for this purpose. The £200,000 land liability has disappeared; there is no provision for it. There is no provision for roads. The Premier hoped that the roads would be cut down by one-half next year; but at least £160,000 will be required, and there is no provision for that. The honourable gentleman has only provided for the votes upon the public works estimates this year and for railways next year. The honourable gentleman tells us, in a covert manner, that we must have a loan next session. I pointed out to the House some time since that that must inevitably follow. The Premier does not seem to believe it: he is always ridiculing and laughing at the idea; but the Treasurer tells us that it must come: and I venture to say that it must come, unless we are going to stop our works suddenly next year. Is this the finance that we have a right to expect from the Government? The Government pretended to map out the finance for two or three years; but they have failed, and now they hold opposite views. There is only one mode of explaining this, and that is that the Treasurer has determined, as I pointed out in the debate on the Financial Statement, to keep to his own scheme, while the Premier, on the other hand, is endeavouring to get the expenditure down to a reasonable limit—but the Treasurer is too strong for him. I venture to say that, unless this House interposes, there will be a gradual increasing of our expenditure, an increasing of our loan, and an increasing of our taxation during next Parliament.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I have not spoken during the debate on the Loan Bill, for the reason, mainly, that I hold views upon this subject that are held by scarcely any other member of the House—at all events, by very few indeed. I believe that my views differ very much indeed from those of the honourable member for Egmont, who has just spoken. I have been opposed to every Loan Bill that has been brought into this House since I have had the honour of a seat here, and I intend to oppose the third reading of this Loan Bill. I am one of those who firmly believe that the borrowing policy that was initiated in 1870 has been a bad policy for the country, and that these difficulties which we have around us now are mainly the result of the policy then instituted and since carried out. Of course, that is entirely a matter of opinion. There are no doubt many honourable gentlemen, and a considerable proportion of the people of this country, who believe that the policy instituted by the present Colonial Treasurer in 1870, and put into effect by him with an extraordinary degree of brilliancy and political power, was a good one for the country, and that any evil results that may have ensued from it are owing, not to the character of the policy, but to defects in its execution. I am quite willing to admit that there were defects in its execution; I am quite willing to admit that the honourable member was met at its very inception by political difficulties of enormous magnitude, which he himself pointed out to the country with great frankness; but I maintain that the policy was mistaken in principle, and that it has worked most disastrously for this colony, for the reason, not of its maladministration, but of the innate viciousness of the principle itself. The Colonial Treasurer, when he brought that policy forward first, imagined that he could forecast the future of this colony for a period of ten years, and he laid out his policy in such a manner that it should extend over ten years, and that at the end of those ten years—namely, in 1880—such-and-such results would be visible. He calculated that by that time the results of his policy would have produced a revenue capable of paying not only the whole of the interest on the ten millions to be borrowed, but also a revenue that would place the colony in an easy financial position owing to the vast increase of population, the vast increase of resources, the vast increase of exports, and so forth. He afterwards had to modify those estimates, because, as he told us, it cost the Government a million and a half to obtain the support of the provincial districts for his borrowing policy; and in many other respects he had to admit that his calculations had been inaccurate. But still he and the supporters of his policy held to it that in the main his estimates would come out right, and that at the end of ten years the interest upon the ten millions would be recouped by the increased revenue of the colony arising from the increase of population and of wealth. The ten years have come and gone; and what is the result? It is this: that in the year 1880, the tenth year, the end of the period the honourable gentleman had allotted to complete the operation of his policy, the colony was plunged into the deepest depression it had ever experienced in its history. So far from the public works of the colony yielding a revenue sufficient to pay interest on the loans, the railways of the colony in 1880 were not, if their accounts had been kept properly, paying more than their bare expenses, and the colony had to provide the whole of the interest on loans out of taxation during those ten years. The estimates of the honourable gentleman entirely failed to be realized. It is true the population had increased, and that there were added one hundred and twenty thousand to the population of the colony in the ten years; but the revenue of the colony had not increased proportionately to the permanent charges for interest and sinking fund; and, what was more significant, the exports had not increased at all. That was the most extraordinary thing: at least, it was not extraordinary from the point of view of those who think as I do; but, from the point of view of the honourable gentleman, that is where the great miscalculation was—that the actual value of the exports of the colony had not increased during those ten years. Coming on further, we find that the policy which the honourable gentleman instituted in 1870, having entirely failed to realize his expectations by 1880, was, nevertheless, fastened upon this colony like a yoke upon a patient beast of burden, and the colony could not shake it off. It had to go on borrowing in order

support the borrowing of the past—in ler to pay the interest upon the debts that d already accrued; and the colony found elf absolutely committed, as it seemed, to permanent policy of borrowing, without any ospect of its ever coming to an end. The nourable gentleman and others who hold th him maintained that the colony would ıdergo periods of depression and prosperity, ıctuating, owing to causes beyond our con-ɔl, but, on the whole, that the revenue and ealth of the country would steadily increase, ıd that we might safely go on adding so many illions a year to our borrowing, *ad infinitum.* believe the honourable member for Auckland ast expressed the same view. I remember is saying in the House that he hoped the time ould never come when the colony would not orrow; and there are other honourable gentle-ıen of great experience who hold the same iews. I am one of those who never held that iew, and I do not hold it now. I maintain ıat it was a shocking thing for this country ver to admit that it had to go on borrow-ıg from year to year in order to keep its ead above water and carry on the work of olonization and settlement. We have now eached a stage when men all over the colony ıre beginning to discover that borrowing does ıot pay; all classes are beginning to discover hat merely to borrow money in London and ıpend it in the colony does not produce pro-ıperity—in fact, that it has not the magic operation it was represented it would have. People are also beginning to understand throughout the colony that for every million we borrow we have to raise £40,000 or £50,000 more of taxation annually for ever. The Premier, with a candour which does him credit, has told the people that every addition to the public debt signifies a corresponding addition to the permanent charge on and the taxation of the colony. There is a difference of expression there between the Premier and the Treasurer. The Prime Minister says this means an addition to the taxation; and the Colonial Treasurer, on the other hand, corrected him in his Auckland speech and said that it meant, undoubtedly, an addition to the permanent charge, but not necessarily an addition to the taxation. There we have a difference of opinion between those two honourable gentlemen. I would ask the House to consider the position at this moment, and let us see which is the correct view. The Colonial Treasurer says it means an addition to the permanent charge, but not an addition to the taxation; for the reason that he is still sanguine enough to believe that the public works policy is developing itself in such a way as progressively to increase the revenue of the colony. But what did the Prime Minister tell us only on Friday night? He warned the House that the consolidated revenue was not increasing, but was steadily diminishing. And what is the position now? We are about to add, by this Bill, £60,000 a year to the permanent charge of the colony, at the very moment when we know there is a deficiency in the revenue of £100,000 for the present year. Where is that provided for? What provision is there in the Budget for that £60,000? There is no provision whatever for it, but yet we shall have to pay the money next year. And at this very moment the Treasurer tells the House that he has more revenue than he knows what to do with, and asks us to remit one-sixteenth of a penny in the pound on the property-tax. The thing will not bear looking into at all. The Treasurer must know, if he chooses to face the position boldly, that the request for this loan should be accompanied, not by a proposal to remit taxation, but to increase it, in order to meet further demands for interest on loan. I know the honourable gentleman's sanguine temperament. He has unbounded confidence in the resources of the country. I know that he—as all of us do—believes that, in the long-run, this colony is destined to be the premier colony of the whole Australasian group, and that we are certain to pull through all our difficulties. I quite agree with him there; but I say he overleaps great periods of time, and he casts his mind forward, on the one side of his ledger, to a period which we shall have to toil towards painfully for years to come, whilst, on the other hand, he deals with the finances of to-day. That is the difference. The honourable gentleman is always telling us not to be afraid, that things will all come right, that this colony can carry any burdens we choose to place upon it. That is perfectly true: the colony can; but I say if he places those burdens upon this colony together with unremunerative works he is greatly imperilling the capability of the colony to come out creditably in the end; whereas if he and the Government of the country would but consent to let the colony work out its own destiny in a natural way, without attempting to discount its future by great borrowing, we should soon arrive at a very much healthier state of affairs. We find ourselves now asked to authorize loans without the least provision being made for the payment of the interest on those loans. The honourable gentleman told us that the colonists of New Zealand slandered their own country by saying that if this borrowing goes on the colony will not be able to meet its liabilities. I have always held that whatever liabilities this colony incurred it would always meet them, and I believe that no colonist has ever seriously said that there was the slightest probability of the colony not meeting its engagements. I do not fear that at all. There will never be such a thing, I am convinced, in the history of this colony as incapacity to meet its engagements. The money-lenders are quite safe. But it is the colonists of New Zealand we have to think of. We have to think of the burdens which must be placed upon them if this borrowing policy goes on in this reckless fashion, without even any attempt on the part of this House to treat it in a businesslike manner. We are to go on raising loans from year to year, without knowing in the least how we are going to pay the interest on them; and we are actually to make a pretence of remitting taxation

at a time when there is a deficiency of £100,000 staring us in the face next year. Sir, "it is a far cry to Loch Awe." London is a long distance away from us. We are not brought into immediate contact with our creditors; but I say that if the people who subscribe our loans had the least idea of the present condition of affairs in this country our next loan would be a dead failure. I am convinced that if the Stock Exchange had the slightest idea of what we are doing in this Bill we should not float our loan, or we should have to float it on such conditions as are imposed on very shaky countries. And they would have good reason to put us on a par with such countries when they see a Government coming down and proposing a loan of £1,500,000 when it is absolutely not able to come within £100,000 of its ordinary expenditure. I should like now to say a word or two as to the effect of this borrowing policy. We hear it stated here, and we hear it all over the country, that we cannot stop borrowing—that to stop would bring about disaster. I deny that entirely, and I say that if we were to stop borrowing immediately it would be the very best thing for the country. I believe now that, if we could borrow no more on the London money-market, except for the effect it might have on private credit it would be the best thing that could happen to the country. Our railways do not pay. There is no getting over the fact that the farther we extend our railway system the less revenue we get from it. The gross revenue is less, and the net revenue is a great deal less. We have to pay out of consolidated revenue, apart from railway revenue, more every year in proportion as we extend the mileage of our lines, in order to pay interest on the construction of those lines. These are facts which cannot be got over, for we have returns laid on the table showing that it is so. You may say that that is because the railways are not properly managed. But why are they not properly managed? Because the system is essentially vicious, from any sound commercial point of view. The House will have it that the railways are to be treated as the Post and Telegraph Departments, and are not to be used for revenue purposes, but for the convenience of the public. One Ministry after another has given in on that point. They may have struggled for a short time against it, but in the end they have always had to give in; and then they defend it by saying that the public gets the convenience, and that the money is in their pockets if it is not in the Treasury. But the interest on the loans has to be paid, and if they do not take that out of the pockets of those who use the railways they have to take it out of the pockets of those who do not use them, for the benefit of those who do. Therefore, regarded from the point of view from which the Treasurer regarded it when he brought down his policy of 1870 namely, that the railways should be the means from which to raise the funds to pay the interest on the loans—the railway policy has been a complete failure. Then, we are told that there are so many people employed on these public works that if you suddenly stopped them it must lead to disaster. I do not agree with that at all. I say nothing has kept down the exports of this country so much as the withdrawal of large bodies of labourers from profitable work to put them on unprofitable work. Every man's labour is worth so much money if devoted to a profitable object, but we have directed a large part of the labour of this colony, besides vast sums of capital and a great amount of energy, to these public works, and for the last sixteen years all this has been devoted to unprofitable works which have never returned any interest in proportion to the capital and the labour which have been expended on them; whereas if all that capital, and all that labour, and all that energy had been employed on productive industry, whether it were farming, or mining, or anything else, there would have been a vast deal more wealth in the colony, and the exports of the colony would have been greatly increased. I say that, if to-morrow you ceased borrowing and stopped all these public works, the effect would be that you would divert your labour and your capital to profitable work, and in twelve months' time the colony would be far richer than it is at present. There is nothing to be gained by unprofitable works going on; and I shall welcome the day when there arises in New Zealand a statesman who will have the boldness to announce that he will put a stop to all these unprofitable works, in spite of the unpopularity it may bring upon him. I do not wish to make any attack on the Government in regard to this measure or in regard to their public works policy. I believe the Prime Minister has made an earnest endeavour to bring public opinion into the right channel, which will lead to a cessation of the borrowing policy; but he has grievously disappointed me and a great many others who wished to work with him in that direction, by allowing things to take place which were not in accordance with the views he expressed. He has undoubtedly an amount of public enthusiasm which not many other men in the colony possess. I should not go too far if I were to say that he rises to a height of patriotism which inspires admiration even in his most bitter antagonists; but, then, his words are not kept in countenance by the deeds of his colleagues, and he will be judged not by the noble speeches he has made or the patriotic words he has uttered, but by the ignoble deeds of his Ministry, as perpetuated in Acts of Parliament. I had hoped that the Premier, by the noble stand he took in the recess, in which, I am bound to say, he was followed by the Treasurer in the speech which he delivered in Auckland, was going to lead the country in a direction in which it was willing to be led—that they were going to lead this colony away from its dependence on borrowed money—to get rid, as soon as possible, of a loan policy as the permanent policy of the country. But what has the honourable gentleman done? This is the result in the Bill we have before us. The mountain was in labour, and it brought forth a ridiculous mouse. We

re to do away with a borrowing policy—to ake such a revolution in the affairs of the untry as has never yet come to pass; and e result is—the schedule to this Bill! I d hoped most sincerely that the Government re going to take a new departure. They me into office in 1884 under totally new cirmstances—a powerful combination backed by a large majority. Everything was new, d they were hampered by no old traditions, that they had every chance to strike out a w line; and what have they done? I say, ith sincere regret and deep disappointment, at those honourable gentlemen have simply rpetuated the bad old system of bribing calities with public works. What is the hedule to this Bill? Can any man pretend at these railways are necessary or remunerave? The honourable gentlemen themselves do t think so. Every one knows that these railays are as bad as any which have ever been ade in the colony, some of them far worse. is simply a surrender to the old bad system governing this colony and ruling this House the distribution of borrowed money among calities which would be able to give them olitical support. I do not say this in any ostile spirit; I would say the same to any ther Government; but I blame those honourble gentlemen especially, because they have ot made a new departure: they had everyhing at their back, and they could have made change if they had chosen; but they surendered to difficulties which they might have ot over. That is what I blame them for, and pecially I blame the Premier for leading the ountry to hope that he would take that new eparture which should have been taken in 884. I do not wish to discuss the details of he schedule at this stage; but I would ask onourable gentlemen to look down the list nd say whether there are more than one or wo of these railways which could not be left lone for years to come, and possibly many left lone altogether. I will only take one instance —that, is the railway from the Thames to Te Aroha. Is it conceivable, under any condition f things, when we are pretending that we are going to put a stop to borrowing and to reform the whole of our public works system, that we should be actually renewing a line which it has been shown cannot possibly pay? Even the honourable members for the district themselves put their tongue in their cheek when they say it will pay. We remember the circumstances under which it was begun. It was begun in a most improper way. The money was absolutely not voted for it, but for another railway altogether—the Hamilton to Te Aroha Railway; and the way in which this line got placed on the schedule to the Public Works Act was very extraordinary, and was severely criticised in this House. It was begun seven years ago, £50,000 has been expended on it, and there is not a locomotive running on it at this moment; and yet we are going to spend another £80,000 on it! The Minister for Public Works has not shown that there is any necessity for it, and nobody has shown that it can possibly pay. That is an instance of what we are still doing: we are simply perpetuating a policy which has been condemned on all sides in this House, and condemned on every public platform throughout the country—the making of railways that do not pretend in any respect to realize the aspirations of the public works policy, but which lead to expenditure in districts and secure political support from those districts. I will not go through the list of the other railways; but I say there are many others in this schedule quite as bad as the one I have mentioned. In fact, I venture to say there are not more than one or two of them which answer the conditions laid down by the Premier in his speech at Dunedin as being necessary and remunerative. Some may be justifiable, although not profitable; but I say the effect of this schedule, if carried out, will be to enormously increase the permanent charges on the taxpayers, and in no way to relieve them from the burdens they have to bear. Of course, it is of no use for any one to hope at this stage that he can alter this Bill or defeat its passage. I have not spoken at all during the debate on this Loan Bill, but I felt that, having taken a very strong stand on this point whenever I have appeared before the public as a politician, I should not have done my duty to myself or to those I represent if I did not say what I have said on the third reading. I deplore the object of this Bill in the shape in which it is now. I had hoped that this session we should put a stop to borrowing; but this Bill does not go at all in that direction, but rather tends in the opposite direction. It is committing us to greater borrowing in the future than we have been accustomed to in the past. Next year another loan will be necessary, and so, year after year, it will go on, and all on account of this measure. That is a matter which is deeply to be deplored, and I greatly regret that the Government should have thrown over their promise of the recess and brought down a measure which is sure to have these consequences. Sir, I myself have always been of opinion that the borrowing policy was the very curse of the country,—that it has demoralized the country from top to bottom. I know that when the honourable gentleman instituted the borrowing policy he did not for a moment contemplate what the consequence would be upon the habits of the people. Sir, it has had this effect: Wherever the borrowed money has been spent in lavish sums there has arisen a degree of speculation so reckless, so shortsighted, that it has substituted for a solvent proprietary an insolvent proprietary, the slaves of the money-lenders; and it has checked production to a degree that is not easy to calculate. As I have seen it stated, great tracts of country which formerly produced rich crops of grain, or of pasture, or what not, have, for many years past, produced no crop whatever but a crop of promissory notes. That is exactly the case. Why, Sir, there are properties in this colony which, before the borrowing policy was instituted, were, in-

hands of the owners, producing a large amount of wealth—properties to the extent of at least two millions sterling, which at this moment are in the hands of the money-lenders, occupied by their pensioners or agents, by men in possession—not owned at all by the people whose names are attached to them. I am well within the mark when I say that the great lending companies hold properties to the value of two millions sterling. Is that a happy state of affairs?

An Hon. MEMBER.—A great deal more.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Yes, I know that. I said two millions, but was thinking only of two lending companies. I say there are two loan companies that are at present in possession of landed properties, to the value of two millions sterling, that the nominal owners do not hold a single shilling of interest in: they are there simply as the pensioners of those great companies, or are worse than pensioners—they are their slaves, working out their servitude, working out their lives and their energies, their very hearts, not to establish themselves and their families as colonists, but to pay 10 or 15 or 20 per cent interest to be divided among the shareholders of the loan companies. That is one of the effects of the borrowing policy. It has also created throughout this colony a want of dependence on honest toil and patient thrift which has led to vast loss of wealth to the colony. It has led, too, to a false standard of living, which has made the people of the colony throw away millions in the aggregate which they might have had in their possession for themselves and their families, to make them an independent, brave, and noble people. This has been the indirect effect of the borrowing policy; and I say, speaking as a born colonist and one who loves his country dearly—I say that the mere burden of taxation, the mere waste of money, is a small thing in comparison with the evil of the demoralization of the people from top to bottom that we see in consequence of the public expenditure of borrowed money. We see, since the year 1870, the same dependence upon the Government—private and public bodies depending upon the Government—our towns crowded with people who could earn a living with the greatest ease if they did not think they would get money from the Government. We see our grand colony spoilt because we have committed ourselves to capitalists at the other end of the world, instead of depending on our own thews and sinews to produce our living and a handsome competence, which they would easily do in this magnificent country. These are the reasons which have induced me to speak, and why I should never lose an opportunity, if I have it, of protesting against a policy which I am convinced is wrong in principle in its inception, which has been executed in a manner that has brought the colony into the terrible state of affairs we see to-day, and which has placed upon it the incubus that we see upon it. Sir, I beg to move, That this Bill be read the third time this day three months.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I wish to make a personal explanation. The honourable gentleman who spoke last stated—and he stated perfectly correctly—that I said on some occasion—I believe, on several occasions—that I hoped the day would never come when we should cease borrowing. But it was then argued that I meant that we should never cease borrowing in the London market and spending in the colony. Now, that was not my idea. I believe that we should borrow in New Zealand, and that the time will come when New Zealand will not only supply all this Government wants to borrow, but when it will also lend to other nations beyond. My meaning, in short, was this: that any nation that ceased borrowing must be going down-hill—must have ceased to grow; and I always accompanied the expression that I hoped we should never cease borrowing with an explanation. I would point out that at the present moment the railway companies in England, which are represented by the Government here, are borrowing very largely to construct new railways; it was only the other day they intended to borrow £10,000,000 to make a canal from Manchester to Liverpool; the Harbour Boards in Great Britain, too, are always borrowing: and in that sense I earnestly hope the day will never come when we shall cease borrowing. I rose to explain what my meaning was in using those words.

Mr. JOYCE.—Sir, I listened with very great attention to the speech of the honourable member for Selwyn, and must congratulate him on its fluency—its remarkable fluency. And, Sir, in the line in which he shines best he was really wonderfully successful. Sir, the line in which that honourable gentleman usually shines best is that of a Cassandra in trousers. Honourable members who are perhaps not conversant with the classics may not object to be told that this lady, on condition of certain advantages to be derived by Apollo, was promised by that mythological personage the gift of prophecy. The lady did not fulfil her part of the contract—I will not say who the political Apollo is: possibly the honourable member for Egmont—and because that lady did not fulfil her part of the contract Apollo ordained that her prophecies should never be worth the breath with which they were uttered. In that respect I congratulate the honourable gentleman as, as I said just now, a Cassandra in trousers. His speech from end to end was a tissue—a series of prophecies which I hope, and I know every member in this House but himself must hope, will not be fulfilled. His disposition may be such that he can look with complacency on the ruin of this colony—on its depopulation. He would not mind, perhaps, that we should lose the men who are here. He may be so misanthropic as to desire to have New Zealand to himself—to be the last man of New Zealand, and to wander over it, and to live on wild fruits and potatoes. That is the meaning of every word he has said this evening. From what he has told us just now we must suppose that seventeen years ago, or whatever the time was when the

ublic works were started, the proper course as to have sat down, and have grown our own otatoes, and have lived upon them. To say hat our exports would have been greater without the public works is to say that which very man's sense convinces him cannot be rue. We could not have anything like the xports or anything like the industries without he public works. But, Sir, I feel ashamed o be uttering such truisms; I cannot conceive such a state of mind as would enable ny one to conclude that the colony would have een in a better position to-day without the ublic works than with them. The honourable entleman's speech—and in that he still preerves that femininity which is so delightful n him—was excessively discursive. He dedared that he would like nothing better for the olony than the cessation of borrowing. Sir, I erfectly agree with him: there extremes meet, s they do sometimes. I have long been in avour of a rigid system of Protection, and of rogressive land and income taxes; and, Sir, he day we cannot borrow another penny—and t will come, I suppose, to that some day—then ll these things will become absolutely necessary to us if the colony is not to be depopulated, r, rather, if the population is not to be reduced o that point that taxation will be unbearable o the community. To say the railways do not ay! I never heard a greater fallacy than to ay the railways do not pay, merely because hey do not pay interest. No one conversant with the facts in the smallest possible way ould say that. Let me repeat what was stated in my presence the other day by two plain men. They were talking about the railways—about their not paying, and being a burden to the colony. "Well!" said one to the other, "I do not know. My brother lives at such-and-such a place: there is no railway to it, and his sugar costs him 8d. a pound, and his tea in proportion I live here near a railway, and my sugar costs me only 3d. a pound, and my tea in proportion." Is that no advantage for districts to derive? You cannot bring that advantage to book—there is the difficulty. The railways, I say, are paying splendidly even now. The railways have not produced the depression; the honourable member ought to know that. He ought to know that the depression we suffer from is due to the diminished prices of produce, and that, although there has been a rise, and we hope for a still greater rise, the value of the produce, the wool and grain, on which the rise has taken place has not yet been brought to book—the change has taken place so recently that it has had no effect upon the figures of the Treasurer. It has not yet begun to show; but it will show, and I hope will have the effect of restoring that equilibrium which ought to exist between income and expenditure. Sir, the honourable gentleman spoke of the borrowing policy having demoralized the community from top to bottom. I wonder in which part of that community he stations himself. Is he at the top or at the bottom; and how does he feel affected? The honourable member's tone was such as really to tempt a slight personalism on my part. The honourable member poses as a censor of the community; and, as a humble member of that community, I may be permitted to ask, "Who made you a Judge amongst us?" Well, I do not claim that superiority over the ordinary feelings of humanity. I do not claim that superiority which some seem to think exists.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Hear, hear.

Mr. JOYCE.—Sir, I would say this: that there is no member of this House but feels flattered when that honourable gentleman objects to what they say. I have to say, in my closing remarks, something of this sort: It has been thrown out against the Treasurer that his policy—or alleged policy—of borrowing ten millions, to be expended over a term of six or seven years, was unwise. I myself regret that the House would not consent to adopt it; for I do honestly believe that it would have restored confidence and have done great good if the people of the colony could have been assured that for a term of years there would have been expenditure on public and, I would say, reproductive works, and that there would be no fear of a sudden collapse; though I do say that it would have been well that the works should have been put in the schedules, and provision made against excessive expenditure in any one year. I have said now, perhaps, quite enough—perhaps more than some honourable members think I should have said; but I could not let the honourable member for Selwyn's depressing and prejudicial remarks—remarks similar to those uttered by his colleagues some years ago, and which we have felt the evil effects of ever since—pass without expressing my opinion of them. When we speak evil of ourselves, when we befoul our own nests, when, for a momentary political purpose, we venture to make broad statements, expressing at the same time a hope that they will be repeated in the statistical papers in the Home-country, to the prejudice of the loan this House desires to raise, then it becomes the duty of any man having the prosperity of the colony at heart to say something in condemnation and, possibly, in retort.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—I hope the honourable member who spoke last is better up in his statistics than he is in classical knowledge. Cassandra was famous for prophesying what was true, not what was false. When Cassandra was young a serpent licked her on the ear, and gave her such extraordinarily sharp hearing that she could hear the future. But Apollo cursed her, and said that, while she was so very clever, no one would believe what she said. But she was always right; and the consequence of not believing her predictions was that Troy was lost. She prophesied that the Greeks were going to take the city by means of a wooden horse, and Troy fell because she was not believed. I trust that will not be the case here. The Apollo in this case is not the honourable member for Egmont: the Premier is the Apollo who has thrown a glamour over the House. I believe the prophecy of the honourable member for

perfectly correct; but the curse is, he is not believed. I hope that next time the information of the honourable member for Awarua will be more correct, and that he will be luckier with it. I only got up to correct him, because it is right that our classical knowledge should be in first-class order. The honourable member for Moeraki the other night said something which caused me to defend my brother and the honourable member for Mount Ida, who were absent. He said he would repeat the same thing in this House when they were present, and I hope he will do so.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—I do not profess to know much about Cassandra, or Apollo either; but all I have to say is, that if Apollo cursed a woman he was not a gentleman. I have no wish to draw honourable gentlemen's attention to ancient history, but rather to induce them to look for a few moments at the history we are building up in this our country. I suppose I shall be placed amongst those who are called "croakers" if I give full expression to the strong opinions which I hold in relation to the railway policy of this country. Whilst I recognize that the construction of railways is extremely useful under certain conditions, it appears to me that such a policy may be carried to extremes; and I venture to think this country is at the present moment making a new departure in our railway policy which is not warranted by the condition of the country or the necessities of the inhabitants. I have felt extremely grieved at the scanty information given to the House by the Minister in charge of this department when requesting us to vote large sums of money for railways in various parts of the country. I do not wish to wander away from my subject, but I have a strong impression in my own mind that the Minister for Public Works himself is as fully convinced as I am that many of these railways which he has been compelled to place in this schedule will not in the immediate future pay anything like the working expenses. I challenged the first vote on the schedule, and endeavoured to get the Committee to strike that out; but they saw it in a different light from the light I saw it in, and that vote and many others were carried. The Committee appears to have taken a stand upon what it chooses to conceive to be a new railway policy; but I have a strong conviction that if the first line on the schedule is carried to its legitimate issue it will be another drag on the prosperity of the country. It has been stated by honourable gentlemen that it is absolutely necessary to continue a borrowing policy; but I have not found one honourable gentleman who has endeavoured to explain what is the necessity for this perpetual borrowing policy. We admit that the results of the borrowed money, so far as we have gone up to the present time, have been extremely unsatisfactory; and when we compare the position of our railways of to-day with the bright future prophesied for them by the Treasurer in 1870, if we are honest men we shall all confess that there is a great discrepancy between his prophecy and the actual state of affairs in 1886. And I am afraid—perhaps I am of a timid disposition — that ten years hence any men assembled in this Chamber to discuss what is good for the country will look back upon our action in 1886 with as much dissatisfaction as some of us look back on the action of the House in 1870, when we began this policy. The Prime Minister has told us that in future the whole of the borrowed money is to be devoted to railway-construction, and that only. It is a policy I disagree with at the outset; because I say, if the policy up to the present moment has been so unsatisfactory, when at least one-half of the money has been spent on the construction of roads and other useful works to feed the railways, what will be our condition in future, when all the loans are to be allocated to railway purposes only? If our railways pay only 2½ per cent., when thirteen and a half millions have been spent in making roads to get to them, what will be the position of these railways in future that have no roads made to them? They will pay absolutely nothing, or less than nothing. I think that in every loan proposal a fair proportion should be allocated to roads and bridges, and for opening up Crown lands for sale. It appears to me that our railway policy has gone far in excess of our demands. It is perhaps not generally known that this country possesses six times as many miles of railway in proportion to population as England, and three miles to one in America, which is supposed to be the premier railway-country in the world. From the information supplied to us by the Government as to the way in which these railways are to be constructed, I feel satisfied that this new departure in railway-construction is not a question of a million and a half, but of many millions, in order to complete those railways to paying points. Those who have taken the trouble to obtain information are aware that these votes will not complete any one of those railways to a paying point. I have held for some years that it is necessary to go on with railway-construction, but that the colony should make a great effort to concentrate its forces so as to complete each railway in its order of merit, and I came here prepared, and am still prepared, to vote sufficient money for the completion of that railway in New Zealand, irrespective of locality, which, in my opinion and in the opinion of a majority of the House, will be most likely to return remuneration in the shape of interest on the cost of construction; and when that railway was completed I should be prepared to vote a sufficient sum of money to complete the next line of railway in the order of merit. This fragmentary construction of railways has been the ruin of the system, and it is to be continued until the colony's credit is almost exhausted. Let me come back to the Premier's proposal to borrow only for railways. His policy appears to be that the whole cost of constructing roads and bridges shall be thrown on the localities. That means enormously-increased taxation; and, although he, as Prime Minister of the colony, will tell

probably, that the increase in our taxation not to be compared with the benefits derived m railways, he must admit that the increased ation required for roads and bridges must heavy if the railways are to be of any service. nce it seems to me that, whatever the cirmstances of the colony may be in the future, taxation is bound to increase very mateally in the not distant future. I do not wish cast on the present Government the blame all the ills the colony is suffering, and I do t know that they are to be credited with the tremely poor plight in which we are now. have unbounded confidence in the future of e country; but I have grave apprehension at the line of policy now being adopted by e Government as to the construction of m-paying fragmentary railways will in the mediate future be exceedingly disastrous to is young country.

Mr. PEACOCK.—I had intended to make a w remarks on the third reading of this Bill fore the amendment was moved; and, though me of the speakers have dealt with some of e points to which I intended briefly to refer, think I am entitled to give expression to my n opinions in my own words. In the debate the second reading of this Bill I stated that did not object to the amount of the proposed an, although I took exception to the manner which it was proposed to be spent. Now, y objection had three forms. First, I considered that the amount to be borrowed should ot be all expended on railways. In the next lace, I thought that the Government, in making appropriation-arrangements for two years, ad underestimated the necessities of the ountry, and that there was more need of oney than was apparent from their Financial Statement—that the tables appended to the Financial Statement showed that additional oney was required for the general purposes of he colony; and I thought it would be wise if om the amount proposed to be borrowed a considerable proportion were set aside to meet general works and to supply the deficiency which evidently existed from the Treasurer's Statement. There was another point in the proposals of the Bill to which I objected, and that was as to the kind of railways—that some of the railways mentioned in the schedule as those to which the money was to be applied seemed to me unnecessary to be made at the present time, considering the financial condition of the colony, and the fact that the burden of taxation is already large, and will be added to very largely by the loan we are now about to authorize. But I was very much surprised indeed at the action of the Government when, after they had made an arrangement, before going into Committee, that, if in Committee the House saw fit to reduce the total amount in the schedule, they would alter the Bill to correspond with the reduced schedule, they did not adhere to that arrangement; and I was still more surprised when they came down and asked that this sum of £175,000 which had been struck off two lines should be revoted in blank. I was very glad that those two lines were struck out, and I should have been glad if more had been struck out as to which there is evidence that they do not comply with the conditions which the Government placed before the House as those which should guide their policy—namely, that money should only be spent on those lines certain to pay and to bring in early returns to the revenue. The Treasurer stated that he must have this money—that this £175,000 is absolutely necessary for his finance, and that the most lamentable results would follow its being withheld. He stated that if he did not get it he should have to contract his expenditure during the present year, or to come down for another loan next year, or to take a part of the North Island Trunk Loan for other purposes which he coveted during the earlier part of this year. What are we to make of this vacillation on the part of the Government? First, during the recess, we have their intention to take the North Island Trunk Line Loan and apply part of it for purposes other than that for which it was authorized; and then, when the country took exception to that policy, even in those places where it was expected to elicit the heartiest amount of support, they turn round and profess to be very desirous that the trunk line loan should be so "ear-marked" that it would not be possible to apply the money to any other purpose than that of constructing the line itself. Then they come down with a Bill to give effect to that purpose, but at the same time they ask us to divert a portion of the loan to another purpose. Then, we find in the Bill before us a proposal to so "ear-mark" the amounts set down for each line that it would be impossible that any portion of the several sums could be used for any other purpose. I should like to know what is the meaning of clause 16, if that is not what it is intended to do. Here it is distinctly stated:—

"The said moneys shall be carried to a separate account in the Public Works Fund, and shall from time to time be issued therefrom and applied to the construction of the several lines and to the other purposes mentioned in the said schedule in such amounts and within such periods only as shall be provided by any Act or Acts to be passed by the General Assembly for the appropriation of such moneys. And it is hereby expressly declared that it shall not be within the power of the Governor to recommend to Parliament the appropriation of any part of the money hereby authorized to be borrowed to any purposes other than those set forth in the said schedule, or, in respect of each of such purposes, to a greater amount in the whole than the sum respectively set opposite to each."

Now, what are we to make of the statement of the Treasurer that it was absolutely necessary to have this £175,000 as a working-balance for the Public Works Fund? I should like to ask how it was possible, if the money was to be so "ear-marked" as provided in clause 16, that it would still be open to be [illegible] other purposes in connection w[illegible]

works. This must be one of two things: either this clause 16 was a sham, or else the Treasurer's statement as to the terrible consequences of reducing the loan by £175,000 was an entirely hollow threat. I have stated my opinion that the Treasurer has not taken into account the necessities of the country for general purposes, and that it will be necessary that he should come down to the House next year with a loan for those purposes. I wish the Treasurer would plainly face the difficulty, and come openly to the House and tell it plainly what he requires, rather than leave it to a future time; for I feel assured that, if he continues to defer stating what money is wanted by the colony for general public works purposes, he will only add still more to the distrust which is felt in the country in regard to his finance, and the day of reckoning will not be much longer delayed. In the debate on the second reading I suggested that provision might fairly be made by striking out several lines that could not possibly be reproductive, and the money could, if it were desired, be devoted to the purchase of Native land along the route of the North Island Trunk line. It is necessary to purchase that land, as the Government have admitted; but in Committee the Premier took exception to such a proposal on the ground that by it would be devoted to the purchase of Native land in the North Island money that was intended to be devoted to railways in the South Island, thus unduly favouring the North Island. I desire most emphatically to protest against any such doctrine being put forth by the Premier in this House. The purchase of Native land is a matter of colonial concern, and, when any land purchased is likely to be enhanced in value by the construction of railways or other public works, I say the colony is entitled to receive the benefit resulting from those public works, and from the increased value given to the land. From the public works, and the extension of settlement due to those, the whole colony is entitled to get the benefit, and not any particular part of the colony. I wish merely to say this: that I shall support the third reading of the Bill, although I should have preferred several of these lines still in the schedule being taken out. I should be glad, also, if part of the money to be borrowed under this Bill were to be devoted to general purposes; for I should be pleased indeed if the Treasurer would show that for the next two years the colony will be able to do without another loan for general purposes.

Mr. MOSS.—I think I have a right to complain of my honourable friend the member for Awarua depriving me to-night of the proud distinction I have enjoyed as the Cassandra of this House; but I am glad to say that before the honourable member concluded the wrong he had done me appeared to strike him. He referred to the honourable member for Selwyn as "the Cassandra of the South;" so that I may assume that I still retain the distinction of being the Cassandra of the North. When the honourable member for Motueka got up, I could not help asking myself, "Is Saul too among the prophets?" The honourable gentleman charged me with generally taking a gloomy view of matters; but this debate is well adapted above all things to inspire any one with hope. I do not know that I have ever heard in this House a debate more calculated to revive hope in those who have almost given up hope than the debate on this Bill has been. Member after member has got up and stated frankly what he felt and what his opinion was as to the position of the colony. I cannot help thinking that much of that is due to the coolness of this side of the House—the cool shades of Opposition. That has, no doubt, an admirable effect, and I believe that, if in the course of two or three years honourable gentlemen now sitting on the other side of the House are in turn transferred to this side, they will take an equally sound view of the finances of the colony, and that we may then, as a whole House, determine to place them on a sound basis. That determination once taken, I, for one, have no fear of the result. It is the stolidity with which we have drifted on, the absence of any visible end, that has always alarmed me, and I am rejoiced to see that it is now alarming many other honourable members. I have listened to the denunciations of the Colonial Treasurer as the cause of all our difficulties, and I do not think anything could be more unfair, and there is nothing I would more strongly protest against. I have heard during this debate the Treasurer denounced in the strongest terms.

An Hon. MEMBER.—By whom?

Mr. MOSS.—Well, by the honourable member for Geraldine, for one. What are the real facts of the case so far as the Treasurer is concerned? I have had the pleasure of knowing that honourable gentleman for, I should say, twenty-five years, and, I think, during that time we have hardly agreed on one political question. I do not think we have an idea in common as to the best means of advancing the interests of the colony. But I know the honourable gentleman well enough to believe he is perfectly sincere in his ideas, that he thoroughly believes in them, and that it is not altogether his fault that they have not been successful. I blame infinitely more those who, not believing in his ideas, have yet taken a hand in carrying them out, to an extent, perhaps, that he hardly dreamt of. When the honourable member for Geraldine was speaking the other night I recalled the position of affairs some five or six years ago, when twenty-three of us walked into the lobby against the borrowing proposals of the Government of which that honourable gentleman was a member—when we begged and almost prayed the then Ministers, including that honourable gentleman, while the country was prosperous, to take advantage of the opportunity, and to taper off when it would be easy to do so. And what was the reply? "Impossible, impossible. If we attempt to reduce the expenditure we shall throw ten thousand people out of employment."

An Hon. MEMBER.—Three thousand.

Mr. MOSS.—I think it was ten. At any to, it was some terrible number. During this ibate I have more than once recalled to y mind the fact that twenty-three of us alked into the lobby and declared that we did ot share those fears, that we thought there as great danger in pursuing the policy the overnment was then launched upon, and that time was so favourable as a time of proerity for what is now called "tapering off," id bringing the finances again into a sound ndition. What is the result? Of those renty-three, some have lost heart, some have spersed, some have got into the trammels of arty, and some have been pressed by their nstituents to change their views; and I have ten found myself almost alone protesting, ill protesting, year after year; and I protest ow as strongly as ever. But let us put the ame on the right shoulders. Do not let nourable gentlemen one after another get p and declare the Treasurer solely responble. Infinitely more blameworthy are those ho, not believing in the policy, yet proceeded carry it out. Of course, in speaking as I , I am aware that the position is a very unleasant one—one that renders a member obxious to both sides of the House, isolates im, and causes him to be misunderstood. I am erfectly aware of the penalty that one suffers om getting into such a position. But I can aly say that I have been so strongly coninced that I am right that I have been ready pay the penalty; and I shall willingly coninue to pay the penalty until a better day awns upon the country. The honourable ember for Motueka asks what is the necesity for this borrowing. Is it necessary to nswer such a question? What we have to ook in the face is this: that we have estalished a system of bribing local bodies throughut the country. We began it in 1870, when we ribed them in every direction—bribed them o surrender their liberty of local self-governnent, bribed them to surrender institutions nder which they had lived for five-and-twenty ears, and under which the country had propered. Had that system not been broken own, it would have been impossible for us to ave borrowed and wasted as we have done or the last ten years. Let honourable memers ask themselves, frankly and honestly, Is t possible for us to keep alive the system that as then established? We destroyed "nine eggars," as they were called, and we created t least ninety in their place. Ever since hen we have been plunging deeper into debt; nd I venture to say that so long as this sysem lasts so long must we go on borrowing; nd, whatever Government may be on those enches, unless they are prepared to face the hole question, they will be obliged to do as very other Government have done before them. again ask—I wish I could ask it in stronger erms—what must be the fate of the country f we go on as we are going on? We have our hoice: we may either face it like men, volunarily, or we shall be compelled to face it in the nidst of a breakdown and disaster. What we want is to relieve this Assembly of local works, and revert to something like the position of things that existed in the past, when there was, at all events, apparent purity in public affairs. Of course I am speaking of purity in legislation. I wish not to be misunderstood. I am not saying anything in reference to the administration. No one will speak about that. I mean purity in the legislation of the country. We should strive to cast local works on the local bodies; and if we do not strive for this voluntarily—if we do not face it willingly—I believe the time is not far distant when we shall have to face it. I understood the Premier to say that the present system would not last two years longer.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Mr. MOSS.—Well, at any rate, he said that it would last a very short time. I beg of honourable members to notice what is going on now. Since this Assembly met three months ago our debentures have gone down 2½ per cent.—they have fallen from 99½ to 98 with 1 per cent. of accrued interest since this House met; while the debentures of other colonies have not gone down, nor have Consols fallen. The fact simply is that we are straining our credit because we are entering upon premature works—works that should not have been begun for another twenty years at the earliest. The honourable member for Auckland East holds that we must continue to borrow, but that we should borrow from ourselves. This is a most important condition, and if we could adopt that course I should be satisfied, because there would be an efficient check. We should not be able to borrow too much, because we could not get the money. Now, I desire to say that I cannot vote for the motion of the honourable member for Selwyn. I would do so with pleasure if I could see my way; but I regard the stoppage of borrowing as impossible, unless it is accompanied with other large measures. We are told sometimes that half a loaf is better than no bread: but no wise man would try to hatch from half an egg, and that seems to me a far more suitable simile. When the Government brought down proposals this year, they told us that they intended that money borrowed for the future should only be applied to the construction of railways; but they made not the slightest effort to provide roads, and bridges, and buildings, which they know have for years past been provided exclusively out of borrowed money. If they are only going to provide money for railways, they must enable the local bodies to deal with these other matters. I am not forgetting these local-government Bills that we have had brought before us; but they seem to me totally inadequate. The question is too large to discuss now; but I may say this: that I am sorry that this Government did not undertake the work of giving us a sound system of local government. Of course they might have lost their lives [illegible] Government had they made the [illegible] so. I believe that half-a-d[illegible]s may yet have to lose th[illegible]

shall get something satisfactory in that way. But I did hope that the present Government would have done something in this direction. I especially hoped for it when I heard the Premier lay down such strong views on the subject of local government; and what I should like to see him do now is, not to tell us what he said at Dunedin, or Invercargill, or Auckland, but what he intends to do. The Government have been in office two years, and have done very little towards carrying out the policy they announced. I still hope that they will initiate and bring down a policy worthy of them—something which will really enable us to put limits to borrowing, and enable the local bodies to do the work which this Assembly is attempting to do, but cannot. If the Government rise to the occasion—if they decide to sacrifice office, if need be, in order to lay their views before the country; for they have the right to a dissolution—I believe that the country will welcome their policy, and they certainly will not have a more energetic or more earnest supporter than myself. I trust that they will yet bring down such a policy. Honourable members laugh; but on what other side of the House are we to look for it? The honourable member for Franklin North laughs most heartily of all. Will his side bring down such a policy? No. I am afraid that we shall not have it from any side of the House if not from the present Government. It is exceedingly difficult to speak on a matter like this with all these interruptions. I am sorry that honourable gentlemen will interrupt. It is very much more pleasant to speak when you are cheered, and when you know that you have a party at your back; but I beg honourable members to reflect that it is not so easy to speak when one stands almost alone in the House. I have often felt that I am rowing against the stream, that I have been rubbing the House the wrong way, and on many occasions I have had to thank honourable members for consideration shown to me. I have said all I intend to say. I wish I could instil my ideas into the Treasurer. He has on all sides been charged with bringing the colony into this difficulty. He sees that his policy is unacceptable to the House—that it has not turned out exactly as he expected. Well, it is now in his power to bring down a new policy; for, after all, he is not so tied to the past as to be unable to shake it off. He was absent during a great part of the time. It is quite open to him to bring down a new policy. With his constructive ability, and with the patriotic sentiments of the Premier, I should hope they might succeed. Let them determine, unitedly determine, to restore our finances to a sound condition, and to restore the local government without which it is impossible in any country to maintain the energy, spirit, and manhood of the people.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I have not troubled the House with any remarks at any previous stage of the debate, but I think the matter of such importance that I should just like to express some opinions which I have not yet heard expressed with regard to the matter. I look upon this as a policy to a certain extent making a new departure—the policy of borrowing solely for the purpose of railways—and I ask myself, Have we been so successful in the past in our expenditure upon railways—have we, as it was promised in the first instance, secured largely an increase in the settlement of the country by making railways? For my part, I answer that question in the negative. Looking at the last census paper I find that the increase of population during the last census term has been mainly in the large towns; and I think we can credit a very small portion of the increase in the country to the railways, notwithstanding that we were assured that railways were to populate this country and enable us to double our population in a few years. I find that it is impossible to make railways pay unless we largely increase our population. Is it reasonable that we should now enter upon the construction of railways less promising than those we have constructed in the past, without trying to make the railways we have pay? Why, look at the richest part of New Zealand—that between the Wanganui River and Patea: in what way has the railway benefited that district? Has it increased the population? The census papers show that it has not. But there are means by which it could vastly increase the population. I should have liked to have seen this loan appropriated for the purpose of purchasing first-class land along the line of our railways in order to locate a population along them, so as to secure their paying. I should like to see that done before we extend our railway system any further. It is said we are to extend our railway system now in order to bring each of them to a paying point. I believe that point to be like the bird in the story—the more we advance the more it flits away from us—and that the paying points will never be reached. We require to make railways to the different ports, to connect our producers with our water system. You make enormous main trunk lines in this country to compete with the sea-board instead, and expect them to pay. That will do a great deal towards ruining the railway system, and the steam system as well. The system we are now entering upon, it appears to me, is one which means abandoning the road-making in the country. I say the road-making in the past has been far more profitable in settlement than the railway-making. How can we get railways to pay or sufficient traffic afforded to them in the small valleys of this country? I believe we are making a mistake: and I could not allow this bill to be read a third time without putting on record, although in vain, the opinions which I hold on the subject.

Dr. NEWMAN.—Certainly the views expressed by different members of this House on this subject are about as discordant as they could possibly be. The honourable gentleman who has just sat down disbelieves in a trunk-railway policy; he believes in a small-railway policy, which policy, I venture to say, has never succeeded in any country. Then, we are

dd by various members that they look on the rrowing policy as the ruin of the country. should like to know what young country— old country—could possibly get on with- it borrowing. Has any one of the railways the Old Country been built without bor- wing? Take the Great Eastern or Great orthern lines: their indebtedness is larger an the whole debt of this colony. I quite gree with the honourable member for Auck- nd East when he says that he hopes this untry will never cease to borrow, because at would be an indication that it is a stag- nt country. The real principle at issue is is: As we shall always have borrowing if we ant progress, are we going to borrow in a ay that will be reproductive or not reproduc- ve? Members like the honourable member r Motueka get up and wail; and yet that onourable gentleman has voted for a railway hich he could not say will pay. The cardinal olicy of this Government was, to my thinking, a exceedingly good one. The Treasurer an- ounced at Gisborne, and afterwards at Ash- urton, that he wished to see our main trunk nes rapidly completed, and the other lines arried to paying points. The whole country rmly believed in his policy, and thought it as an exceedingly good one. The honourable entleman graphically depicted the slow and iserable way in which our lines were crawl- g along, and how many little bits of lines here were, and he said the profitable policy ould be to connect those branches; and he ent on further, in this House, to decry the olicy of his predecessors, and said the honour- ble member for Egmont's only criterion of the alue of railways was the expenditure which ent on during their construction—that he ad no real knowledge of the value of railways, hich were for the purpose of opening up the ountry and carrying produce; and he said, rom time to time, that it should be the policy f his Government to connect these lines. What has happened? Three Public Works tatements have been brought down by his overnment, and in those Statements the ardinal point of his policy has been frankly enied—in each one he has deliberately nored the very things which wafted him into ower. This Loan Bill is a most striking nstance of the most absolute denial of the onourable gentleman's policy, because half of he railways in the schedule cannot be carried o paying points for years and years to come, and he other lines will not be connected for years o come. On the other hand, take the line oining Wellington and the West Coast on one ide with Napier on the East Coast. There s a line which everybody admits will pay, and he sooner it is made the more profitable it rill be, because a large amount of traffic will pring up between Hawke's Bay and Welling- on, and Hawke's Bay and Taranaki. Hitherto ll the sheep, cattle, and goods have had to be erried across the Manawatu, and have had to o through the long, tortuous, and dangerous orge; and this militated very much against ny increase in the traffic in that direction. It was part of the honourable gentleman's policy, and of the policy of his Government, that this line should be rapidly completed. It was announced two years ago by those honourable gentlemen that this line would be completed within two years. I was convinced that that would not be done. Two years have come and gone, and it is perfectly certain, as far as I can see, that at least another two years will pass before that line is completed. The line between Napier and Wellington was begun in 1870—sixteen years ago—and it will take two years more to complete: that is, it will take eighteen or nineteen years to complete one of the main trunk lines of the colony. During that time many far less important lines have been begun. There has been a large expenditure in the South which, I believe, is not to be compared in value with the Otago Central. One of the most curious features of politics is this: that every year some cant phrase comes up. Last year we had the "machinery Bills," and then we had the "policy Bills," and now we have "ear-mark- ing Bills." If there is one thing that has shocked me more than anything else it is the loose way in which our accounts seem to be kept. For years I have been on the accounts committee of the city and on our Education Board, and we never ventured to dabble with money as it is dabbled with all over the pages of our various Acts. We pass a Bill expressly for a main trunk railway, and suddenly after- wards we pass a Bill to "ear-mark" the loan to be raised for its construction. In the Financial Statement it is stated that the loan will be strictly allocated, so that it cannot be diverted to any other purposes whatever; and yet, after passing a clause allocating it, the Treasurer comes down and says, by message from the Governor, "I want £175,000 for railways in the South Island;" and about ten minutes afterwards the honourable gentleman looks up to the gallery and says, "My words are reported, and no one can misunderstand me now. I want that £175,000 for general purposes." Could anything be a greater mon- strosity than the line which says, "Perma- nent-way, &c., for railways, £370,000"? Will any one venture to say that that is the truth? We know that it is not the truth. That £370,000 has nothing to do with railways—it is simply meant to go to general purposes. The all-important questions are, Can we borrow profitably? and, when we have borrowed, Will the money be devoted to profitable purposes or not? We are going to borrow £1,325,000, which will increase the taxation by £54,000 a year. Of course, if we do not put that money to profitable work, we have to raise the inter- est out of taxation. That is a hard fact which nobody can controvert. In this matter of railways it seems to me that this colony is getting most luxurious. In Great Britain there are only fifty-two miles of line for every hundred thousand people; in the greater por- tion of Europe there are less th[illegible]-two miles; in the United States [illegible] hundred and ten miles; an[illegible] land there are two hundre[illegible]

miles for every hundred thousand persons. In other words, though we have always looked upon the United States as a country very well supplied with railways, New Zealand has one-third more miles of railway per hundred thousand of population than that country. No doubt our railways have been far more cheaply constructed than those of any other land except Scandinavia; but, then, we may have too much of a good thing, and when we look at the Public Works Statement and the schedule of this Bill we must recognize that there are a great many railways put down here which will not pay. Then, I say that it is to be regretted that the Government, apparently in a moment of petulance, refused to allocate that £175,000 which they brought down. There is no doubt that, while we are borrowing, we might have borrowed a little more; and if that sum had been allocated to some of the railways now in course of construction it would have made them reproductive. Take, for instance, the Napier-Palmerston line: £40,000 or £50,000 expended on that line would have made it profitable. I shall not detain the House any longer, and will merely express the hope that the next Financial Statement and the next Public Works Statement we listen to will be more definite and more accurate than those we have had this session; for it was only after long discussion and through the speeches of members of the Opposition that the Government awoke to the fact that they had not sufficient money to keep them going to the 31st March, 1888. No matter what the Premier has said, it has been conclusively shown that they will not have sufficient; and I think it is much to be regretted that that fact should not have been clearly stated in so weighty a document as the Public Works Statement, which should be couched in such language that every colonist could understand it and believe in it as the platform of truth.

Mr. HOBBS.—I think the uneasy feeling which pervades the House in regard to this Loan Bill is caused by the fact that many of the items in the schedule have been supposed to be what honourable gentlemen call "political railways," or works for consolidating votes. Now, I think it is a very unkind thing that honourable members should accuse this Government of such a thing. They ought to know better than that. Another feeling has been that a great many of these railways are railways which would not pay, or new railways. My feeling has been, not against borrowing, but against borrowing for railways that are simply branch-lines, and railways which will not pay. I should just like to refer to some remarks which have been made with regard to this Loan Bill, and as to its containing no provision for railways in the Canterbury District. I fancy that one honourable member, who is now present, when he cheered that remark, laughed in his sleeve, for we know that the East and West Coast Railway—now called the Midland Railway—will take a million and a half acres of what we are led to believe is some of the richest land in the colony—perhaps not the richest for agricultural purposes, but for minerals and timber, and the untold wealth which is said to be lying there. If, instead of the Government coming down year after year asking us to vote dribblets of money to carry it on, this railway is to be carried out in a short space of time, I think we may congratulate honourable gentlemen from that part of the country that the work is being carried out by a syndicate. I do not make these remarks in any unfriendly spirit, as is shown by the fact that I voted for the measure; and I believe that wherever the Government will not carry out a work which they admit will be reproductive, and will not put sufficient money in the schedule to the Bill to carry it out within a certain specified space of time, they should not take a dog-in-the-manger view of the matter, but allow the work to be done by a syndicate. Several members from the South Island have told me that they were willing to vote for the North Auckland Railway being constructed in this way, and I would point out that it makes little difference to us whether the work is carried out by the Government or by a syndicate, so long as we get country opened up and people settled on it. I believe it is necessary that we should carry on to completion such works as are of a reproductive character. I was rather amused at the speech of the honourable member for Motueka. That honourable gentleman pursued the same tactics when the schedule of this Bill was before us that other night as he did in a somewhat similar case last year. He moved that the first item should be struck out last year, and thought he would catch honourable members this year in the same way. But he was disappointed, and I think, rightly so. We can give him credit for any amount of sincerity, but we all know well that those were the tactics he pursued, and I am glad that he has been disappointed this year. Referring to the railway north of Auckland, I confess I cannot understand what principle the Government follow in dealing with it. To put down £50,000 in this schedule, out of which only £6,000 is to be expended this year, is simply absurd. It would take fifteen years to complete the railway at that rate. It is a railway which, I am quite sure, is equal in importance to the Otago Central. I have not one word to say against that line, but I say that the railway north of Auckland is quite as important; and the Minister for Public Works has told this House before, in his Public Works Statements, that the line as far as it has been made is paying well and is very profitable. Therefore I can see no reason why this work should be delayed. I think that the Government, having come to the conclusion that this line is sure to pay, should come down with a fixed period in which it shall be completed. They should bring down a schedule of the main trunk lines from the north to the south of the colony, and estimates of what it will cost to complete them, take the sense of the House on the matter, and then stick to that understanding; but it is absurd to bring down these little branch-lines all over the colony.

Mr. *Newman*

ıh will cost millions to complete, and the of which we cannot see. If the Govern- t did as I say they should do, we should r what we were about, and the money- ers would know it. I say the amount put n for the North of Auckland line is simply nulous, and I hope the House will support view I take that the Government should, ar by Royal Commission or otherwise—and ve not much faith in Royal Commissions— g down some scheme for the completion of main lines. As it is, I feel it is humiliat- to bring such a sum down as £50,000 for main trunk line north of Auckland—a line ch is far more important than the trunk from Auckland to Wellington; and that aying a great deal. The portion which is pleted is paying at the rate of 7 per cent., when the whole line is completed it will handsomely. Therefore it is only natu- that I should feel indignant when I see ,000, £80,000, and £90,000 put down for ach-lines which will never pay. I desire to ar this protest with regard to that parti- ar line, because I recognize that the Bill uld pass, and I shall vote for the third ding. The honourable member who moved t it be read a third time this day three aths knows quite well that his amendment l not be carried, and I presume he only ved it by way of entering his protest against further borrowing.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Sir, this Bill is now raise £1,365,000, and it has been stated by Premier and the Treasurer that this ount and that which was in hand upon the t March will last till the 31st March, 1888. t, Sir, I wish to draw the attention of the use to the fact that always upon the 31st rch, ever since the inauguration of the blic works scheme, there has been a large ount of liabilities, ranging from a million wards; and, if we are to have liabilities on 31st March, 1888, the expenditure up to st date will be very much less than what upon the estimates, if we do not intend to row next year. That brings me to the point at neither the Treasurer nor the Premier assured us that it was not in their scheme borrow next year. They very carefully ab- ined from saying that it was not in their heme. I grant that no person in authority a say what we shall do next year, because me unprecedented thing might happen, such the war-scare we had some time ago, and ake it necessary to borrow. But they do not y that at present it is not in their scheme to row next year. Now, if we are to spend this oney by the 31st March, 1888, and have no bilities, or comparatively few liabilities, then ay the works must stop, on the 31st March, 88, for at least four or five months, while arliament is called together and a Loan Bill ssed, and money raised on short-dated deben- res or otherwise. Therefore my impression that it is in the minds of the Ministry to row next year; and the Colonial Trea- rer, when replying, if it is not in his mind, ill relieve us very much if he gives us an as- rance to that effect. Of course, in passing a Loan Bill for, say, a million, next year it need not necessarily be put upon the London market that year; and therefore, in saying, "We do not intend to borrow in the English market for two years from this date," they would be keeping faith in words with this House, and keeping faith so far as the English market is concerned, even though they anticipated the sale of that million loan by short-dated debentures. Therefore I should like the Treasurer, for the sake of the House, to state, when he replies, what is the scheme of finance of the Government at the present time, mentioning whether it is to do without bringing a Loan Bill before the House till after the 31st March, 1888. My own impression is that, if the amount to be spent this year is decreased—if there be a reduction in the estimates such as will allow of liabilities extending, after the 31st March, 1888, to, say, £500,000 or £600,000—that would be tapering off; but if we vote this money that is down upon the estimates now—if we are going to vote that, and then say we are tapering off, I do not say we are misleading the country and deceiving the House, but we are doing this: We are leading honourable members to expect that we shall not require to spend more than the amount mentioned in this Loan Bill and the balance in hand on the 31st March last for two years, whereas we shall have to expend as much as we have been expending in past years, and shall have to borrow next year. If the scheme of finance is not different from what I think it is we shall either have to reduce our estimates in Committee or else not go on with all the works to expend all the money voted. Now, we speak about raising loans in order to bring railways to a paying point. Well, I also favour that. I question, however, if it is a wise thing to raise loans to do a little piece of work upon this line and a little piece upon that, with no prospect of bringing any of them to a paying point for years. I question whether it would not be a wiser thing—and whether we should not rise to it—to say, "We will vote for this line"—one line or another—"a sufficient sum to bring it to a paying point within the next two years," even if we let the other lines remain as they are in the meantime. I am putting that which I know is unpalatable to all who have railways going through their districts, but I am speaking what I believe is best for the country. I am sure it would be best for the country to spend the money—instead of putting it as in the schedule to the Loan Bill—on two or three lines, and so bring them up to paying points. Honourable members have said that railways have not come up to that point, but that, whenever we fancy we see that point, and are reaching up to it, we find the paying point is another beyond that one. We have had 136 miles of new railway opened during the past two years; and one would have thought, from what has been stated in this House in years gone by, that whe[illegible]ed 136 miles of new railway we [illegible] greater net result. Well, we

greater net return, but a less return; and from the 31st March up to the 26th of June our railways, as compared with the corresponding period of the previous year, have turned out £23,000 less. That is close upon £100,000 a year. I have looked back for the last two years to see where was the cause. Last year we thought a great deal of corn would come down, and that that would increase the returns. Well, it did not. It was averred that there was a great deal of corn kept in stack, that did not come down to the shipping port the previous year; but this year we have not had it, and are £23,000 short. And the most alarming thing about it is that our estimates of what the railways will do this year, our estimates upon which the Financial Statement is based, assume that the railways will produce £106,000 more than last year. Well, Sir, we see the falling-off. How is it possible for the railways to pull up for the remainder of the year what has fallen off? Of course, this would come better later on, and no doubt it could be referred to and spoken about, and the Minister for Public Works may give explanations when going through the public works estimates; but it is pertinent to the present subject, because, if we are going to spend money upon lines of railway—upon pieces here and pieces there, and do not finish any one of them in a short time—then I ask whether our calculations with regard to the income will not be as fallacious as they have been in the past; and it becomes, I say, a very important question how to provide ways and means to meet this deficiency. I do not like the schedule of the Bill, upon that account. It is quite impossible, in my opinion, and it would be unwise in a great many respects, to stop borrowing all at once. It is out of the question, I think, now, committed as we are; but we should taper off, and I think it would be wise to taper off. When the Premier said we should stop borrowing altogether in two or three years, I take it for granted he meant we should taper off very quickly, if we were going to stop borrowing in three years.

An Hon. MEMBER.—"A few years."

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Well, it was heard the other way; but, whether it was "two or three years" or "a few years," when that time comes at which we shall say we must stop borrowing, I say it will be disastrous to the country if we have not tapered off previously; and it would be wise now to do so. I hope that when we go into the public works estimates we shall consider that, and reduce them very considerably. The policy of borrowing largely in order to make railway works at great cost I consider to be disastrous to the country. The policy put forth by the Premier, that we should taper off, I entirely agree with; but I think that we should begin now: and the policy of the Government, as disclosed to the House, does not begin now. The policy of the Government, if I understand it aright, commits the country to a great, but what, no doubt, the Government thinks is a wise, expenditure; and I believe they will come down next year and say to the House, "We can either stop the works, if you like, before the 31st March, or we shall have to borrow another million;" and they will leave it to the House to decide. I am sure they must come down in that way if we do not reduce the amount at the present time in the public works estimates for expenditure this year and next year. I should not have risen were it not that I was surprised and grieved to see that our railways, from which we expected so much, and which we were told would pay so much better when we completed certain portions, are now paying considerably less than they did before.

Mr. BRYCE.—Before I forget it I ought, perhaps, to refer to a point that the honourable member for Akaroa has alluded to—that is, the question whether the Treasurer has made or will make any declaration of his intentions as to borrowing again next year. I do not know whether the honourable member was in the House when I somewhat pressed the Treasurer on that point, and what he said was that a loan might be authorized next year, but that he could say that he would be able to avoid any necessity for raising it. But when I suggested that that would not preclude the necessity of exercising short-dated debentures on it, he did not deny that—which I took for acquiescence. I think that in this matter, as in all similar matters, it behoves us to be perfectly open and above-board, not only in respect to this colony but even in respect to the people who are to lend us the money. Now, I understood the Treasurer, in replying to a remark made by the honourable member for Egmont, to say that it was scarcely desirable, seeing that we were about to float one loan, immediately to declare positively our intentions as to loans next year. I dissent entirely from any such doctrine. Even if the honourable member for Timaru were right, and we required this loan at the present time to enable us to fulfil our engagements with the public creditor, I should still say that not the less are we bound to make a clean breast of our position, and not to endeavour to get money upon what—if not false pretences—at any rate would be a suppression of the real circumstances of the colony. I am one of those who hold the old-fashioned doctrine that "righteousness exalteth a nation." I hope, if that sounds at all like cant to any honourable member, that he will allow me to say that I think "honesty is the best policy" in all such matters as these, as a substitution for it. The honourable gentleman, very possibly, feels a difficulty in explaining the true position to the House, on account of the chance of misconstruction. Indeed, he went so far as to say that there was only one honourable member in the House who would be able to understand his explanation in regard to certain matters if he made it. I can readily understand, if that is the honourable gentleman's position, that he might easily conceive that any explanation he might give might be misconstrued by people both in the colony and outside of it. But I venture to say, if, after two years' manipulation of the accounts of the colony, he has got them into such a mysterious

ndition that even he, with all his ability, nnot hope to make honourable members unrstand them, that, although that may have en a very clever performance on his part, it not in the interests of the colony that it ould continue. This is one continuous deite, and I should like very much to refer to an rlier part of it in reference to myself, beause I think I have been treated decidedly ifairly by the Native Minister, the Premier, id the Colonial Treasurer. The Native Minisr, in replying to my speech on the second ading, took occasion to say that he had never efore heard a speech in which there was so uch distortion, discoloration, and misreesentation. There is one point on which e honourable member fairly "had" me—at is, in a certain reference I made to the ccounts, as exhibited in the public works estiates. In the way I put it I was fairly open rebuke: I do not mind in the least admitng anything where I feel myself wrong. But no other respect did he correct me. For ample, I pointed out that the purchase of ative land by commission was contrary to w, and contrary to a very sad experience the colony. But he neither contradicted e fact nor the other. He admitted that it as contrary to the spirit of the law of the ountry, but he said the circumstances justied it. I say that the circumstances of the ountry did not justify it. If I really had disorted, misrepresented, or discoloured matters fact, it would have been a shameful thing on y part; but I also say it is an equally shameal thing to make an unjust charge against ny one of doing these things. In the course the debate I met a gentleman in the obby who told me the Premier was criticisg me, and that I had better go in. The onourable gentleman had been speaking about en minutes at that time, and when I did come n I was not there two minutes before the remier absolutely made four misstatements egarding myself as to matters of fact. He aid I had not alluded to the fact that a Comittee of the Council had reported favourably s to a certain payment in respect to the Himangi Block, when he afterwards showed that e knew I had carefully made the allusion. disstatement No. 1. He said I was entirely rong in saying that the thing was smuggled hrough the House, because it was brought own on the estimates, and that I had myself iscussed it. Well, the Premier was one undred and twenty miles out in that statenent. I left for Wanganui two days before, nd certainly was not here. Misstatement No. Then immediately he plunged into the case f the purchase of land from Mr. Churton. He aid that land was bought to clear up complicaions that existed in titles to land. There is ot a shadow of a shade of complication either n the title of the land purchased, or in the itle of the other block for which it is to be exhanged. Misstatement No. 3. Then he went n to say that the Government had acted on he recommendation of a Judge of the Native Land Court. It was no such thing. The Government acted on the recommendation of Mr. Thomas Mackay, who is not a Judge of the Native Land Court. The Premier took about two minutes to make those four distinct misstatements;—and then he boasts about his memory! I say that it is a defective memory, and that a good memory ought to have enabled him to avoid these mistakes; but, if he objects to my charging him with defective memory, I shall be quite willing to use any word he can supply me with from his own extensive vocabulary to characterize it. I have been told, not only by the Treasurer, but by other honourable members, that I had aspersed the conduct of the Native Minister or made an attack upon him with respect to his action on the West Coast, and that I compared it with my own action on the West Coast. The honourable member knows very well, and so do others, that I did not say a word about it. I never attacked him upon that subject, or compared my own action with it. Let me say a word or two about this. Never since I left those benches have I defended my policy on the West Coast, neither in my place here nor elsewhere. And why have I not? In the first place, because I saw no public good likely to come out of it; and, in the second place, I was personally so well satisfied with the result that I felt I need not refer to it; and so I have kept perfectly quiet amidst all the jeers and sneers hurled at me. Sir, the Treasurer, in speaking of this, did not hesitate to repeat, for the thousandth time, the miserable sneers and jeers which have been hurled at me on this subject, even although the honourable gentleman occasionally chooses to lecture the House on good taste and delicate perception. The honourable gentleman might easily understand that, if I was the only rider on that occasion, if resistance had been made I should have been the mark for every bullet. But, even though the honourable gentleman knows that it was because I was unwell and unfit to walk that I had to ride, that does not prevent him from sneering and jeering. Where is his good taste? What if I were to jeer at him because he has to use a chair to help his infirmity? Would he not regard it with contempt, as would every other member of the House? But where is the difference between that and his own conduct in the House in venting these sneers and jeers? I am ashamed of the honourable gentleman in that respect, and when the honourable gentleman chooses to lecture the House on good taste and delicate perception I do not subscribe to it. That he is a man of great ability I admit at once, Yes; that he is a man of large, comprehensive intellect, Yes; that he knows how to manipulate accounts, Yes; but that he has good taste or delicate perception, No—a thousand times No. If he had, he would not be constantly reminding members in this House that his name is going to live long in history—that his name is going to be remembered longer than those of the honourable member for Akaroa, the honourable member for Geraldine, and the honourable member for Egmont. Now, the Govern

the late debate, shown a most remarkable desire not to have the proceedings reported, with, apparently, as it seems to me, the sole intention of preventing publicity. It is true that there was another ostensible reason given: that was, that it was done to save the time of the House. It was pointed out at the time, however, that there was no chance of saving time in that way; and, in fact, it must have been evident, from our experience in this House, that reporting a debate in Committee was not at all likely to lengthen it, because we have had plenty of experience in that respect in Committee of Supply, and that is a case where, if a debate was to be lengthened at all, there would be every opportunity of doing it. The debates, so far as I can see, are not unduly lengthened on account of being reported. In this case, surely the magnitude of the subject, surely the lines on the schedule, would have better justified the reporting of the debate than do proceedings in Committee of Supply; and yet in Committee of Supply we are reported, and in this matter we were not. I think that was wrong altogether. If I understood them, the Government took up the position, in their vexation after the vote of the House that the item should be reduced, that it was not their responsibility, or, at any rate, that they would cast the responsibility on the House. Now, I think that is an unconstitutional doctrine altogether. They used the same doctrine to a very large extent during the late recess in connection with Captain Russell's amendment—to a wonderful extent, I may say. I apprehend they were quite unjustified in throwing the responsibility of the reduction of last year on the honourable member for Hawke's Bay at all. It is true that he proposed it; it is equally true that the House indorsed his opinion and passed the reduction — took it into its own hands and made the reduction; and it is equally true that not only was the House responsible for it, but the Government were especially responsible; and that this was the case is proved by the fact of their continuance on those benches, for either they accepted the responsibility or they should have left those seats and have allowed other people to assume the responsibility which they declined. There is no escape from that. In the recess, when they so persistently endeavoured to throw off their responsibility and put it on a private member of the House, they were acting unconstitutionally, and at the same time proclaiming their own humiliation; and, if they attempt to do the same thing, during the coming recess, with regard to this reduction that has been made, that line of argument will apply to them equally, and they will be proclaiming their own humiliation in doing it. It is not altogether fitting, I think, that what passed in Committee, although not reported in *Hansard*, should fail of publication other than by means of a newspaper report. At any rate, I am going to refer to one thing that took place on that occasion which struck me as being very important, although perhaps it did not strike honourable members generally in the same way; but I apprehend, although I may be mistaken, that the Government, from those benches, led the Committee astray as to their intentions in regard to the schedule and clause 3. What was the position? Clause 3 came up for consideration. That clause contained the amount of one and a half millions. I was the first that spoke upon it, and I spoke against the amount, and expressed an intention, if no one else would do it, of endeavouring to get it reduced. The discussion went on and on, and various methods were proposed to get over the difficulty which had arisen of dealing with the amount provided for in the clause before, from a consideration of the schedule, it was ascertained what reduction could reasonably be proposed; and, if it had not been for the Chairman of Committee ruling, over and over again, that clause 3 could not be postponed till after the schedule had been considered, I have not the slightest doubt that it would have been postponed till after the schedule was considered, and for the purpose of reducing the amount of the loan in case the schedule was reduced. That seems to me perfectly clear. The Colonial Treasurer was unwilling to reply to me—he rather evaded that. But, when the honourable member for Bruce got up in his place and put it fairly whether the amount in the clause was to be reduced if reductions were made in the schedule, the Treasurer, in replying to the honourable member for Bruce, implied that if the schedule was reduced by the Committee then that item would be also reduced. If he had at that time fully determined to make up the amount of the schedule in case it should be reduced, then I say that, in all openness and fairness to his friend and supporter the honourable member for Bruce, he ought to have told him so, and not kept it in his own breast. Then the Premier came in. It was fairly put to the Premier, and the Premier said that the amount in the clause should be reduced if the schedule was reduced. And what else could the Premier say? We have not forgotten—it is not so long ago—the very eloquent speech that the Premier made in the House the other night. I believe it was felt by every one in the House to be one of the most eloquent speeches ever made in the House. And what was the most telling part of that most eloquent speech? It was where he took the Opposition to task for not endeavouring to save money when they took items off the loan. He said, "If you were sincere, when you got the item reduced you would reduce the loan by that amount, and not add it on to other votes." That was the test of sincerity that the honourable gentleman put the Opposition to; and he cannot complain if he is tested by the same standard. And, if he is tested by the same standard, what shall we say? It becomes a stronger argument against him than it possibly could be against us under any circumstances, because the Committee had actually reduced the vote by the large sum of £175,000, and the Premier and the Government strained every nerve to get that back on the schedule again,

and, moreover, in the most objectionable form that it could be put back in. I say the most objectionable. What I mean by that is that it would have been more objectionable in the form in which it was to be put back than if it had been put back upon votes: it would have set aside and destroyed the professions the Government had made with respect to specifying the works on which the money was to be expended. There is no one in this House who has ever expressed so well and so strongly the desire for economy in expenditure on public works from borrowed money as the Premier did, and one would have thought those expressions if his were sincere, as they certainly appeared to me to be, and that he would have taken every advantage of the opportunity of reducing the amount of the proposed expenditure. But he did not do that when he had the opportunity; and yet he must have been sincere at the time: I cannot believe otherwise. Nevertheless, the action of his Government is in a contrary direction. Look at the schedule itself. I will not glance over each item, but I will take the first item—the item that the honourable member for the Bay of Islands has spoken so strongly in favour of. Can any one fairly say that this is really a necessary work? I cannot say that it is. I am told, in fact, that a good deal of the money proposed to be voted will be required to bridge over navigable branches of a very fair harbour. That fact alone is sufficient to show that, at any rate, although a railway may be required at some future time, yet it is not a work of urgent and pressing necessity. And so, going down the lines in the schedule, we find the same thing. Take the case of the railway-line out of Auckland. No doubt the doubling of the rails is a very desirable work, as soon as it can be fairly done with available money; but it is not a work of immediate and pressing necessity. Then there is the Thames Valley Railway. This is a railway running along a navigable stream the whole way. Who can say that that is a work of pressing necessity? If we are really to stop borrowing altogether in two or three years, as the Premier said, then, I say, none of these works are of such urgent and pressing necessity as to justify the raising of a loan this year to a large amount in order to go on with them. There may be other reasons for desiring the loan. I cannot say what they are. The honourable gentlemen is right in saying that I am one of those members of the House whom he has failed to make understand the position. The honourable gentleman said he desired to have this amount of £175,000, not for the purpose of being expended, but to draw upon as a kind of reserve—that is to say, to draw upon it for expenditure only when and as it was authorized by law. Now, I am greatly puzzled to know what the honourable gentleman meant by that. As it has been interpreted by the honourable member for Egmont, the honourable gentleman means to confine himself to the objects contained in the schedule. I cannot see how it can possibly be that; but I can see that if he wants to use it as a fund to take up deficiency bills with, it might be wanted for such purposes. But I do not think we ought to go to the money-market to raise money for any such purpose as that—at any rate unless the purpose is fully explained and we do it with our eyes open. It has been very common for some time back, both in and out of the House, to deeply reproach those who take a despondent view of the future of the colony in connection with borrowing. Now, I do take a despondent view in that respect, and, amongst others, I have been deeply reproved. I do not know, however, if honourable members will believe me when I say that I have taken every reproach directed to me as a compliment; and it is my belief that before many years are over—I do not confine myself to two or three years, as the Premier did—every one who has been reproached for desiring economy and cessation of borrowing will feel that the reproaches directed at him in the past were compliments. That is how I feel in the matter, and there is no doubt at all in my mind that we are borrowing at too rapid a rate; and it appears to me that the increasing amount of interest will be felt as a great strain on the resources of the colony almost immediately. It has never been explained to us how, with a falling revenue and increasing charges, the interest on this proposed loan is to be met; and it appears to me that even next year further taxation will be required to meet the charges on the ordinary revenue of the country. If it is not so I shall be very glad to find that I am wrong. It is very remarkable how the professions of some members of the Government have differed from the performances of the Government, and on many questions. Take, for instance, the defence expenditure. I venture to say that eighteen months ago there were hardly two men in the House more earnest against such expenditure than the Premier and the Minister of Defence: yet see how they have plunged into that expenditure! Now, it has been broadly maintained in this House that a Government should follow the dictates of popular feeling; and, in a sense, I am quite willing to admit that it cannot be otherwise in a democratic country: it must be so. But we ought to be sure that popular feeling is permanent and stable for a time at least; for I believe it causes bad government if the Parliament or the Executive follows every breath of popular opinion, and follows it however it changes. I think there ought to be resistance on the part of the Government to mere temporary and passing opinion—perhaps merely created and sustained for the time being by a few newspapers, and really not the deep and general feeling of the community at all. I know very well that in some parts of the colony there was a terrible outcry about defence, and I believe that the Premier and the Defence Minister at least, whatever may have been the case with other members of the Government, were hurried into the defence expenditure again[illegible] victions. Then, we know how m[illegible] was about reforming the Legi[illegible]

and about the great need of that reform; and a Bill was brought down purporting to effect it; but just before it was proposed to end a system of nomination which was so loudly condemned the Government made a very large number of appointments under that system, and the change they proposed could not have affected those they had just appointed. Surely there is contradiction there. Then, more important than all, there is the question of the tenure of land. The Premier, I believe, and other members of the Government have held, very strongly, that the land ought to remain the property of the State. Yet a Government holding that opinion absolutely hands over to a syndicate an area that may amount to two and a half million acres. Another point in this debate has struck me as very curious. When this Government took office they declared, through the Queen's Speech, and, later, through a Public Works Statement—a very important document, always considered by the Cabinet—that they intended to propose Boards for the management of the railways; but the other night the Premier told us that three years ago, when he was in Victoria, he wrote strongly to the Press against handing over the management of the railways to Boards, saying that the Board system would not work, and that the establishment of such a system was a confession that the system of democratic government had failed. Yet a few months later he put in a Queen's Speech in this colony, and again in a Public Works Statement, statements to show the urgent necessity for non-political Railway Boards, and said they should be established. There is great inconsistency in that, it seems to me. And this brings me to say, in conclusion, that I do hope we are not destined to be convinced that the Premier's professions of desire for economy and for a stoppage of borrowing are mere professions, to be contradicted by his actions as his professions on other questions have been contradicted, and as even these have already been to some extent. I was perfectly delighted when I heard that eloquent speech, for I am sure the Premier was sincere at the time. It has been contradicted to some extent by the actions of the Government since; but I hope the honourable gentleman will think over it, and will stand by the principles he enunciated so eloquently on that occasion. If he does, if he attempts to carry out his convictions in that way, I can only say that he will have my warmest sympathy and support in doing it. I do not care which side of the House I am on, I am going to support that; and if the honourable gentleman will stick to his professions, and not allow them to be contradicted by the practices of the Government, I am willing to support him. But I would point out this: that the Government, and he himself to a certain extent, by the line of conduct since followed, have not by any means been consistent with the Premier's loud professions, and have not acted in a way calculated to gain the confidence of those who desire economy. On the contrary, when profession and practice so strongly contradict each other, those who are so inconsistent cannot complain if a very harsh term is applied to them. I do not use that term so far as the actions of the Government have been at variance with the professions of the Premier. I believe the Premier was sincere at the time in making those professions, and I believe that some other members of the Government sympathize with those professions, and I hope they will stick to the principles the Premier laid down the other night, and, so far as they can, make their practice accord with them. I do not go quite so far as the Premier went. Speaking of the proposals of the present year, I say it is utterly out of my power, with my convictions as to the catastrophe to trade that must ensue on a sudden stoppage of borrowing, to vote against every Loan Bill this year. I would gladly vote against this Bill if I thought it would cause some modified one to be brought in; but, in any case, I cannot vote in a direction which would prevent any loan being authorized this year. I say that if borrowing were suddenly stopped it would hasten the catastrophe, and make it very much greater than it would be if we approached that catastrophe as we ought to do.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I desire to say that I cannot vote for the amendment, because I believe it is essential to have a Loan Bill of some kind this session, and I see no prospect of getting any other than the one before us—that is to say, there seems to be no prospect of getting one modified in the direction which I think desirable. Therefore I cannot vote for the amendment. At the same time, I cannot say there is not a principle in this Bill which ought not to be supported, and therefore I shall not vote at all. Now, the honourable member for Akaroa referred just now to the fact that the railway revenue is falling; and that is a very serious matter in relation to our general finances, because if we, this year, get £100,000 less from our railways than we have calculated upon, it is quite clear that very serious increased taxation must be imposed next year in order to make up the deficiency. The Customs, at the very same time, are falling alarmingly. I have no doubt that, though they have fallen at a rate of £160,000 a year for the past quarter, the other three quarters are not likely to be so bad; but the fact remains that there has been a fall, notwithstanding the progress of works, and the extra consumption of dutiable goods owing to the wages earned on those works. It has been said during this debate that the Customs revenue will fall if we cease borrowing; but the fact is that it is falling now, and we may as well face this thing at once. The longer we go on the greater and more sudden will be the collapse. History is simply repeating itself. If we run away from the principles of political economy in our dealings, the end is not far off. There is one point on which I think we should have some explanation. We have been constantly told that if we reject the proposition put forward by the Government to borrow a million and a half it will be essential to borrow again next year; and we were told by the Premier that

f we would only borrow a million and a half it would last two years. But when the Bill came down it was found that the million and a half did not include the whole of the purposes of the Government, but merely that of railway-making; yet if less than the amount proposed was borrowed we must borrow again next year to make up the deficiency. Well, if that be so, where is the economy that was to be practised? Then the Premier was asked this: "Do you pledge yourself not to propose borrowing again next year?" and he answered, in effect at any rate, "Yes." But when another honourable member was speaking he said that the Premier had not given any such undertaking; and subsequently the Premier repudiated what he had said—for, whether or not the honourable member said in so many words that there should be no borrowing next year, he certainly led the House to believe that there would not be. Now, I must say that I think it is a serious matter when the leader of the House takes up a position of this kind. It must create want of confidence in his word. It reminds me of what took place upon a somewhat similar occasion in regard to the 3rd clause of this Bill, when the Premier and Treasurer could not be got to answer in less than half an hour a question which might have been answered in three words; and then, making a statement to the House the next day, the Treasurer said that they had not said anything of the kind. In fact, they had simply played upon us; and the Premier sat opposite to us not daring to say that he had not led us into a certain belief, and not manly enough to say that the Treasurer was wrong, and that he had given the assurance to the House which we said he had given. These things lead to want of confidence in the word of public men, and it will be some time before the Premier gets over it. Then, I should like to call the attention of the House to the "ear-marking" of which we have heard so much. One honourable gentleman said that ear-marking might be got rid of by cutting off the ear. That is certainly one way of getting rid of an ear-mark; and, strangely enough, that is exactly the way the Government propose to get rid of their ear-marking. When we proposed to take these items out of the schedule, what did the Premier say? "Oh, we did not propose to spend this money upon these railways. We only propose to spend enough to make surveys, and, if the surveys prove that the enterprises are not promising, we shall ask the House to pass this sum over to other purpose." If that is the way in which loans are to be ear-marked,—if, whenever a new policy presents itself to the mind of Ministers, the objects of certain amounts are to be changed by a special Act of Parliament,—then the sooner we cease ear-marking loans the better. We might just as well put the loans down every session to be scrambled for, and not pretend to the public creditor that we borrow for well-considered works—to do so is simply to get money out of the foreign creditors by means of false pretences. Then, I wish to call the attention of the House to certain very pregnant sentences that fell from the Premier in one of his speeches. His whole frame seemed to be quivering with anxiety as he asked, "Where is this borrowing to end?" And again, in another portion of his speech, he asked, "Is this borrowing never to cease?" But, when we took to cutting down the borrowing, his powers of oratory rushed to the other side, and were used for the purpose of inducing the House to continue borrowing. Was that all acting? It seemed very much like it? At one moment he is in favour of economy; at the next, supporting most extravagant proposals in the Bill. Now with regard to the courses open to the Government in consequence of the cutting-out of this £175,000. As to the first course,—that of curtailing expenditure,—that must be done to the extent of the cutting-down, and therefore we need not trouble further about that. As to the second proposition, that of using a part of the North Island Trunk Railway Loan, I would just direct the attention of the House to the fact of these continual threats that something will be done with that loan-money if the northern men are not obedient to the Government whips. As a mere matter of policy this is bad. Men will not be driven by "a whip" of that kind. It was tried during the recess till people were sick of it, from one end of the colony to the other; and it did not succeed. It could not frighten the people of Auckland, nor the people in any part of the North Island; nor did it make them more friendly to the Government. Such conduct will not conciliate anybody, and will probably anger a good many. We in the North Island can snap our fingers at this Government, or at any other that threatens not to make this railway, or to use the money set apart for its construction, because if the money does not come from that source it must be made up in some other way. The people of the North may make their minds very easy on that point. The third alternative was to borrow again next year. Why is this, if the enterprises for which the money is to be borrowed are to be put on one side? The Treasurer made a bungle about the celebrated £800,000: that was a clear bungle, and he knows it, as we know it; and he is now casting about in all directions to find money to make it up. He gets £100,000, if we allow him, out of the North Island Trunk Line Loan, under the pretence of buying Native land. He will get another £100,000 under the pretence of buying rolling-stock and stores for that line; and he will perhaps further supplement that by £175,000 out of this loan. What he will do will be something like this: When the money is wanted for these other works, it will be borrowed from the Railway Fund; and when it has to be repaid he will say, "The railways for which that money was required are not going to be made, and we will use that money for roads, public buildings, and other purposes of a miscellaneous char[illegible] and he will have to make up in th[illegible] ciency which he has from tim[illegible] but which he at last virtual[illegible]

and which, I think, the House ought to force him to acknowledge before it has done with him and it. I would, in conclusion, caution the Government that the short-cut is not always the nearest way to a place. You may depend upon it that time is sometimes saved by appearing to be liberal, and my experience of parliamentary life has taught me that, at any rate, a little consideration for what is going on will sometimes gain a great deal in the end; and I think a whole day, or perhaps two days, might fairly have been saved if the Government had done what was reasonable and just in regard to this Bill.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—I wish to say a few words before this debate is brought to a close, as the mover of the amendment on the second reading; and I will point out—as some misapprehension appears to have arisen outside this House — that the reason the amendment was moved on the second reading was that it was impossible to reallocate the money in Committee. The object of the amendment was, mainly, to strike out what appeared to be political railways; and, though the amendment which I proposed was lost, the object which it was desired to attain in that respect has been gained. A further object was to reallocate the money set down for political railways in a direction which would be remunerative to the colony. As the amendment was lost, that object could not be attained in Committee; but I consider the result which has been arrived at far more damaging to the Government than if it had accepted the amendment and allowed it to be discussed upon its merits. Honourable members on both sides of the House stated that they would vote for the £175,000 that was struck out being replaced on the schedule, if allocated to works. They went further than that. When the Government declined to allocate the money, they went so far as to state — and the House has, by its vote, affirmed their view of the matter—that they would not trust the Treasurer with £175,000 that was not specially allocated. My amendment — which was a simple and practical amendment — was treated as a no-confidence motion. The Premier is my superior in political experience and in knowledge of constitutional usage, and in making my amendment a no-confidence motion I have no doubt he was acting strictly according to constitutional usage; but what I will say is this: that, if my amendment was to be treated as a matter of no-confidence, much more should the vote of the House the other evening, on the Government proposing, by Governor's message, to allocate that money to railways in the South Island, have been treated as a no-confidence motion. There has been no such direct no-confidence motion passed as that vote since I have had the honour of being a member of the House. I think that the result has shown that the moving of the amendment has served a useful purpose. I think that it paved the way for the striking-out of those political railways, and it would have been a grand success, if for nothing else than that it led to the magnificent burst of oratory from the Premier indorsing and emphasizing his remarks at Invercargill on the matter of borrowing. But the Premier time and again preaches prudence, the Treasurer beside him all the time practising what he calls "progress." The Treasurer turns a deaf ear to the Premier's preaching, and the Premier turns a blind eye to the Treasurer's practice. It is time that this was ended—this halting between two opinions on the part of the Premier—halting between his duty to the country, his patriotism, on the one hand and his loyalty to his colleague on the other. The Premier did me the honour to suggest that the honourable member for Egmont had consolidated my vote for £10,000 put down to the Seaward Bush Railway—a line which, I may remark, is in the electorate of a Government supporter. If the honourable member for Egmont succeeds in consolidating my vote for £10,000, I think it would be very well if the Government would go and do likewise and place a maximum of £10,000 per vote; and a great saving to the colony would ensue. I think that when the honourable member for Inangahua rose the other night and alluded to the action of the House he spoke inadvisedly. He said that an injury had been done to his district by the striking-out of the Westport-Inangahua line, and that insult would be added to injury if the money was otherwise allocated at the present time. Such an insult, I understood him to say, would lead to the alienation of a Government supporter. This House has not forgotten the session of 1884. We were asked to consider a little matter—the East and West Coast Railway — a small matter, involving a million and a half. Suddenly, while we were engaged discussing this little matter, there dropped, as from the clouds, another proposal to construct a line from Brunnerton to Belgrove, involving an additional million. This, I take it, was to consolidate votes. How many votes that little addition to the proposal consolidated, honourable members can judge for themselves. And, looking to the large "retainer" the honourable member for Inangahua received for his district in 1884, he appears unreasonable in demanding a substantial "refresher" in 1886. I have heard those land-grants likened in this House this session to German principalities. This colony is small, and it stands to reason that you cannot, in a limited colony, continue to give away German principalities without running out of stock. It soon occurred to the Government that land was scarce: "We are getting over the edge; but we have plenty of water, and that will do to catch little fish." Then, we heard of a South Sea Bubble scheme—a monopoly of the South Sea Island trade. That was one idea to consolidate votes. Subsequently the Government "hatched" another idea. They said, "We will conserve fisheries Upon the shores that round our coasts from Bluff to Nelson span, And thus secure the hand and 'seal' of a very doubtful man!" This is the way in which the Government appear to me to consolidate votes, and I think they paid the

Colonel Trimble

honourable member for Egmont the highest compliment they could pay him when the Premier suggested that my vote was consolidated by the proposed expenditure of £10,000 in another man's electorate. I was also accused of insincerity in being an advocate for economy and yet not, in my amendment, proposing to simply strike out the money, instead of allocating it to other lines. I believed in the assurance of the Government that this proposed loan was to cover an expenditure for two years; and, if the loan was to cover an expenditure of two years, then I considered it was following out the lines laid down by the Premier in his Invercargill speech, and was a decided tapering-off of the previous public works expenditure. I did not think a million and a half in our present position was too much to spend within that time. I believe it has been suggested in one or two directions —I hardly know what terms were used, but it amounted to this: that, to use a colonial expression, I had been "put up" to move this amendment. Sir, I take it that the amendment, from the top to the bottom, discloses its authorship. My action in relation to the original proposal in connection with the East and West Coast Railway is well known to this House. Why should I take another view of the matter when a second and still more unnecessary East and West Coast Railway was proposed? The Blenheim-Tophouse and Inangahua-Westport Railways meant a second and absolutely unnecessary East and West Coast Railway. Then, again, there was the other point—the construction of new railways before completing unfinished railways to a working point. At a meeting held by Otago members during the course of this session I carried a resolution which was, I believe, in identically the same words as those of my amendment to this Bill: that, I think, pretty well proves the authorship of the amendment, though it was moved with the approval of the Opposition. In conclusion, I may simply say that any credit or discredit that attaches to that resolution I am prepared to take myself, being perfectly satisfied it has served a good purpose.

The House divided on the question, "That the word 'now' stand part of the question."

AYES, 55.

Allwright	Hakuene	O'Callaghan
Ballance	Harper	Ormond
Beetham	Hatch	Parata
Bevan	Hislop	Pearson
B.-Bradshaw	Ivess	Pere
Brown	Johnston	Reese
Bruce	Joyce	Reid
Buchanan	Lake	Richardson, E.
Conolly	Lance	Russell
Cowan	Larnach	Samuel
Dodson	Locke	Seddon
Duncan	Macarthur	Smith
Fraser	McKenzie, J.	Steward, W. J.
Garrick	McMillan	Stewart, W. D.
Grace	Moss	Taylor
Guinness	Newman	Thompson, T.
Tole	Walker	*Tellers.*
Turnbull	Wilson.	Hobbs
Vogel		Peacock.

NOES, 7.

Hamlin	Levestam	*Tellers.*
Hirst, H.	O'Conor.	Kerr
Hursthouse		Wakefield.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Cadman	Mitchelson
Mackenzie, M.	Buckland, W. F.

Majority for, 48.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. KERR.—I wish to explain that the reason why I called "No" was that I wished to see who were the non-borrowers. As I felt perfectly certain that they did not mean to call for a division, I called "No," to see who they were.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—As a matter of personal explanation, I should like to say that I distinctly intended to call for a division throughout, and had arranged for another teller; and I was quite as determined as the honourable gentleman to let the country see who were the non-borrowers.

On the question, That the Bill be now read a third time,

Sir J. VOGEL said,—The intention has been so obvious this evening to lengthen out the debate, and it is so much the wish of members who support the Government that there should be no unnecessary prolongation of the session, that I do not think it desirable to take up the time of the House in replying. I shall only say, with regard to the North Island Trunk Railway Loan, that when that Bill comes on an explanation will be given which will, I believe, be quite satisfactory to honourable members who are interested in the matter.

Bill read a third time.

The House adjourned at fifteen minutes to one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 3rd August, 1886.

First Reading—Second Reading—Third Readings—Unconvicted Prisoners—Settled Land Bill—Civil Service Reform Bill—Deceased Persons' Estates Duties Bill—Public Bodies' Leaseholds Bill—Harbours Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

New Zealand Loan Bill.

SECOND READING.

Public Trust Office Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Otago Harbour Bridge Bill, A[illegible] Act Extension Bill.

UNCONVICTED PRISONERS.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK, in moving the motion standing in his name, said that some time ago he asked the Hon. the Colonial Secretary a question on the subject referred to in the motion, on which occasion the honourable gentleman replied as follows:—

"The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY had consulted the Minister of Justice on this point, who replied that he saw no reason for altering the regulations. They were the same regulations as those of the Old Country and the other colonies."

He did not consider this was a satisfactory reply, and, consequently, he had decided to bring the question forward again in another form. The law of this country, he pointed out, was not the same as that which prevailed in the other colonies: the tendency of the New Zealand law was in the direction of leniency. With the permission of the Council he would read the clause of the Prisons Act to which his motion alluded:—

"14. In order to mark the difference between the treatment of persons unconvicted of crime and in law presumably innocent, during the period of their detention in prison for safe custody only, and the treatment of prisoners who have been convicted of crime, during the period of their detention in prison for the purpose of punishment, special regulations may be made for the treatment of prisoners confined for safe custody only. Such regulations may provide for all or any of the following matters:—

"(1.) With respect to the retention by any such prisoner of the possession of any books, papers, or documents in his possession at the time of his arrest, and which may not be required for evidence against him, and are not reasonably suspected of forming part of property improperly acquired by him, or are not for some special reason required to be taken from him for the purposes of justice;

"(2.) With respect to communications between any such prisoner, his solicitor, and friends, so as to secure to such prisoner as unrestricted and private communication between him, his solicitor, and his friends as may be possible, having regard only to the necessity of preventing any tampering with evidence and any plans for escape, or other like consideration;

"(3.) With respect to arrangements whereby such prisoners may provide themselves with articles of diet, or may be furnished with a sufficient quantity of wholesome food, and may be protected from being called upon to perform any unaccustomed tasks or offices;

"(4.) And generally regulating the confinement of such prisoners in such manner as to make it as little as possible oppressive, due regard only being had to their safe custody, to the necessity of preserving order and good government in the place in which they are confined, and to the physical and moral well-being of the prisoners themselves."

He believed a set of regulations had been compiled under some of the above subsections with respect to provisions, books, papers, and so on; but the subsection to which he more particularly wished to refer was that part of the 4th which referred to the physical well-being of prisoners. So far as he had been able to make out, the other colonies treated all their prisoners alike, making no exception whatever. That was not the proper time to discuss whether it was a wise thing to show this leniency or not. It was sufficient to point out that there was a difference of treatment provided for prisoners who were unconvicted and for those who were undergoing sentences. Correspondence had recently taken place on the subject between the Visiting Justices of the Wellington Terrace Gaol and the Government; but this he had not yet had an opportunity to peruse. It was well known that among persons committed there were a large number who, after undergoing detention before their trial took place, were acquitted. Therefore it was not right that the innocent should be made to suffer the same as the guilty, as was the case at present. In fact, they suffered a great deal more than the guilty, because prisoners who were undergoing sentences of hard labour got the advantage of open-air exercise, whereas those who were waiting trial were committed to their cells for twenty hours out of the twenty-four. It was with a view to a modification of these regulations that he moved the present motion.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR seconded the motion with great pleasure. It simply asked that the prison regulations should be framed in accordance with the Act already passed by the General Assembly. It seemed necessary that persons awaiting trial should be treated differently from those who were convicted. In some parts of the country the Supreme Court criminal sessions took place at intervals of six months, and it was hard that persons awaiting trial should be subjected for several months to more severe restrictions than those who were convicted. He had no doubt that, now that the attention of the Government had been drawn to the matter, they would see the propriety of making regulations to meet the case brought under notice.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That in the opinion of this Council the prison regulations should be altered so as to conform with clause 14 of 'The Prisons Act, 1882,' whereby the treatment of persons confined for safe custody, and unconvicted of crime, may be made as little oppressive as possible."—(*Hon. Mr. Peacock.*)

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY confessed that when he first saw the motion on the Order Paper he was at a loss to understand what the mover was referring to. He did not think it could be said that the tendency of the present Parliament was to make the position of the first offender a hard one, because the Legislature had provided within the last few days that his position should be rendered as little hard as possible. But there were two classes of misdemeanants provided for by the Act in question. It was provided in one part of the Act that there should be the greatest pos-

ible leniency consistent with safety. The regulations provided,—

"31. Prisoners before trial may be allowed to retain in their possession any books or documents belonging to them at the time of their arrest, and which may not be required for evidence against them, and are not reasonably suspected of being part of any property improperly acquired by them, or are not on some special grounds required to be taken from them for the purpose of justice. . . . Each such prisoner shall, by permission of the Visiting Justices or Inspector, be permitted to be visited by one or two persons at the same time for a quarter of an hour on any week-days, or longer if sufficient cause is shown, and he shall be allowed to see his legal adviser on any week-day at any reasonable hour, and, if required, in private, but, if necessary, in the view of an officer of the prison. Paper and all other writing materials, to such an extent as may appear reasonable to the Gaoler or the Inspector, shall be furnished to any such prisoner who requires to be so supplied, for the purposes of communicating with friends, or preparing a defence.

"32. Prisoners before trial and misdemeanants may, by permission of the Visiting Justices or Inspector, procure for themselves or receive at proper hours food, clothing, bedding, or other necessaries, subject to examination by a prison official, and any articles so procured may be paid for out of the moneys belonging to such prisoners in the hands of the Gaoler. No part of such food, &c., shall be sold or transferred to any other prisoner. If a prisoner before trial does not provide himself with food, rations as laid down in No. 2 scale will be issued to him."

Every possible allowance was made to them. They were allowed to have their own food and clothes, and to see their friends every day. He asked his honourable friend not to interfere with the prison regulations; but if he had any complaint to make he would take care the matter should be attended to.

The Hon. Mr. BATHGATE supported the motion. Perhaps the Council were not aware that, out of every hundred persons who were accused of breaking the law, 40 per cent. were afterwards found innocent by the juries. This showed that they were subjected to very hard treatment under these regulations. It was not sufficient to tell them that the regulations were approved by the Governor in Council. The question was, whether they were in accordance with the law. He held that if they were inconsistent with the Act it was high time they should be altered. The present Inspector of Prisons was deemed unequalled in his special branch. He had been brought out here, having been trained in English prison management, and there was no doubt that officer knew perfectly well all the principles of the management of gaols in England. He (Mr. Bathgate) held, however, that it was a mistake on the part of this colony, seeing that it was a young and growing country and was without a large body of professional criminals, as was the case in older countries, to be guided by the rules of English prison-management. It was owing to this mistake that, in the face of the objections made by the community, a large building for the purposes of a gaol was being erected in the heart of Wellington. It was true that when the Inspector acquired his knowledge in English prisons there were large prisons situated in the centres of population; but that was now found to be a decided mistake, and efforts were being made in England to have those prisons removed from the centres of population. With respect to the motion before the Council, he was prepared to go further than the mover, and to move that the question be referred to a special Committee of the Council to inquire into the whole administration of prisons in the colony. It might be too late to do so this session, but he trusted that next session some honourable member would undertake the responsibility of such a step. He had complained last year of the way in which a very innocent class of prisoners were treated. The Legislature had abolished imprisonment for debt; but if an unfortunate debtor was summoned to appear before the Magistrate by his creditor to show cause why he should not pay, and, through ignorance or inadvertence, failed to appear, the law required the Magistrate to commit him there and then. It so happened that a good many prisoners were in gaol for this reason; but if they had had the sense to know the law, and appear before the Magistrate to state the facts, they would not have been committed; and yet they were subjected to all the pains and penalties of incarceration the same as convicted criminals. The Inspector, last year, in his report, designated them misdemeanants, putting them on the level of criminals. He held that to be in opposition to the spirit of the Abolition of Imprisonment for Debt Act. He also took exception to dressing prisoners in striped stockings and knickerbockers, and to short- and long-sentenced men being clothed in different garments. That was altogether foreign to the philanthropic spirit of the day. They should take care to adopt means to reform prisoners, so that they might be better men when they came out. The object of imprisonment was not so much to punish as to endeavour to make better citizens of them. In the present prison regulations that seemed to be altogether lost sight of. Many of the offenders who were imprisoned were the mere victims of carelessness. They were young men, for the most part, who were sent out here because their friends did not know what to do with them at Home, and, after overrunning the constable, they passed valueless cheques and got into prison. Instead of marring their prospects for the future they ought to be led to a better tone, and no treatment followed with prisoners to lower their self-respect. Again, instead of having the prisons in the middle of towns, the prisoners ought to be sent to prisons in the agricultural districts and taught farming pursuits, so that when they came out they would be able to earn their own livelihood honestly.

The Hon. Captain FRASER

those who had any sympathy with Te Whiti or any other Maori breaker of the law; but he had sympathy with those who were supposed to have broken the law not in a criminal sense, and yet were confined as criminals. He would like to ask whether the prisoners he referred to were allowed tobacco.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—No.

The Hon. Captain FRASER said that formerly they were allowed that; and he thought it was a very hard distinction to be made. With regard to the unfortunate debtors referred to by the Hon. Mr. Bathgate, some of those men were hardworking, poor men. In that respect they were treated differently from the rich man. Whereas a rich man either made a compromise or became insolvent after levying black-mail on his friends and acquaintances, and there was no alteration in his mode of living, yet punishment was allotted to the poor working-man, who, in the Legislature, appeared to have no real friends, although there was a great deal said about the working-man.

The Hon. Colonel BRETT was rather surprised at the line of argument resorted to by the Hon. Mr. Bathgate, as an old Resident Magistrate, in defence of the present motion. The honourable member had said that of those who were committed for trial 40 per cent. were found to be innocent; but his opinion was that seven out of every nine of those were in reality guilty, and got acquitted through a quibble or the power and ability of a lawyer. He had no sympathy with any man placed in custody on suspicion; for in the majority of cases he felt confident that they were guilty of the offences with which they were charged, and deserved their punishment. He had never known a soldier in his regiment having been charged with an offence who was not, nineteen times out of twenty, guilty of that offence, and the offenders were formally tried by Court-martial, and were not allowed to employ lawyers to try and get them off. He hoped the honourable member who moved this motion would not be allowed to interfere with the rules and regulations of the public prisons of the colony.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK was prepared to admit all the Hon. the Colonial Secretary had said had been done. It was true the prisoners were supplied with books; but he was sorry to say they were not supplied with light to read them by, except by means of a little bit of a window in the cells. With respect to the more stringent regulations in New South Wales, the law there did not contain anything similar to the clause of the New Zealand Act to which he referred in his motion. They had no law in New South Wales by which they could make lenient regulations for the treatment of prisoners; but the New Zealand Legislature had expressly stated that lenient regulations should be made, and it was with a desire to see the will of the Legislature carried out in this respect that he had moved the motion. He also wished, before concluding, to direct the attention of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary to the want of ventilation in the cells.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Captain Fraser

SETTLED LAND BILL.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I beg to move the third reading of the Settled Land Bill.

The Hon. Colonel BRETT.—I am very much opposed to this Bill, which affects my family very seriously. It is one that I believe will give general discontent, and I feel convinced that it will be thrown out in another place even if it passes here; and that is my only hope. I would not have objected to it if it had not been a retrospective measure, because then it would have removed all the difficulties that will accrue to my family. But I say this is a wicked and vicious Bill. We may have undutiful sons and daughters, and under this Bill they would be able to sell their birthright for a pot of porridge. I would not object to this Bill if it were made so as not to interfere with my will. But if I had the power to say that this Bill of this insane lawyer—(Oh!)—well, this unwise lawyer, who has concocted this Bill—I would have no objection to it if he would put in a clause to that effect. It would not be impossible for him, with his ability and talent, to make provision against those spendthrift sons. I suppose that all I can do is to raise my voice against the Bill, which I do.

Bill read a third time.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM BILL.

On the motion for the third reading of the Civil Service Reform Bill,

The Hon. Dr. GRACE said,—I wish to ask the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill whether he has taken any steps in regard to clause 10, which is in conflict with the rest of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—No.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—Then I should like to point out that clause 10 has no relation whatever to the rest of the Bill. It ought to have been struck out last night, in consequence of the amendment which was made to clause 9, as proposed by the Hon. Mr. Reynolds. Clause 9 now provides that all appointments to the Civil Service shall be by competitive examination, to be held annually in the chief centres of population, and that cadets shall be selected in order of merit. Clause 10 provides that candidates shall be selected from the different electoral districts. Will the honourable gentleman consent to have the Bill recommitted, with the object of having that struck out?

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—When this Bill was ordered to be reported last night I suggested to the honourable gentleman in charge of it that in consequence of the alterations which had been made in Committee it would require to have some of the other clauses adapted to the view taken by the Council; but, with characteristic obstinacy, the honourable gentleman has done on this occasion as he has done on every occasion before—resisted the friendly attempts which I have made to assist him in improving the Bill. He now proposes that it shall be read a third time without effecting the alteration which has just been pointed out

necessary. It is now simply an absurd Bill, hich I should be sorry to think this Council ould allow to be sent to another place as presenting their work in improving the Civil ervice Reform Bill. It is an important point consider whether examinations for appointents shall be as they are now under the Civil ervice Act, or whether they shall be under e University examinations. I understand at the Minister of Education is of opinion at the Civil Service examination should be me away with, and the matriculation exnination made the standard for entering the ervice. The Council cannot stultify itself by aving the Bill as it stands now; and, as the nourable gentleman refuses to protect the ouncil to that extent, I move, That the order the day be discharged and made an order of e day for to-morrow. I will then take upon yself the duty of endeavouring to put the ill into proper shape, so that we shall not be hamed to send it to another place.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—The honourle gentleman who has just sat down says at he has endeavoured to offer every friendly tempt to improve the Bill and make it a od working one. The only attempt that he s made that I know of was to move that it ould be read the second time in six months; d when the question came up last night in ommittee he wished the Chairman to report ogress and ask leave to sit again, instead of porting the Bill with amendments. Then, if understood him rightly, while in Committee s rather rejoiced that the Bill was now in a ore ridiculous position than ever it was in. that is giving every assistance to make the ill a good one, then I cannot understand hat assistance the honourable gentleman ould give to make it a bad Bill. I have not e least objection to the order of the day ing discharged and made an order of the y for to-morrow, but I could not allow the onourable gentleman to make the remarks e has done without contradicting them, and pressing my opinion that, instead of giving sistance in passing the Bill, he has been the eatest enemy the Bill has had. And, when I y that, I also say that the honourable gentleman has been mixed up in the Civil Service days gone by. The Civil Service Act was iginally prepared by Civil servants, and was troduced in 1866 with a view entirely to look fter their interests, and not to look after the terests of the public. I regret very much hat the honourable gentleman should have iven me occasion to point out that I conider he has been anything but a friend to his Bill, inasmuch as all along he has raised very objection that he possibly could to its assing.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—I am sorry the onourable gentleman should have inputed to he Hon. Dr. Pollen—what the honourable entleman regarded as a crime—an act which he Hon. Dr. Pollen, no doubt, would have een glad to avail himself of had the Standing rders permitted it. It was not the Hon. Dr. Pollen who moved that the Bill be read a second time in six months. On the contrary, he made such an excellent speech that I was compelled to supplement what he said by moving the amendment, which, unfortunately, was not carried.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD.—I am happy to be free in this matter from any possible imputation that I am unfriendly to the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill, or to the Bill itself; but it is quite clear that the Bill will have to be amended before it leaves the Council. Clause 10 is entirely inconsistent with clause 9 as altered. It is obvious that clause 10 must be struck out, or we should be a laughing-stock in another place, and the country will say that we insert clauses inconsistent with each other. Clause 10 has no meaning as the Bill stands. Then, there is another clause which bears traces of amendments having been made, but not completed; and as it stands now it has no meaning. It reads thus: "No Civil servant hereafter on his retirement, or immediately preceding his retirement, receive more than three months' leave of absence." No doubt there was an intention to insert something in that clause, and, so far as I can recollect what took place, the amendment was that "No Civil servant hereafter appointed shall, on his retirement," &c.: but we have not that in the Bill. Therefore we are passing the Bill with two clauses in conflict with each other, and another clause which has no meaning. The Bill must be recommitted. And, whatever the honourable gentleman in charge of it may say with regard to other members of the Council, he cannot charge me with any unfriendly feeling towards him; but I do desire that anything that goes from this Council shall be, at any rate, in a rational and intelligible form.

The Hon. Mr. BRANDON.—There is another point which I should like to bring under the notice of the Council, and that is clause 7. In one part of the Bill it is proposed that there shall be an examination periodically in the chief centres of population, and by this clause applications are invited from the various districts for the nomination of candidates. I do not think that that harmonizes at all with the other provisions of the Bill.

Order discharged, and made an order for next day.

DECEASED PERSONS' ESTATES DUTIES BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY, in moving the second reading of the Deceased Persons' Estates Duties Bill, said,—It will be in the recollection of honourable members that in 1884 a Deceased Persons' Estates Duties Bill was passed, and that another was passed in 1885. This Bill is to amend these by providing that an investigation may be held before the Resident Magistrate in regard to the executor or any other person concerned, so that parties may have an opportunity of appearing by counsel and giving the[illegible] in the same way as before ordin[illegible] justice. The other provisions

not of an important nature. The Bill altogether is a very ordinary one.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—My friend says that the Bill is a very ordinary one; but it seems to me that it is a very unusual and strong Bill, and one that seems to be modelled somewhat upon the lines of the Spanish Inquisition. It appears that by this Bill power is given to summon any person who may be an executor, and put him through an examination in reference to affairs connected with the matter he may have in hand. It may be that it is desirable to pass such a Bill, and I do not propose to make any reference to that now; but I do not wish it to pass *sub silentio*, as it evidently was about to do. It would be well, in my opinion, for members to consider the position in which this Bill stands at the present time. It has only just been distributed, and it would be well to see if there are any precedents for such provisions as are contained in it, though it may be found that the working of it will not be so very undesirable as I apprehend. The Council should, at all events, be careful, and not pass a Bill of this description without considering whether it has been in operation anywhere else. When it comes on again, to go into Committee, I may take some steps with regard to it. In the meantime I offer no opposition to it.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—From what has fallen from the gentleman who has just spoken, I am sure the Council will see the propriety of adjourning this debate till to-morrow, to enable members to consider the provisions of this Bill. I therefore move the adjournment of this debate.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—In relation to this measure, I think it should be clearly shown, in the first place, that the abuses that have grown up under the operation of the Deceased Persons' Estates Duties Acts of 1884 and 1885 have been sufficient to justify such a measure as this to amend them. If there has been anything like a uniform attempt to defraud the revenue, or any substantial difficulty in collecting the revenue, which would justify the measure, I would not offer any opposition; but I think we are in the habit of introducing Bills into this Legislature with the object of extracting at the point of the bayonet every shilling that can be extracted, and at the cost of imputing unworthy motives to the people. I do not think that the tone of society in the colony is elevated by this kind of procedure. I am exceedingly unwilling to be obstructive; but in my profession I am constantly brought into contact with the difficulties that arise in relation to these duties, and I do think that we should take time to consider the question.

Debate adjourned.

PUBLIC BODIES' LEASEHOLDS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY moved, That the order for the second reading of the Public Bodies' Leaseholds Bill be discharged, and be made an order of the day for the following day, in order to give time to honourable members to consider the measure.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES would like to suggest another course. The Bill was an extremely important one, and it appeared to him that it deserved to be considered by a Select Committee, who would go into it carefully and report the results of their inquiries to the Council. At that late period of the session they had no time to lose if they proposed to deal with any Bill of this character, and he thought the course he suggested would be the best one to adopt. In the meantime they could agree to the second reading of this Bill formally, and take the discussion when the Bill was reported upon by the Committee. The Bill was one he had looked at carefully, and he thought it had good points, as well as some points which he would like to see altered. It was a Bill which would excite a great deal of discussion, and ought to be submitted to the ordeal of consideration by a Select Committee. He hoped, therefore, the Colonial Secretary would reconsider the motion he had made, and, if his suggestion met with the honourable gentleman's approbation, that he would adopt it.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said he would be happy to withdraw his motion in order to enable the suggestion of the Hon. Mr. Menzies to be carried out. He therefore moved the second reading *pro formâ*, on the understanding that the Bill would be referred to a Select Committee.

The Hon. Mr. BRANDON wished to point out that if they assented to the second reading now they would be assenting also to the principles of the Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said he did not think that would be so.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR thought the course suggested by the Hon. Mr. Menzies was a very good one. There were some excellent provisions in the Bill; but there were others which required looking into. He did not think the Council would be committing itself to the principles of the Bill if it followed the course which had been suggested.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON thought it was absolutely necessary that the Bill should be referred to a Committee, to be fully considered.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER wished to point out that there were very large interests affected by this measure, and it was being looked to with great interest. The Bill was of considerable importance, and he hoped the Council would allow the Bill to be read a second time *pro formâ*, on the understanding that had been indicated.

The Hon. the SPEAKER asked if the Hon. Mr. Menzies was prepared to nominate his Committee.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES said he was.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN objected to the nomination of a Committee without notice. He was not desirous of obstructing the business of the Council—he was desirous to facilitate it. Why should the Council relegate its functions to a Committee? Not a word had been vouchsafed as to the cause or need of such a Bill as this.

Motion, That the order of the day be dis-harged from the Order Paper, and be made n order of the day for the following day, greed to.

HARBOURS BILL.

Adjourned debate on the question, That the mendments made by the House of Repre-ntatives in the Harbours Bill be agreed to.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—I would like to sk the honourable gentleman in charge of e Bill what is understood by the words treble costs" mentioned in one of the clauses f the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I really can-ot explain what "treble costs" are, beyond is: that I am informed that any one bring-g an action against a Harbour Board, if he ses it, has to pay treble costs. As a lawyer, e honourable gentleman ought to be able to nswer that question himself.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—I am not in charge f the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—It is not to be xpected that I can explain what treble costs re. It is a legal term, and I do not know hat it means, further than what I have said. do not intend to answer the question. I am ot paid six-and-eightpence to answer it.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—If my onourable friend presses a clause upon us, think he ought to be able to tell us what he clause means. However, I am happy to be ble on this occasion to help the honourable entleman out of his difficulty. In some in-tances, it is supposed to mean that you pay he original costs as they are taxed, then you ouble that, and then add a third amount qual to the taxed costs. But that system was bolished in England some forty years ago, and ow it got into this Harbours Act I do not now. It will be found also, in other cases, hat you pay the original costs, and then add ne-half of the original costs, and then one-alf of that, making in the whole one and hree-quarters. The Harbour Board get the osts, and on the other party failing to sub-tantiate his case he has to pay treble costs. t seems to me a bad principle; and this octrine of treble costs has been abolished long go. I think the clause is quite right as it tands in the amended Bill, and should be llowed to remain so.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I trust that the onourable gentleman in charge of the Bill ill give us some reasonable explanation of he alterations which he asks us to agree to. t the present time it is impossible for me to gree to the amendments in certain clauses. ake clause 16, for instance. Here we have n express provision that the Harbour Board ag-boat may ply as a ferry-boat; and I could ot consent to such a provision as that. I irected attention yesterday also to clause 23, hich raises the maximum charges from 6d. er ton, as provided in the Harbours Act of 868, to 2s. per ton. I trust the Council will ot agree to this. I do not see any reason hatever for increasing the port-charges to 2s. per ton. I also object to the insertion of the words "including goods consigned to the Colonial Government," which will take away from the Harbour Boards a portion of their revenue. The demands made on Harbour Boards are very great indeed, and why Government goods should be exempted from all charge whatever I cannot understand. We know perfectly well that the amount of rails and trucks and locomotives which are imported by the Government is very trying to the wharves, and these should not be allowed to escape paying the usual charges.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I am also one of those who think that the amendments, on the whole, should not be agreed to. Yesterday I called attention to the new clauses which have been inserted at the end of the Bill. The honourable gentleman stated at the outset as one reason for the passing of this Bill that it would enable £1,500 to become colonial revenue. I think the Bill requires to be carefully considered before we go further in the direction proposed by this Bill—that is, to hand over the amount for the purpose of erecting baths at Moeraki. At present no case whatever has been made out for this. While saying that, however, I should be sorry to be understood to mean that I had any desire that the money should be made colonial revenue. I should like to see it returned to the district, but in a way approved by honourable members.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I do not know whether I shall be in order in making a suggestion. It is this: No doubt some of the amendments proposed by the House of Representatives will be agreed to, and others will not; therefore I should like to move that the Council go into Committee, so as to consider them *seriatim*. That would be the most convenient course to adopt, I think, in the present instance. I move, That the Council go into Committee of the Whole, in order that it may consider the amendments *seriatim*.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I am quite willing that the Council should go into Committee of the Whole on this Bill; but I think it is rather ungracious of the Hon. Mr. Wilson to ask me to explain a legal term. I said, at the time the matter was before the Council, if I mistake not, that it meant three times the amount of the costs: and since then the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker has explained the meaning of the words; but he states that the money goes, not to the lawyer, but to the Harbour Board. I can only say that in parts of the country with which I am acquainted it goes into the pockets of the lawyers.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—It may by arrangement between the Board and their lawyer.

Motion to go into Committee of the Whole agreed to.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 23.—Maximum rate of port-charges.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES moved, That the words "two shillings" be omitted, with a view of inserting "one shilling."

The Committee divided on

"That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 7.

Bathgate	Reynolds	Swanson
Buckley	Shrimski	Wilson.
Johnston, J.		

NOES, 20.

Acland	Johnson, G. R.	Pollen
Barnicoat	Lahmann	Shephard
Bonar	Mantell	Stevens
Campbell	Menzies	Whitaker
Dignan	Miller	Williams
Fraser	Peacock	Williamson.
Holmes	Peter	

Majority against, 13.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 24.—Goods consigned to Government exempt from dues.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be a clause of the Bill."

AYES, 12.

Acland	Fraser	Shephard
Barnicoat	Lahmann	Shrimski
Bathgate	Peter	Walker
Buckley	Reynolds	Williams.

NOES, 18.

Bonar	Mantell	Stevens
Brett	Martin	Swanson
Campbell	Menzies	Whitaker
Dignan	Miller	Wigley
Holmes	Peacock	Williamson
Johnson, G. R.	Pollen	Wilson.

Majority against, 6.

Clause struck out.

Progress reported, and leave obtained to sit again.

The Council adjourned at five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 3rd August, 1886.

First Readings — Third Reading — Library — West Coast Steam Service—Honorary Volunteer Corps —Bonuses—Napier Excursion Trains—Sydenham Justices of the Peace—Canterbury Village Settlements—Kaikorai Siding—Springston Telephone —Government Labourers—Payment of Witnesses —Parliamentary Portrait-gallery—Nelson Creek Courthouse—Grain and Minerals Railway Tariff —Midland Railway—Kensington Siding—Wire Netting—District Railways Purchasing—Members' Travelling Expenses—Public Works Expenditure—Waipahi-Heriot and Lawrence Railways—Auckland "Unemployed"—Fisheries Conservation Bill—North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Application Bill—Beer Duty Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Bill, Government Life Insurance Bill.

THIRD READING.

Deeds and Instruments Registration Bill.

LIBRARY.

A message was received from the Legislative Council asking the concurrence of the House in the report of the Joint Library Committee as follows :—

"The Joint Library Committee have the honour to report that they have passed the following rules and regulations for admission to the General Assembly library during the recess, which they recommend for adoption :

"1. That the list of persons admitted to the full privileges of the General Assembly library during the recess be the same as for last year.

"2. That visitors may, on application to the Chairman, be admitted to the General Assembly library for the purpose of reference.

"3. That literary workers or students of a special subject may, at the discretion of the Chairman, be permitted to take out specified works on that subject."

On the question, That the report be agreed to,

Mr. MACANDREW said he thought the benefits of the library could be more extended by members in different parts of the colony being allowed to have the use of the books during the recess; and he would move, as an amendment, That it be a recommendation to the Joint Library Committee that it is expedient regulations should be framed for the lending of books during the recess to members residing outside of Wellington.

Major ATKINSON sympathized with the honourable member for Port Chalmers. He knew the objections as to the chance of losing books if they were sent out; but it was very desirable that the books should be made some use of by the present generation. The library was not nearly so useful to members as it might be, and he thought that there was no difficulty that could not be overcome as to sending out books during the recess—books of all descriptions except those retained in the reference library, which should be a limited number. It was quite possible that a few books might be lost; but that should be almost impossible if a proper check were kept: there ought to be no difficulty in recovering the books or their value. It would be far better to lose a few books if they were disseminated throughout the country than that they should be kept on the shelves here and only looked at, for during the session members had very little time to read the books. He should like to know the opinion of the Government on the matter.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN said there would be no more risk in lending books out to members during the recess than there was during the session. The books could be sent in boxes at the expense of members, and each member would be responsible for the books taken.

Mr. BEETHAM thought the residents of Wellington should have greater facilities for using the books in the recess, subject to the regulations. Many people applied for the use of the books, and it seemed to him a dog-in-the-manger policy to refuse the use of them to responsible persons, with whom they would

fe. He would like the Committee to consider his point.

Mr. SUTTER thought the whole country would be put on the same footing, and not that Wellington should get a special benefit from which other parts of the colony were excluded. He should move, if it were done at all, that it be made general.

Colonel TRIMBLE did not wish it to go forth that every member of the House was in favour of the course proposed. If the books of what should be the national library were to be sent all over the country they might as well turn it into a subscription library at once. They had already lost a considerable number of valuable books, notwithstanding the fact that members did not get leave to take those books home. If they were sent all over the country no doubt in a very short time half the library would disappear—that was, of the books worth keeping. Novels and books of that class might come back; but many works which could not be replaced at all or only at a great cost would be lost. The idea of keeping a reference library separate from the general library was impracticable, and could not be carried out. It was desirable that the country should have a library of really good books, and he did not see how it was to be kept up if books were to be sent all over the colony, and put to the risk of being lost or damaged.

Mr. O'CONOR entirely disagreed with the remarks of the last speaker, and thought that if books had been lost or injured it was owing to the bad system on which the books had been looked after. If a good system were adopted books would travel any distance without being lost or injured.

Dr. NEWMAN thought it was a great mistake to assume that the library consisted of books which, if once damaged, were irreplaceable; for the fact was that the great majority of them could be bought in any shop at any time they were wanted. No doubt there were some few books which could not be replaced, and so far as those were concerned special care might be taken. If it was desired that books should be sent out he thought it would be quite easy to make regulations which would meet all difficulties. The experience of the last two years showed that the books were well looked after, and that members and others who were allowed to take out books really took very good care of them. There might be occasional instances in which books were badly treated; but they were very rare: and he believed that the loss of books had been occasioned by the lax way in which they had been looked after in bygone years. If books were to be sent out members should pay the expense of packing and forwarding, and also a small sum to cover additional expense entailed on the library, if such were necessary.

Mr. CONOLLY hoped that, if the resolution were adopted, the Joint Library Committee would at least provide by regulation that the books should not be kept beyond a limited time. For his own part, he thought it was very undesirable that the privilege should be extended. The honourable member for Wairarapa had suggested that it should be extended also to persons, not members, who happened to live in Wellington. But, as the honourable member for Gladstone said, if residents in Wellington were to have the books, why not people in other parts of the colony?—and, if that were done, it would come to this: that, though the library nominally contained thirty thousand volumes, half of them would be scattered over the country, and there would be an immense amount of what he might call "book-keeping" necessary on the part of the Librarian in order that he might have full information as to where the books were. If the amendment were carried—as he was afraid it would be—he hoped that the Committee would see that the books were kept for only limited times, and that there should be a fine for detention of them beyond the allotted period. Otherwise it might happen that people would come a long distance to see a particular book, and then find that it was at Auckland or Dunedin, or some other place.

Mr. FITZHERBERT said that, as a member of the Recess Committee, he had always advocated that residents of Wellington should be allowed access to the library to read works which they desired to read as a matter of reference; but, of course, he objected to residents of Wellington taking books out of the library. He did not see any objection to members of Parliament being allowed to have books sent to them during the recess. The evils which had been complained of in the past had arisen from the neglect of the Librarian. It sometimes happened—as he knew in his own case—that books taken out were mislaid, but would have been at once searched for and returned if the Librarian had sent a note of reminder or had called. He thought, therefore, that the objections of the honourable member for Taranaki were really no objections at all, and that any difficulties might be got over by regulations which might be made by the Committee. He should therefore support the proposal that members be allowed to take out books, and would also suggest that certain residents of Wellington, to be approved by the Committee, should be allowed to see the books. He had often been asked by members of his own profession if they could not get a sight of a book which could not be seen in Wellington except at this library; but he had been obliged to tell them that they could not be permitted to visit the library.

Mr. LAKE did not see why residents of Wellington should be permitted to take out books any more than people in other parts of the colony, and he did not quite see where the line was to be drawn. If people resident in Wellington might take out books, why not those at Kaiwara or Pitone? He approved of members being allowed to have books sent to them during the recess, for that was really the only part of the year when they had time to read books that required to be read thoughtfully. He did not think that there was any danger of books being lost. As regarded any books of special value,

the Librarian might be allowed to exercise a discretion as to sending them out or not; but the majority of the books were such that new copies might be easily obtained, and he saw no reason why they should not be sent out.

Mr. HATCH objected to the remarks of the honourable member for the Hutt. This library was simply a Legislative library, to be devoted to the use of members who desired to look up subjects that came before that House year after year. If it were to be made an absolutely free library for Wellington, then the best thing to do was to at once remove it away from the Parliament Buildings, so that the public and visitors could make use of it whenever they pleased. But, if a free library was to be given to Wellington, he did not see why other parts of the colony should not have a free library at the expense of the colony as well as Wellington.

Mr. MENTEATH said that if it were intended to make the library a circulating one it would be necessary to entirely change its character and constitution. At present it was simply a reference library, and it was usual to obtain but one copy of a work; but, if it were intended to circulate the books, it would be necessary to remodel the library, and to obtain twelve or fourteen copies of works, as was the custom with Mudie's and other circulating libraries.

Mr. MOSS pointed out that one of the recommendations of the report was that the list of persons to be admitted to the full privileges of the library should be the same as that of last year; but the House had no information as to whom that list comprised, and it might be that honourable members would be able to add advantageously to the list. He suggested that, when the Committee brought up the report again, they should attach to it a list of the persons who were admitted to the full privileges during the recess.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN was understood to say that if proper regulations were made books would be returned speedily, so that there would be no need to change the character of the library. It would still be a reference library.

Amendment agreed to, and report ordered to be referred back to the Committee.

WEST COAST STEAM SERVICE.

Mr. MACANDREW asked the Minister of Mines, If, with a view to enabling miners to try their luck on the west coast of Otago, which there is every reason to believe contains mineral deposits of immense extent and value, and also with a view of encouraging settlement in a part of the colony which may be said as yet to be a *terra incognita*, the Government will take steps to establish regular monthly steam communication along the said coast? Ten years ago the Provincial Government of Otago initiated a monthly steam service along the West Coast. Unfortunately, one of the benefits of Abolition was that this service was allowed to drop. Had it been otherwise, the chances were that they would now have had mining and fishing industries to a large extent carried on on the west coast of Otago, teeming as that coast was with wealth, not only on the land but in the sea. He believed a very small consideration, probably about a tenth of the subsidy that was formerly paid—which, he believed, was £4,000 a year—would be sufficient now. Seeing the number of steamers trading between Westport and Greymouth and the East Coast ports of Otago and Canterbury, he thought that probably for £300 or £400 a year one of those vessels might be got to go through Foveaux Straits instead of going through Cook Strait—once a month at any rate. There was a monthly service to Jackson's Bay, and he did not know why it should not be extended. It might possibly be extended as far as Dusky Sound or Preservation Inlet, if occasion required. He hoped that the Government would seriously consider this matter. For a long time he had been of opinion that the Government should have a mineralogical survey of this West Coast; but he was now inclined to consider, on further reflection, that the most effective way of discovering whatever minerals were there would be by establishing a regular monthly steam service, by which facilities would be given to the energetic and adventurous class who were now flocking to Kimberley to explore that coast. One might depend on it that there was untold wealth there; members had no conception of the mineral wealth that existed on that coast, which had not been put there by Providence for nothing. If such a service were established they would not see their enterprising and energetic fellow-colonists going away by hundreds, for they would have an ample field on the West Coast.

Mr. LARNACH had long thought it very desirable for the Government to establish a monthly service in the direction suggested. The obstacle in the way hitherto had been the great cost of getting steamers to perform the work; but, if such a service could be established at anything like the cost suggested by the honourable gentleman—four or five hundred pounds per annum—the Government would take the matter into consideration during the recess with a view to carrying it out.

HONORARY VOLUNTEER CORPS.

Mr. T. THOMPSON asked the Defence Minister, If the Government will place a sum on the supplementary estimates sufficient to provide a small capitation allowance to honorary Volunteer corps? He wished simply to state that during the war-scare a large number of Volunteers had offered their services to the Government, and the services of several of those corps had been accepted. The conduct of the men in thus proffering their services was very patriotic, and, to his knowledge, several of these honorary companies had been attached to and formed part of the administrative battalions at Auckland, and he believed it would be found that the members of these honorary companies were quite equal to the members of other corps as to efficiency and physique, and, further, they had at a very considerable expense found uniforms, &c., and unless some encouragement were given to them

he feared their services would be lost. No doubt there were other honorary companies in different parts of the colony in a similar position, and he would ask the Minister of Defence whether he could not see his way clear to put a small sum on the supplementary estimates to give some encouragement to these men. He might say that the fact of these men having given their services at the time they did probably saved the Government going to the expense of calling out the Militia.

Mr. BALLANCE said it was true some of these honorary corps were very efficient, but he would remind the honourable gentleman that if they received the capitation allowance they would cease to be honorary corps. In some cases, where it had been necessary to complete the battalion, the department had accepted the service of honorary corps as country corps, and it was prepared to do that in other cases, but not to put down a sum of money on the estimates for these corps. He might say that applications were continually coming in from various parts of the colony to accept the services of honorary corps, and, if capitation were given, of course that would limit the number of acceptances that could take place, because whenever the services of a corps were offered the question of pounds, shillings, and pence would have to be considered; whereas the rule now was, when an honorary corps offered their services, to accept them. He therefore thought it was not expedient to put a sum on the estimates as a capitation grant; but where it was necessary to complete or strengthen battalions, or where special circumstances might require them, honorary corps would be placed amongst the garrison corps as country corps.

BONUSES.

Mr. T. THOMPSON asked the Government, If they will extend the time within which notices of claims to bonuses on colonial industries may be lodged, in accordance with conditions notified in the *Gazette*, dated the 10th December, 1884?

Sir J. VOGEL said this question was one which required very careful consideration of each item, and it was quite impossible for the Government to give it that consideration during the session. The Government would look into it after the session, and deal with it as they considered most desirable. He was quite aware of the great importance of the matter, and the honourable gentleman would recognize how very short was the time at the disposal of the Government during the session.

NAPIER EXCURSION TRAINS.

Mr. ORMOND asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether, in the case of excursion trains on the Napier Railway, he will direct that in future first- and second-class tickets be issued? He understood there was no difficulty in other places in having first- and second-class fares issued at excursions. The consequence of issuing only one class of fares at excursions was that those who took their families were put to very great inconvenience and discomfort because of the rush which took place.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said there was a better supply of rolling-stock now on the line than there had been for some time, and instructions had been given to have this done.

SYDENHAM JUSTICES OF THE PEACE.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister of Justice, Whether the Government will take the necessary steps to enable Justices of the Peace to sit periodically within the Borough of Sydenham, and to deal with cases within their jurisdiction there? At the present time the residents of the Borough of Sydenham had to go a considerable distance to obtain justice, and, seeing the great loss of time and the great inconvenience this occasioned, he had given notice of this question. The Borough Council of Sydenham had offered the Government, free of cost, the use of the Council Chambers, and he thought the local Justices of the Peace might well be utilized in the direction indicated by his question. Seeing the very small cost that would be entailed, and what a great convenience would be afforded to ten or twelve thousand people, he hoped that the Government would give him an answer in the affirmative, or, at any rate, favourably consider the request.

Mr. TOLE replied that the same question had been brought before him some six months ago by the Borough of Sydenham, and, after making inquiry, he then came to the conclusion of which they were informed—that he did not see his way to comply with their request. Sydenham was within only two miles of Christchurch, and he did not know that any greater inconvenience was suffered by the residents of that suburb than by those of other suburbs about Christchurch. He did not know whether any new circumstances had arisen since that reply which would warrant any change, but he would make inquiries after the session.

CANTERBURY VILLAGE SETTLEMENTS.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister of Lands, Whether the Government, in the interests of the labouring-classes of the colony, are taking any steps to establish special village settlements within the Provincial District of Canterbury? His reason for asking this question was, simply, that he found, from a statement furnished by the Land Department, that a very large number of the labouring-classes were taking advantage of these village settlements where they had been created; and he thought that if this system were introduced into the Provincial District of Canterbury it would tend, at any rate, to relieve the population of the towns. The village-settlement scheme was no new scheme. He remembered when, some years ago, pensioners' settlements were established. The men simply had one acre and a cottage, and the great bulk of them had only 1s. or 1s. 3d. a day to supplement what they made out of their land. It was well known to many honourable members in the House that

great numbers of these men had made a good living, and had saved money, and provided for their families in a decent and respectable manner. Of course the land was good, especially about Onehunga and one or two other settlements. Wherever the land was good there could be no question that these special settlements must be a success.

Mr. BALLANCE could assure the honourable gentleman that the establishment of village settlements in various parts of the colony was receiving the attention of the Government. With regard to their introduction in Canterbury, he had set aside large areas of land under the village-settlement system. At the present moment there were sixty-eight sections, comprising 1,527 acres, open, on the perpetual-leasing system, on the lines of railway, near Chertsey, Ashburton, and Oxford; and twenty-four additional sections, comprising 756 acres, were in course of being proclaimed at Arundel, Glenavy, and Waitaki—making a total of ninety-two sections, comprising 2,283 acres. In addition to the foregoing there were 414 sections opened throughout the provincial district on the ordinary small-farm and village conditions. These sections were enumerated at pages 59 to 62 of the *Land Guide*, No. 7. An officer of the department was now engaged in bringing the advantages of the perpetual-leasing system before the settlers of Canterbury; and very enthusiastic meetings had lately been held at Ashburton, at which a number of persons expressed their readiness to take up sections. He differed from the honourable gentleman when he said that one acre was sufficient.

Mr. TAYLOR said he only referred to the conditions of the pensioners' settlements. They only had one acre.

Mr. BALLANCE said the Government thought that five acres were necessary, and even up to twenty acres or more.

KAIKORAI SIDING.

Mr. BARRON asked the Government, Whether they are now prepared to comply with the request for a public railway siding at Kaikorai Valley?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON replied that inquiries were made in regard to the question of this siding last year, and, after considerable expense had been gone to in the way of surveys and estimates, he was informed that those who were anxious for the siding were about to make arrangements with the holders of sidings in the vicinity, and that therefore the public siding was not required. Since then nothing had been done in the matter.

Mr. BARRON could assure the honourable gentleman that the siding was absolutely necessary.

SPRINGSTON TELEPHONE.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked the Commissioner of Telegraphs, Whether he will provide for the establishment of a telephone station at Springston, on the Southbridge line? This town had enjoyed a railway and telegraph station for about fifteen years past. During the last few months these stations had been closed, and the inhabitants of the district were now virtually in the same position in which they were before the railway was made, as regarded telegraphic communication. He thought that it was due to the people there to be provided at least with a telephone station. The town was within a short distance of the main line of railway, and within three or four miles of the telegraph station. The cost of the work would be trifling.

Sir J. VOGEL could not give an answer to this question without receiving a reply from the Inspector, to whom he referred the matter as soon as he noticed the question on the Order Paper. He hoped to be able to give the honourable gentleman an answer in a few days.

GOVERNMENT LABOURERS.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether it is true that the Government have issued a circular to their officers directing them to give only 6s. per day to all labourers employed by the Government, and, if so, will he state why this circular was sent? This question was, he thought, of great importance, not only to the Government, but to the colony. If the statements in his question were true, he hoped the Minister would be able to inform the House that the circular was sent under a wrong impression, and had been withdrawn.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that when this question came up the other day he was not aware of the action which had been taken in this matter by the department. Lists showing the various rates of wages were generally submitted to him. These lists showed not only the rate of wages for ordinary labour, but also for skilled labour in the various districts into which the colony was divided. He had given instructions to this effect: that skilled labour was to be paid for at the ordinary current rate in the several districts—no rate could be fixed, because it was found that the rates for skilled labour differed considerably in different parts of the colony. With regard to ordinary labour, his instructions were that, for the present, all who were to be taken on were to receive at the rate of 6s. a day, and that no interference was to be made with those who were at present in the Government service. He might state that, having given those instructions to the department, the heads of the two branches sent out circulars, but these circulars were in such an indefinite form that as soon as he saw them they were withdrawn, and the instructions then issued were exactly as he had stated.

PAYMENT OF WITNESSES.

Mr. BEETHAM asked the Government, If they will consider the advisability of providing funds for the payment of expenses of witnesses for the defendant in criminal cases, the payment to be made only on the order of a Judge of the Supreme Court? He had brought this question up several times before, and during the present session he had an opportunity of moving in the matter; but the Minister of Justice re-

quested him to defer the motion, stating that he had the matter under his consideration, and hoped to be able, at any rate, partially to concur with the object he (Mr. Beetham) had in view. Regulations similar to those referred to in his question were in force in the United States, England, New South Wales, and Queensland. He had no wish that the colony should be committed to any inordinate expense. He believed that by regulations under the control of the Judges great injustice might be prevented in future, and without any excessive cost to the colony.

Mr. TOLE said the honourable member had been very persistent in pursuing this question, and laudably so, because a good deal could be said in favour of his view of the matter; but, on the other hand, he (Mr. Tole) was unwilling, on behalf of the Government, to agree to the motion of the honourable gentleman on this subject some weeks ago, which was of a very open character. The sum at present put down on the estimates for witnesses in criminal prosecutions was £7,500 annually; therefore he was afraid of the House passing a general resolution, which probably might involve a similar amount for the expenses of witnesses for the defence. He was inclined to admit that there were cases of real hardship, such as the honourable gentleman had alluded to in a former question. He would give the matter his earnest consideration, with the view of taking steps, in exceptional cases, as far as possible, in the direction indicated in the question.

PARLIAMENTARY PORTRAIT-GALLERY.

Mr. BEETHAM asked the Government, If they will give effect to the recommendation contained in the report of the Joint House Committee relative to providing a portrait-gallery, for historical purposes, in connection with Parliament Buildings? He gave notice some time ago that he would move, in Committee of Supply, that this question should be considered by the Government. On the 22nd June a report was brought down from the Joint House Committee recommending that the Speakers should be requested to take steps to have parliamentary portraits and busts of other eminent colonists procured, with a view to their being placed in the lobby of Parliament Buildings. He did not think the House would consider that the responsibility of procuring those busts should rest with the Speakers, who, under the wording of the resolution, might be called upon to find the ways and means, and therefore he wished to ask the Government whether they would find the ways and means for the prosecution of this object. There were already the portraits of some eminent men in existence, which would present a very good appearance if placed in the lobby; and the portrait of their first Speaker was looking down on them in that chamber. He did not see why they should not have the portraits of other Speakers as well. The portrait of Sir David Monro was now in the Museum, and he had no doubt if a suggestion were made to his friends they would be willing to have the portrait placed in the lobby of the House. Possibly other Speakers might wish to have their portraits placed there also; so he trusted the Government would see their way to place a reasonable sum on the estimates to give effect to the recommendation.

Sir J. VOGEL was sorry to say that the Government had not had time to consider the matter yet. It appeared to him that it was one that should rather be referred to the Speakers, who doubtless would bring it before the Government in the shape they thought desirable. He was not aware whether it was to be understood that honourable members were to make a presentation of their likenesses, or whether the colony was to be at the expense. At any rate, he agreed that the lobby would be improved by having the portraits placed there, for he was remarking only the other day to a friend in the lobby that one could scarcely find a hundred men assembled together anywhere among whom would be found a greater number of handsome and striking-looking persons than amongst the members of the House.

NELSON CREEK COURTHOUSE.

Mr. MENTEATH asked the Minister of Justice, If he will place a sum of £200 on the supplementary estimates for a Courthouse at Nelson Creek, Grey Valley?

Mr. TOLE would make further inquiries, and if he found there was a necessity for erecting these buildings he would have it done.

GRAIN AND MINERALS RAILWAY TARIFF.

Mr. REID asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will favourably consider the petition of the Tokomairiro Farmers' Club to have the railway charges on the carriage of grain and minerals reduced, which petition was forwarded to the Government for consideration on the 20th July last? Under the present tariff a ton of grain could be carried five miles for 3s. From five miles to seventeen miles the charge went up 1d. a ton per mile; from seventeen miles to forty miles, 2d. a ton per mile; and for any distance beyond forty, it went up 1d. per ton per mile. The northern boundary of his district — Tokomairiro — was situated seventeen miles from Dunedin, and up to that distance grain was carried at an ascending rate of 1d. per ton per mile; but all through his district the charge went up to 2d. per ton per mile, and his constituents felt that they were considerably handicapped under the present tariff. They had held a meeting, at which a resolution was passed that the Government be requested to make the rate uniform for all distances from five miles to a hundred and fifty miles.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON was not quite sure whether the gentlemen who had sent a petition on the subject were aware of the fact that the grain tariff had been reduced in March last. It had been found necessary to lower the rate for shorter distances owing to competition. It

had been said that the rates in New Zealand for the carriage of grain and minerals were higher than they were in other colonies; and, as that belief had caused some dissatisfaction in the colony, it might be as well that he should read a return of the comparative rates in New South Wales, South Australia, and New Zealand:—

Miles.	N. S. Wales. Ton Lots. Per Ton.		S. Australia. Ton Lots. Per Ton.		S. Australia. Five-ton Lots. P. Ton.		New Zealand. Two-ton Lots. Per Ton.	
	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.	s.	d.
10	4	0	4	6	3	8	4	5
15	4	0	5	9	4	6	4	10
20	4	6	7	0	5	4	5	6
30	5	5	9	6	7	0	7	2
50	7	4	14	6	10	4	9	8
100	11	9	27	0	15	7	13	10
150	15	6	38	11	19	9	18	0
200	18	10	50	2	23	11	22	2

For purposes of comparison, allowance for loading and unloading was included in each case. New South Wales did not export, but the average distance carried there was 132 miles. South Australian grain rates were also tabulated, that being the only Australian Colony which exported largely. The grain in that colony was carried from forty to one hundred and fifty miles.

MIDLAND RAILWAY.

Mr. REID asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether, prior to the division on the motion to add to the schedule of the Loan Bill £175,000 for railway works in the South Island, he promised or led any member of the House to believe that, in the event of the motion being carried, the said sum of £175,000 would be expended in part construction of the Midland Railway if the English company failed to go on with the contract? He had been induced to put this question owing to rumours current to the effect that, prior to the division on the motion to add £175,000 to the schedule of the Loan Bill, the Minister for Public Works had promised a member of the House that, in the event of the motion being carried, this amount of £175,000 would be expended in part construction of the Midland Railway if the English company failed to carry out their contract. Of course it was only a rumour, and he could not say whether there was any truth in it or not. It might not be very advisable to place credence in the rumours one heard in the lobbies, and he would have taken no notice of them in this case had it not been for the fact that an honourable member referred to the matter in explicit terms during the debate on Friday evening, and the Government did not think it worth their while to give a statement in denial. In answering this question the Minister would have an opportunity of giving a distinct denial to the rumour, if there was no truth in it; while, on the other hand, if there was any truth in it, the House was entitled to have the reason which induced the Minister to make such a statement.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said he did not hear the statement alluded to by the honourable gentleman on Friday evening or he would have at once risen and given it a distinct contradiction.

KENSINGTON SIDING.

Mr. BARRON asked the Government, Whether they will now provide a public railway siding at Kensington?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said nothing further had been done in this matter since a question had been put on it on a previous occasion. He believed an action was still pending, and until that was settled the Government would take no steps.

WIRE NETTING.

Mr J. C. BUCKLAND asked the Colonial Treasurer, Whether he can see his way to offer a premium for the first ten miles of wire sheep netting made in the colony?

Sir J. VOGEL said the matter had not been under the consideration of the Government. He would be glad if the honourable gentleman would be so good as to furnish him with any particulars with regard to it, and the subject should receive consideration during the recess.

DISTRICT RAILWAYS PURCHASING.

Mr. J. C. BUCKLAND asked the Government, If they have entered into any correspondence or negotiation with any member of this House for the issue of debentures under section 25 of "The District Railways Purchasing Act, 1885;" and, if so, with whom?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON was understood to say that last session negotiations were opened up under the District Railways Purchasing Act, and those negotiations had been carried on ever since. The Government had insisted that good securities should be given by the company, but, up to the present time, the company had not been able to satisfy the Solicitor-General in the matter. With regard to negotiations having been carried on with a member of the House, he might say that on the Board of the railway in question there was certainly one, he believed there were two, members of the House; but there might be more, for all he knew. The negotiations had been with the chairman of the company to a considerable extent, and also, he believed, with the whole of the directors.

Mr. J. C. BUCKLAND would like to know if the correspondence was with a member of the House, or generally with the directors.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON believed that some of it was with the chairman of the company, some with the secretary, and also with one, if not two, members of the House, who were directors of the company.

Mr. J. C. BUCKLAND asked if the Minister objected to give the names of the members.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON had no objection to give the names; but, as they were directors of

the company, it was open to any one to find out who they were, and the correspondence was all open.

Mr. SAMUEL asked if the honourable member for Auckland West was one.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Yes; and he thought the honourable member for Marsden was another.

MEMBERS' TRAVELLING EXPENSES.

Mr. J. C. BUCKLAND asked the Government, If their attention has been directed to the extravagant travelling expenses allowed to certain members' wives, and members, in connection with attending Parliament during the sessions of 1884 and 1885; and will they, in future, take steps to prevent similar occurrences?

Sir J. VOGEL had asked each one of his colleagues, but they knew nothing about the matter, nor did he. He had not spoken to the Premier on the subject, as he was ill.

Mr. J. C. BUCKLAND asked Mr. Speaker, If it is true that an honourable member has made a charge of about £40 for travelling expenses in connection with his attendance in Parliament in the session of 1885; and, if so, does the Speaker mean to give a certificate for the payment of the same?

Mr. SPEAKER said it was not true that any honourable member made a charge amounting to £40 as travelling expenses during any session that he had been in office. The proprietors of the coach between Springfield and Hokitika made a charge of £39 for the conveyance of two honourable members by a private trap from Springfield to Hokitika. He disallowed the charge, because it seemed to him excessive. He had, a week or two ago, settled the claim by paying the two honourable members the ordinary fare of £7 10s. each: that included luggage. He had no dealings whatever with the coach-proprietors, but left it to the honourable members to deal with him. Those honourable members were liable to be detained three days if they had not engaged the private conveyance, and in addition to the £7 10s. he made them a small allowance for the three days. The claim was therefore settled for £18 instead of £39. He might perhaps take this opportunity of stating, with regard to the previous question, that he was not aware of ever having passed any extravagant travelling expenses for honourable members. He exercised the greatest vigilance with regard to those charges, and he passed none that did not commend themselves to his judgment as reasonable. With regard to wives of honourable members, their passages were paid under a resolution of the House: it was not allowed at his instance; but in their case he never passed anything but bare coach or steamer fares, and no hotel expenses were ever allowed.

Mr. J. C. BUCKLAND said there had been a return just laid before the House, and he found there items very much beyond passage-money or anything of that sort. Passage-money from Auckland was about £5 10s., but last year there was one item of £12 19s. for one honourable member's wife. There was another from the South amounting to £11.

Mr. SPEAKER would be very glad if the honourable member would call his attention to those charges in his room, and he would inquire into them. He exercised the greatest vigilance, and never allowed any unfair charges.

PUBLIC WORKS EXPENDITURE.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked the Government, Whether they intend in future to continue the system hitherto adopted, by which the northern portions of the colony have been entitled to obtain the consideration of the House for proposed votes in the public works expenditure before the other parts of the colony? In asking this question he would not make any remarks which might give rise to debate. He saw no reason why one portion of the colony should be considered before other portions of the colony when the public works estimates or Loan Bills came down. He thought it was very desirable to reverse the order, or to have a different order on future occasions.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON thought the honourable member had made a very good suggestion. If it fell to his lot to prepare such estimates on another occasion he would give the matter full consideration, and would probably mix up the items.

WAIPAHI-HERIOT AND LAWRENCE RAILWAYS.

On the motion of Mr. PYKE, it was ordered, That a return be laid on the table showing the gross total amounts of traffic and receipts on the Waipahi-Heriot and Lawrence lines, respectively, for the month of May last.

AUCKLAND "UNEMPLOYED."

On the motion of Mr. MOSS, it was ordered, That the correspondence between the local authorities in Auckland and the Government, and the chairman of a meeting of the unemployed in Auckland and the Government, with any other information the Goverment may have as to the nature and extent of the distress in Auckland, be laid before this House.

FISHERIES CONSERVATION BILL.

On the motion for the committal of the Fisheries Conservation Bill,

Mr. H. HIRST said,—I should like to say a few words in reference to this matter. The honourable member for Invercargill gave us a very interesting speech on the second reading of this Bill, but I do not think that he was quite right in attributing the diminution of seals on the coast to poaching.

Mr. HATCH.—I did not say anything of the sort. The honourable gentleman quite misunderstood me.

Mr. H. HIRST.—I understood the honourable member to say that it was from poaching. He said something to that effect, at any rate. I attribute the decrease in a large measure to the number of steamers that are now employed in these waters. We know that many of the old whalers say that that is the cause of the

whales disappearing. I happen to know as much of seal-fishing as the honourable gentleman himself; and, indeed, I had killed seals long before the honourable gentleman came to New Zealand. In 1859 I went to the west coast of the South Island looking for open country, and, whilst there, killed seals, and I learned at that time that the seals were diminishing very fast, according to conversations that I had with many old sealers. Now, the people object very much to this monopoly being given to one or two persons who are well off, who probably will have a few large vessels that are properly fitted up for the trade, and who will take the business out of the hands of a large number of men who have small vessels at the Bluff. I do not wish to impute motives, but I do believe that the honourable member for Invercargill is interested in this matter, and I may as well say so. I have had letters from the South asking me to oppose this Bill "tooth and nail." I think that the honourable member himself knows that there are scores of vessels which are engaged in the trade; and not only that, but the Natives would be deprived of a certain amount of their livelihood, and I ask the Minister in charge of the Bill if it is not an infringement of the Treaty of Waitangi, as under that treaty the Natives were entitled to the shore fisheries. When large vessels go sealing the sailors are paid by results: that is, under the "lay" system they get so much of the profits, less payment for what is called "tucker." What I think is required is that the Government should make some regulations which would compel people taking seals to pay so much per skin to the Government, so that the Government should get some revenue from the seal-fishery. I see no reason why the small boats should not be allowed to be engaged in the trade.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Then all the seals will disappear.

Mr. H. HIRST.—I do not think that the honourable member for Port Chalmers knows much about it. The seals have been disappearing for the last thirty or forty years. In Preservation Inlet, Dusky Sound, and Breaksea Sound—places where they used to be caught by hundreds—they are not caught now by tens; so that it shows that they began to decrease long before these small vessels went sealing.

Mr. JOYCE.—I move, That the Bill be committed this day fortnight. I think, in the first place, that we ought not to be in a hurry in reference to this matter. The Bill gives very large powers to the Government of the day. Everything is left to the Governor in Council, and, if we pass the Bill in its present shape, regulations might be made which would press very hardly on people who now get their living by the seal-fishing. I do not think that I need go into the matter at any length, after the remarks which have been made by the honourable member for Wallace, beyond saying this: that the Bill would permit of the establishment of a monopoly, for the whole of the fisheries might be let in one lease. I simply move my amendment.

Mr. PARATA.—I may say that the Natives and half-castes in the South Island, and also the people living on Stewart Island, are interested in this matter. When I was down there a wish was generally expressed among them that reasonable regulations regarding seal-fishing should be framed, so that all persons should be placed on the same footing and have a fair chance. The Natives heard that there was some probability of a Bill being brought in by which only certain people would be able to undertake seal-fishing; and that their fears were well grounded seems now to be shown. They were afraid that a big monopoly would be set up—that two or three persons would have all the fishing-grounds to themselves and be able to sublet to others, and all others would be debarred from the pursuit of seal-fishing. My constituents have written to me asking me to oppose this Bill. They wish to have preserved to them the fishing-rights given by the Treaty of Waitangi. That Treaty gives them the full and perfect right to fish where they please—they were to have perfect liberty to go where they thought fit in pursuit of those rights. The Native people are quite aware of what is the proper time for killing seals, and they never went to kill seals during the breeding-season; but they saw that Europeans were in the habit of killing seals indiscriminately, so, thinking they would not be behindhand, they did the same thing. The Maoris are very careful indeed about killing birds and animals in the right season: they only go for their mutton-birds during a certain season of the year, when the birds are fat. I have only mentioned about the Maoris killing mutton-birds to prove that they were fully aware of the importance of preserving the seal-fisheries, and that they only killed them during the right season. If this industry is to be put up to public auction, I am afraid that some of the Natives will not be able to compete with those Europeans who are much richer than themselves, and they will be shut out altogether. I think that they will suffer great privation if this is done. I think, seeing that this session will soon come to a close, it will be far better to withdraw the measure from the Order Paper, and during the recess to have a much better Bill prepared. As so few sitting-days remain before the House rises, I think that the House will not be able to give due attention to this matter and to find out what would be best for the largest number. I hope the honourable gentleman in charge of this Bill will see his way to withdraw it for the present; and during the recess he will have a better opportunity of finding out the requirements of the case. It will be well for him to give a public notification, preventing people from interfering with the seal-fisheries for the present. I am sure that, if he will take that step, and request the people to abstain from killing seals for the present, every attention will be paid to his wishes. I do not wish it to be understood that I am acting in opposition

the honourable gentleman who brought in his Bill, or to the honourable member for Invercargill; but I ask this House not to pass the measure hastily. I hope the House will fully consider this measure before it becomes law. I felt bound to make the remarks I have made upon it, because I supported the second reading of the Bill. I again ask that this Bill should be allowed to stand over till next year.

Major ATKINSON.—It appears to me that the suggestion of the honourable gentleman is a very wise one. I also should like to suggest to the Government the advisability of withdrawing this Bill. There can be no doubt that, at this time of the session, a great deal of valuable time would be occupied with it. The feeling against it is very strong indeed. I cannot say I share in that feeling altogether, though I do not like the Bill in some respects. Looking at the very heavy Order Paper we have, and understanding that the Government desire to get rid of us as soon as possible—I should not be sorry to get away, though I am quite ready to remain—if the Government wishes to get us away in a short time, I would suggest that this is one of the Bills which might very well be postponed. As we have so much work on the Order Paper, I would suggest to the honourable gentleman that he should agree to the postponement of this Bill till the day after to-morrow, in order that the Government might have an opportunity of considering this among the other Bills, in deciding what it is desirable they should not proceed with. I am sure it would take four or five hours if we are going on with this Bill; and I should like, at any rate, its postponement till the day after to-morrow, in order to consider whether it is advisable to go on with it, for I know there will be very strong opposition to it.

Mr. SUTTER.—I, too, would appeal to the Government to withdraw the Bill. We find the close season is extended for twelve months longer. There will be ample time next session to deal with this question. The session is coming to a close, and I hope the honourable member will withdraw the Bill.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I would press the same request upon the Government. There is no doubt whatever that the steps they are taking are, in the main, most judicious and right, although I do not think the details of the Bill quite give effect to their wishes. I think it is quite certain that if proper regulations are laid down these seal-fisheries will become a source of very considerable revenue to New Zealand, and not only a source of revenue, but that they will afford an article of commerce of great value to the country. But I think it is absolutely essential that the Government should take powers to enforce a close season until next session, if they do withdraw the Bill now. I think they should be quite certain that they have the power of protecting the seals until a proper Bill is passed. I would suggest that they should apply to the United States Government, and get an actual copy of the regulations which are in force in the seal-fisheries belonging to the United States, from which seal-fisheries they enjoy a very considerable revenue—I think $55,000 a year, besides $2 for each seal killed. Those regulations, I believe, are so good that the seals, which had in part disappeared, have increased to a great number, and are maintained at a standard number. They are never allowed to fall below that, and if the authorities see a decrease they immediately stop the slaughtering of young male seals, 100,000 of which class of seals are usually annually killed. As these seal-fisheries are likely to be a source of revenue to the country, and a profitable industry, I think the Government should persist in the course they have taken; but I think, to do that, it is desirable to obtain the information of which I have spoken, so as to enable them to put in the Bill clauses which would enforce the regulations. I think they should take power to protect the seals, which are being destroyed at the present time, I understand.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Yes.

Sir G. GREY.—Then I think there should be some sufficient penalty to put a stop to that; and I am sure the House will help the Minister, if he brings down a Bill next session, to secure the revenue we ought to have, and to preserve a means of commerce which would be of great advantage to the colony.

Mr. HATCH.—I may say, in regard to the remarks the honourable member for Wallace said fell from me, that that honourable gentleman is quite incorrect. He admits not having been in the House, and he has not correctly read my speech. I may say, so far as the whale fisheries are concerned, that the whales are far more numerous now than they had been for a number of years. That is really the fact, and it is accounted for by the low price of oil, which has had the effect of putting from the whale-fishing trade many who were engaged in it before. As far as whales are concerned, honourable members will bear me out that that class of fish follow the feed which they require for their sustenance. I may also state that the Bill would not be unfair to the men engaged in those fisheries, because any person taking over those fisheries would have to fall back upon these men to do the work; and it is in their interest that the trade should be looked after. The honourable member for Wallace deprecates this Bill; but I have a large number of letters from his district—something like a dozen—suggesting that the Bill should be carried through, in order to protect them, I might say, against themselves. It is to the interest of those men that some one should be in charge, so that the business might be carried on in a judicious way. I might also state, in reply to the Native members, that it is not against the Natives that we require to guard ourselves. The Natives, unless they have been led astray, have not been the persons to take these seals out of season; but there have been people who have done that, and there needs to be some supervision of an effective character.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I may say the position of this matter, to my mind, is somewhat piti-

ful. This House, for the last dozen years, has been trying to enact legislation to prevent the wanton destruction of the seals, and here we are just as far from that end as ever. I must say I cannot understand why delay should be urged. However, I think the law as it now stands gives ample power, and I do not see what the Bill is wanted at all for. But, if the law as it is now were enforced, the honourable member for Awarua would be the first to take exception to it. I understand the object of the Bill is to protect the people represented by the honourable member for Awarua and the honourable member for Wallace from themselves. If some action is not taken at once, those people will soon find that "Othello's occupation's gone." There is not the slightest doubt the great object of it is to prevent the seals from being utterly annihilated; and I do not see why we should postpone the thing further. I hope the Bill will be allowed to proceed, although, as I have said before, my idea is that the Administration might get on without it.

Mr. JOYCE.—Hear, hear.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I cannot understand the force of that "Hear, hear," because action, I believe, was taken under the existing law, and was denounced by my honourable friend. It is not, I think, to our credit that such a number of years should have elapsed without our being able to do anything practical in the matter; and I do hope we shall allow no more time to be lost. The Bill contains a provision for leasing for twenty-one years. I understand the principle of the Bill is to give the lessee an interest in protecting the seals, as it appears the Government cannot possibly do that. They have failed in their attempts, and by giving a lessee or lessees a long lease the lessees will have an interest in seeing that the seals are not destroyed, and are allowed to increase and multiply, which it will take a great many years to do.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—It appears to me that the Government have already got quite sufficient power to make a close season. The penalties are also heavy. I do not think the Minister has given sufficient reasons why we should pass the Bill at the present time. Why should not the Government enforce the regulations? or will they point out how this Bill will enable them to enforce the regulations? I will vote for the postponement.

Mr. GUINNESS.—I hope honourable members who have heard the arguments *pro* and *con.* will now come to a vote on the question; and if those honourable gentlemen who are opposing the Bill find themselves in a minority I hope they will assist, in Committee, to make the measure a good one.

Debate adjourned.

NORTH ISLAND MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY LOAN APPLICATION BILL.

Sir J. VOGEL.—In moving, That the House go into Committee on the North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Application Bill, I wish to say, with regard to the North Island Trunk Railway Loan, that imputations have been freely made that the Government was not sincere in desiring to preserve that loan for the purposes for which it was intended. I might make a sufficient reply to those imputations by saying that the Government have incurred a great deal of responsibility, and some amount of difficulty, in order to carry out the promise not to allow the loan to be used otherwise than for its proper purposes; for it is two years since, unknown to me, the loan became, by law, associated with the general Public Works Fund in such a manner that it was open for use for any general vote charged to that fund. The purpose of this Bill is so to tie it up as to prevent any such possibility in future; but, in order to wait until such a Bill as this could be passed, the Government had to abstain from floating the loan earlier in the year, although there were obvious reasons for doing so, and, to arrange to finance so as to do without floating it, they had to take some amount of risk as to what might be the state of the market when the new loan, which it was proposed to ask the House to sanction, was available for negotiation. That, I think, is an ample answer to the imputation that the Government were indifferent to keeping this loan to its proper purposes. Now the Government have brought down a Bill which ties up the loan absolutely and completely for the purpose designated in the Bill; and as to all the other purposes—such as the repayment of past expenditure on the railway—I presume there will be no cavil whatever. But the one point about which we have evidence that there is a difference of opinion is the charging £100,000 of the amount for the purchase of a special portion of Native lands to be set apart as an endowment for this railway and works connected with it. The House knows how it was that that amount was set apart or proposed to be set apart for the purpose; but I have to say that even were it perfectly easy to take the £100,000 from the general fund I am of opinion that it would be desirable to adopt the course proposed by the Bill. The railway will open up a large extent of entirely-unsettled country, and as that country becomes settled there will arise within its limits demands for public works such as roads, tramways, and bridges; and we know, by experience, the difficulty which, invariably, newly-settled districts have in obtaining votes. Now, the land proposed to be purchased and dedicated to the purpose will, there is very little doubt, attain to very large value. I am speaking within reason when I say that it is probable that in ten years this purchase of Native land for £100,000 will acquire considerable value, and will yield a large annual sum for the purposes designated. I cannot help thinking that those honourable members who oppose the vote may, in some day not very far distant, if now successful in opposing it, think with bitter regret of the course they are taking in not allowing the Government to carry out the proposed purpose. I am aware it may be said that it would be desirable that such a course should be pursued with other railways; and I quite admit it. Be-

des, this is an exceptional case—especially is exceptional because of the way in which the nd can be obtained. If, however, it is the sire of those most interested in the railway reject the proposed endowment, then the overnment will consent to that course, and ill appropriate for it £100,000 out of the gene-l Public Works Fund. But I again say to nourable members that it is utterly without ason that they should take any such course. ould understand, if it were a question whether is £100,000 would or would not complete the ilway, that they might hesitate in the matter; it, as a matter of fact, the railway requires, cording to the estimate of the Public Works epartment, £350,000 in excess of the million an to complete it; and there are no honour-ble members in the House, however much ey may talk about not borrowing, and so on, at must feel perfectly aware that, at the oper time, the Parliament of the colony will ovide the necessary amount to finish the ilway, and that a matter of £100,000, more less, will certainly not stand in the way of e completion of the line. Therefore they are ot jeopardizing the completion of the line or using its delay for a single day in accepting is endowment, and it seems to me that they ill be very much mistaken if they do not ccept it. There are parts of the country hich will be opened up by the railway which, nquestionably, are likely to prove of great alue. From all I can hear, near the point here the line will cross the Wanganui River here will grow up one of the principal inland owns of the colony. There is very valuable ineral land between the line and the Mokau nd New Plymouth districts. Besides that, here is reason to think that there are other arts of the line of great importance; and we now that the value of these new districts epends upon the facilities with which they an be settled, and roads and means of com-unication made within them. I have stated he case, and, if the House likes to reject the ndowment, upon those members who do so be he responsibility. If, when the time comes, hey regret it, I hope they will not forget the arning which I have given this evening.

Mr. BRYCE.—May I ask the honourable entleman to make a further explanation to the Iouse? He has already explained that, if the Iouse should refuse to allow the £100,000 to be aken out of this special fund, it will be pro-ided for elsewhere—that is to say, from some ther fund. But that £100,000 is to be spent uring the current year. From what fund oes he expect to get the further sum required or next year's purchases?

Sir J. VOGEL.—I do not think I am called pon now to make a general financial state-nent. I prefer that we should keep to this Bill. That we should begin over and over again o discuss the same question as the honourable member has put and as has been discussed before is so irregular, and so calculated to ake up the time of the House, that I pre-fer not to follow him. Of course, if I am led o it by the nature of the debate, I will do so in reply. But the business before us now is to deal with this Bill. We were told last night that the House would insist upon the loan being tied up. Now, I state that, if honourable members wish it, it can be tied up either with or without this special endowment.

Mr. BRYCE.—I would remind the honourable gentleman that the House, as yet, has had no information on the interesting point I have raised.

Major ATKINSON.—What the honourable gentleman complains of arises from the fact that he does not condescend to give the House any real explanation of the financial condition of the colony. I was going to say that he had never pretended to do so. We are utterly ignorant as to how the honourable gentleman proposes, next year, to deal with this subject. And now he talks lightly of putting this £100,000 on the £800,000, although that is already "ear-marked" for other works. The honourable gentleman knows as well as I do that, if he places this £100,000 against the £800,000, he will have to cut off so much from the estimates now before the House. He will not only not provide for next year, but he will have to cut off so much from the estimates now before the House. I make that remark because the honourable gentleman seems to desire to throw upon this side of the House the blame for the time spent in this repeated discussion. What we are trying to do is to get at the facts of the position, and the honourable gentleman will not let us. We have put what are the facts, and the honourable gentleman dare not deny them, and cannot deny them in detail with any accuracy. Now as to the honourable gentleman's position in taking great credit for having resisted the temptation which, apparently, he has felt to improperly use this loan. I should have thought we might have expected that the possible improper use of a loan would be no temptation to the Treasurer, but that only the most dire necessity would drive him to improperly use any loan. For he admits that it was never intended that this loan should be used for general purposes, but only for the special purpose of making the trunk railway. That is shown on the face of this Bill itself. Therefore I can give the honourable gentleman no credit for being virtuous in these circumstances. But let us see whether there was any virtue in it, after all; and I think I shall show, in a moment, that there was no virtue whatever such as is claimed by the honourable gentleman—and very cleverly he put it. The virtue apparently consisted in running the risk of a lower price next year. That was all the risk run—there was nothing else—for the honourable gentleman had cash in hand to the amount of £800,000 at the beginning of the present year. After expending the whole amount voted to be spent last year, there could have been, as I showed during the recess, no possible excuse for raising this loan and paying it into the Treasury, unless it was to use it for other purposes than the House had passed votes for. The money could only have simply lain idle in the

Treasury. It might have been convenient for the honourable gentleman to use it to pay interest with, or something of that sort; but he can hardly claim virtue in resisting temptation on that account. The honourable gentleman has shown that he had more than enough cash last year; and therefore there was no temptation to raise and use this loan. Then the honourable gentleman, acting in this matter as he does in almost every other, says this loan became liable to be paid into the general Public Works Fund by accident, without his knowing it: in other words, somebody else did it. That is the usual excuse with the honourable gentleman now; and, when he has told us that, he thinks he has given a sufficient answer. He says this loan got into that position without his knowledge, and he did not know it until some one else told him. That seems now to be a sufficient answer—an official answer—to any charge of wrongdoing by the Government. I was never let off, when I had the honour to sit on those benches, with any excuse of that sort; and I do not think the House or the country will accept such an excuse from the Treasurer. The honourable gentleman ought to have known it was in the Bill of 1884, and that it had been put there, and he ought to have explained at the time why it was put there. I have outside the House taken blame to myself for not looking after the schedule of the Loan Act of 1884; and I do blame myself to a small degree, because I thought I had looked at the Bill very carefully when it was before the House. I did carefully look at the enacting part, but I did not happen to look at the schedule so attentively. The North Island Trunk Line Loan Act was passed two years before that; yet the Government which passed that Act did not dream of putting the loan into the schedule of votes to be used for general purposes: it was recognized as allocated to a particular purpose, and so it was left. Now we are being told that the reason why it was not put in was that it could not be raised until the loan had been determined upon by the House. But that is no answer at all, because the Treasurer will see that the Three-million Loan was scheduled in the same year as that in which the Trunk Loan Bill was passed, and yet we were absolutely prohibited from raising it except at the rate of a million a year. There was a clear distinction, and a clear reason why it was not put in. The honourable gentleman claims virtue for not taking this loan after the power to do so had got in by accident; but, I ask, with what care can Bills be prepared if such an accident can give the power to expend a loan in a way different from that in which the House has provided it should be spent? What confidence can we repose in the honourable gentleman in such circumstances as these? That would have been no excuse whatever. But the honourable gentleman has told us that the money was not wanted if he had taken the loan, and he was bound—as he tells us it was his desire to do—to see before raising it that it was properly set apart as the House intended when it passed the special Loan Act. Then we come to this curious position: The honourable gentleman now tells us in plain terms that the reason why he proposes to ask for this £100,000 for Native-land purchases is that he has not got the money to spare out of the £800,000 which he told us he had in hand at the beginning of the year. Well, of course I have had the honour to point out, when replying to the honourable gentleman's Financial Statement, that he had not that amount; and now he admits it fully. But what I object to is this: that, having found out his mistake and admitted it, he does not come down to the House and tell us what he wants for expenditure during the next two years for land-purchase, but he is content to make a small provision for the purchase of land during the current year only; and I say, if the Government do their duty, according to their own showing that provision is too small for this year, leaving next year to take care of itself. Now, I say that this House, before it makes a special grant for Native-land purchase out of this loan, or out of any other fund, should demand that the honourable gentleman should look a little ahead and tell us how he provides for the whole scheme of two years in this respect. He did tell us that the £800,000 balance would provide for all general purposes for that period, and that this new loan of a million and a half, as it was proposed, would provide for railways for the two years; but now we see that the fund for general expenditure has gone to the winds. And yet the honourable gentleman proposes to do nothing but in a piecemeal way. He says, "Give me enough for this year." That is, really, "Give me time to turn round and manipulate the accounts again against next year." That is the real meaning of asking for this money in this form. Then what does the honourable gentleman do? He appeals to the selfishness of northern members to enable him to do this. He says to them, "Do not be afraid for your railway. Have no fear about that. You know very well that after £900,000 has been spent Parliament will vote whatever more is necessary to complete the line." I say "£900,000," and it would be that if the loan is secured from further encroachment during the next year; but it is quite possible that the House might alter its mind next year, and determine that £300,000 should be taken for land-purchase from it. We know that the line will cost more than a million—probably it will cost £1,400,000—but the honourable gentleman says, "You are sure to get it, whatever it may cost." I do not doubt that at all—no doubt the House, having begun the line, will continue and complete it—but what I object to is that, while the Government profess to "ear-mark" the loan for a special purpose, the Treasurer, in order to get himself out of a temporary difficulty, wishes to seize part of this fund, and he does not seize it in a straightforward way, but he holds out the bait of some special advantage to the northern members to be gained by allowing him to do what he proposes. But I hope the northern members will rise above that altogether: I am quite sure they

No. 24.

NEW ZEALAND.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SESSION 1886.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

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will. Even if it were to be the great boon to us that the Treasurer says it will be—even if the Government were able to show that in three or four years an enormous revenue would be derived from the sale of the land—I should not look upon it with envy; but I should regard with great delight the fact that the money was not to be devoted to a particular purpose, but to the legitimate purposes of colonization throughout the colony. But I want to know—and the Bill does not tell us—who is to pay the expenses of surveying the land; and does the House believe that, after the cost of surveying the land and making the necessary roads for settlement has been defrayed, there will be any margin left? Does not our experience tell us that there is scarcely any land in the North Island the proceeds from which, when the land is sold or leased, will pay the cost of surveying and making roads? We know that invariably there is a balance on the wrong side of the ledger; and there will be a balance on the wrong side in this case.

Mr. KERR.—Too thin.

Major ATKINSON.—There are some honourable gentlemen whose one idea is selfishness—they are governed by that one idea. I do not believe in it myself. I do not believe that selfishness does govern the world, or that it ever will, as some of those among us believe. I treat that idea with the utmost contempt wherever I meet with it, and I hope the House will do so. I venture to tell the honourable gentleman who is always imputing base motives that if he hopes his speeches will have any weight with the House he must change his mode of looking at the speeches of honourable members, and he must get to believe that there are men in the House who can be moved by other motives than the grossest selfishness. We are asked to vote this money in a way in which the Government no doubt regret to have to ask us to vote it; but the Treasurer evidently feels that he is proposing to use this money in a way which will promote settlement, and he thinks large returns will be got from the land, instead of—as probably will be the case—more money being wanted to open up the land than will be realized by the sale of the land. But, if a profit is to be got from the land, it is not in the interest of the colony that the revenue from that land should be allocated to any special work. The whole colony is interested in the settlement of the North Island, and therefore the colony is entitled to any benefit that may be got from the sale of the land at a profit. If there is any deficiency the colony must bear it; but if, on the other hand, there is a profit, small or large, it should go into the general revenue of the colony, to be dealt with as this House may vote for general purposes. If the money should be spent in the district in which the land is, I hope that would be decided not upon the fact that the land there had returned a profit, but upon the question of whether or not the money was required to be spent in that district to promote further settlement on the ground of public interest. These are the grounds I wish this matter to be put upon. I have stated generally my reasons for opposing the diversion of this £100,000. To sum up, I say that we should not consent to provide any special funds for the purchase of Native lands this year until we have a clear statement from the Treasurer as to his whole scheme of purchase of Native land, and the providing of funds for it. That seems to me a matter of great importance; and therefore, even if it was not proposed to take this particular sum in this way for the purpose, I should have taken exception to the voting of any money from any fund for the purchase of Native land on that ground alone. I say further, with regard to this land, that the honourable gentleman has failed to show a single reason why the money should be devoted to this purpose, except this one: that he says that the £800,000 is not sufficient for the purposes for which it was ample when he made his Financial Statement. Now, that would be a good and sufficient reason—though not as against this loan—for asking the House to make proper provision for the purchase of Native land and for the construction of other works if the honourable gentleman would only come down and ask us to make provision for those things after giving us a clear and definite statement as to how he stands. But I do hope that this House will pause before it consents to make a special appropriation for land until such time as we really know where we are being led to in this matter. We know that £200,000 has been dropped out of the accounts altogether. In a note to the public works estimates it is stated that £202,000, set down as liability for land-purchase, is not required for this year, and that it is only set down as a contingency. But it is taken into account nowhere else. The Native Minister has told us that he wants £100,000 for this year's expenditure on the purchase of land along the North Island Trunk line; but there is nothing said about what is required for the purchase of the other blocks, and there is no money appropriated for that land—not a single halfpenny—except a sum of some £16,000, which we are asked to vote this year. I do hope the honourable gentleman will give us some further information; for absence of information on that point is alone sufficient to justify us in refusing the provision which the honourable gentleman now asks us to make for this single year. And then, with regard to the settlement of the country, I say that the honourable gentleman ought also—and he is bound, indeed—to give us further information as to how he proposes to settle this land. I think that the provision which is asked for roads and other works is totally insufficient for the purpose. The honourable gentleman ought not to raise the hopes of this House and the country in the way he does. I am speaking of the House generally, because we in the North know better than to suppose that when the land is purchased it is going to provide ample revenue to make the roads and other things mentioned in this clause 5. The honourable gentleman is simply deceiving the House; and I hope

the House will accept the alternative he gave when he told us that if we did not vote the money we must accept the responsibility. We are all willing to take that responsibility, and I hope that the honourable gentleman will throw it upon us.

Mr. PEACOCK.—I am glad that the Colonial Treasurer has made this statement upon the subject, for, at any rate, we have now advanced a stage in the matter. At an earlier period of the Bill's history we were told by the Colonial Treasurer that if we rejected his proposal to set aside £100,000 for the purchase of Native lands he would withdraw the Bill altogether. We have advanced a stage beyond that, for he told us to-night that if the £100,000 is not allowed to be taken from this million loan the money will have to be found from the Public Works Fund. I am glad to hear that statement; but I desire to take exception to the position which the Colonial Treasurer takes up, that the northern members will be doing a wrong thing if they do not agree to this particular proposition—that they will have very much cause for regret hereafter if they do not allow the Government to follow this particular course. I am quite sure that none of the northern members would for a moment object to the endowment referred to in clause 5 of this Bill; but what they do object to is that it should be purchased by means of a loan which was to be devoted entirely to the construction of the railway. The clause before us states distinctly that the endowment is to be applied to the making of branch railways, tramways, and so forth, and is to be purchased out of this loan, which by the legislation of 1882 was authorized to be raised for the particular purpose of making the railway. It was never intended that the money should be applied to such things as making roads and branch railways. What the House meant and said was that the money was to be applied to the construction of the main line of railway and no other. This is not a question, to my mind, as to whether there should be an endowment, or whether land should be purchased along the line—I am not prepared to dispute that; but what I say is that it should not be bought by money intended for another purpose, because, if you take £100,000 for this purpose, I see no reason why you should not take half a million. It is wholly foreign to the intention of Parliament, which would be entirely frustrated if this were allowed. I feel sure of this: that, if the Colonial Treasurer comes down to the House and says that he has not sufficient for the purchase of this land alongside the main line of railway, the House will gladly vote sufficient money for the purpose. I have a strong belief that the land should be acquired, and that the colony should derive the benefit from the increase in the value of the land and the settlement of the country, and that the Treasurer would find the House quite willing to vote the money which might be necessary for the purpose if he would come down and plainly say that he wants it.

Dr. NEWMAN.—When the Treasurer commenced his speech just now I was very curious to hear what he could have to say about the arrangement that he proposes. He told us that we northern members who objected to this endowment should be doing something that we should greatly regret for years to come, because we should be losing something that would be extremely valuable. I think he said—if not just now, it was when we were in Committee—that in the course of five or ten years the endowment would be worth £50,000 a year. Had that been true no northern member would have been so foolish as to oppose this proposal: but I would point out to the Colonial Treasurer that his figures are simply as absurd as it is possible to imagine figures to be; because clause 5 actually says that, of the hundred thousand pounds' worth of land to be purchased, only 2½ per cent. is to be set aside as an endowment for the railway; and to say that 2½ per cent. of £100,000 is to produce £50,000 a year is too absurd to be credited. I have read the clause time after time, and there is no getting away from it: because we decline to sanction—I hope the House will decline to sanction it—the taking of £100,000 from this loan, we are going to lose the magnificent endowment of £50,000 a year; and that is to come from £2,500, being 2½ per cent. on the £100,000 which is to be set apart as an endowment. Well, it is a very extraordinary thing——

An Hon. MEMBER.—Read the 5th clause again.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I must say that it came to me as a revelation last year that by a clause in the Appropriation Act the Government had been enabled to get hold of this North Island Trunk Railway Loan; because in the year 1882 an Act was specially passed to prevent such a thing. That such an Act should have been repealed by a single line in the Appropriation Act was a thing that had never occurred to me. Then the Treasurer takes great credit to himself for not having floated this loan, and for having kept it intact so long. But I would like to point out that in the Appendix to the Journals of last year it will be seen that almost directly after the route of the line was decided he wrote Home to the Loan Agents—that was in September, 1884, when it was only possible to spend £20,000 of the money within the year—asking them when it would be possible to float it; and that ever since then he has been continually asking them when they could float it. At last the Loan Agents stated that the Bank of England was dead against it, and had absolutely refused to have anything to do with it. Then, the Treasurer writes Home to say that he cannot understand this cavilling on the part of the Bank of England. So that it is really the Bank of England that prevented the loan from being floated. The fact is, too, that on the 24th February of this year the Clerk to the Executive Council actually signed an order authorizing the loan to be floated. Therefore it seems to me that the Treasurer has been very anxious to float this loan. I can only say again that there seems to me to be no reason for rendering the Act that we previously passed

iterly useless. In my opinion there is nothing to justify clause 5.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I simply rise to correct the honourable gentleman who has just sat down. It is clear to me that he has not read clause at all, because the 2½ per cent. mentioned in clause 5 applies to charitable aid and purposes of that character, the balance being an endowment for the railway. I certainly think that, when honourable gentlemen get up and talk so glibly about the "absurdity" of the Treasurer in this, and the "monstrosity" of that, they should at least know what they are talking about. It appears to me to be a waste of time for honourable gentlemen to come here with speeches which are not according to book. This is simply what it means. It is not my intention to take up any time discussing this matter; but I simply wished to correct the honourable gentleman, and prevent him making such misstatements in the future.

Mr. BRUCE.—I should like to make a few remarks in reference to this measure, although I have very little indeed to say, because I have been almost entirely anticipated by the honourable member for Egmont. The Treasurer has laid considerable stress upon an admitted necessity for providing funds for making roads in the land along the line of this railway. Now, in the first place, £84,000 of this loan has been voted for roads in connection with this line, and it ought to go far, if honestly spent, in constructing roads alongside the railway. And, in the second place, those who know the character of this country know that, after the cost of survey and roading, it is absolutely impossible to derive any funds for expenditure on roads elsewhere in less time, probably, than twenty-one years, and we all hope that long before that time the roads will have been made and the country settled all along the line. In reality, when we analyse it in that way, we see the endowment will not serve the purpose for which the Colonial Treasurer assumes it will be valuable. For that, and for other reasons which I have previously given, I shall oppose this clause.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I wish to say a few words, but shall not travel over the ground that has been gone over already if I can possibly help it. The honourable member for Egmont has put the matter, I think, very clearly before the House, as far as his statement went; but I think there are two or three points not touched on. As to the amount of virtue which it required to withstand the temptation of taking money from that million loan which was specially devoted to a particular railway—a temptation arising simply because a mistake had been made by the Treasurer himself in putting it in the schedule of the Appropriation Bill—I think the less said about that the better. It is very apparent that an error was committed upon his part in putting it there, and he, knowing afterwards that he could not honestly devote it to any other purpose than that for which it had been voted, takes credit to himself for not using the money for any other purpose. I say, with regard to the endowment, that, as the honourable member for Rangitikei has pointed out, roads and surveys will be required, and, if we are to understand that this railway is not to be completed until funds from that endowment are available to complete it, I do not think that will carry out the intention of the House when it voted the money. The impression was that the railway would cost a million and a quarter—and very likely it will cost a million and a half—but that the railway would be of great service to the colony, because it would open up land which has hitherto been closed, and which could not be opened up without a railway, and it will be the means of settling many hundreds of people along the line, and turning to beneficial use the land now lying idle. But we did not anticipate that a single shilling from this land would come in for any other purpose than that which is required to open up the country. Does the honourable member know how much has been taken out of the Public Works Fund for the making of roads and bridges? We have taken upwards of three millions. How much has come in from the sale of lands in the Provinces of Auckland, Taranaki, Hawke's Bay, and Wellington—leaving out the price received for the sale of confiscated land in Taranaki—since 1879? Why, honourable gentlemen would be perfectly astonished to find that it does not come to £300,000. And do honourable gentlemen know that we have spent a million already in the purchase of Native lands? When we consider how much it has cost to survey the land, how much to make roads—no doubt there is a quantity of land not yet sold—but when we see how much it has cost to do these things, and how slowly the money is coming in now, and how very slowly, in all probability, it will come in for years to come, it must be a settled conviction on the part of members that it is not the amount of money to be raised from this land which is our object. Our object is the settling of people on the land; and, when we consider that, how can we think of setting apart this land as an endowment for that railway, and expect to get any funds from the endowment to make the railway? We voted a million of money for that railway, and for nothing else; and, if we are to preserve our honesty of purpose, we should not take a single shilling of it for any other purpose whatever. If it is necessary to buy that land along the line of railway, let us vote money for it. We shall have to do that or else take it out of the North Island Trunk Loan, and then have to borrow more money to finish the line, and so pay back the money taken from it. Let us, straightforwardly, without any shuffling in the matter, borrow the money that is necessary to purchase these Native lands along the line; and let us, in order to make these lands available, borrow more money, if necessary, to make roads, so as to settle people upon the land. Let us do it wisely and carefully, and as to the proceeds from that land, whatever they may be, let them come into the general fund the same as the Land Fund at the present time. I hope we

shall not be establishing as a precedent, by our action here to-night, that we can take money from the purposes for which it has been voted and let us tie it to the purpose which is essentially national in its character, for any profit it will be to the country. I shall vote against subsection (5) of clause 4, which, of course, will mean that clause 5 should come out; and I trust the House will throw it out; and if the Treasurer has not got the money, and is able to show the House that the £500,000 in hand for general purposes is not enough—the honourable member for Egmont says that it is non-existent—or if the House thinks the whole of the £500,000 should be diverted to general purposes, then let him come down with a small loan Bill, if necessary. I say let him do that in a straightforward manner. I do not say I will agree to vote for that Bill, but I say it would be the straightforward course, and that he should rather do it in that way than in this, which, I think, is neither politically fair, nor practicable, nor satisfactory to the colony. I think that out of that £500,000, if we are going to taper off, we shall be able to get £100,000 to purchase Native land, by reducing the estimates; but, if the House decides to borrow money for the purpose, let it borrow straightforwardly, and let us keep the million voted for that railway for the purpose for which it was authorized.

Mr. MACARTHUR.—The Colonial Treasurer just now took great credit to himself for having incurred responsibility in not allowing the North Island Trunk Loan to be diverted from its proper purpose. A late repentance is better than none, but we know that the Treasurer was the one who proposed to divert it from its proper purpose, in a telegram which he sent to the Auckland Chamber of Commerce. In regard to the expression that "he had incurred great responsibility in not allowing the loan to be diverted," who proposed to so divert it except himself? Is that one of the numerous contests that have taken place between himself and the Premier?—because the Premier also proposed to divert it. Did he incur great responsibility by preventing the Premier diverting it from its proper purpose? The Premier, in Otago, I think it was, stated—

"The carrying of the motion meant this: We did not need any loan; we had got authority to raise one million for the North Island Trunk Railway, and of course, if we are hard up for money, the money is there. It will be very hard for the North Island people if the money for their trunk railway is taken for general purposes; but we cannot help that."

The Treasurer was then in accord with him, for he said,—

"Expenditure according to law will proceed, and it will not be long before the trunk line loan will come into use. Members who voted for Captain Russell's motion were determined not to sanction a new loan, and they must have had intelligence enough to know that, as there was no provision for defence and other purposes in other loans, that expenditure would come out of the only unexpended loan until further provision was made. We wished to push on the North Island Trunk Railway as rapidly as possible; and what object could members have had in stopping it and refusing other loans, except to use the trunk line loan for defence and other purposes?"

However, the Treasurer tells us to-night that he has repented of his intentions, and, according to his statement, he evidently had a contest with the Premier so as to prevent the loan being diverted, and now he proposes to tie it up for the purposes designated in the Bill; but there is nothing here to show that he thinks of tying it up for the purpose for which it was always intended it should be appropriated, and which was intended when the Three-million Loan and the North Island Trunk Loan were authorized. What does the Bill do? Does it tie it up for that purpose? Not a bit. The railway comes in here and there, but there are to be a great many other purposes to which the money is to be applied just as much as to the railway itself.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Only one other.

Mr. MACARTHUR.—I think I shall point out two or three others if the honourable gentleman will allow me to finish. He will be able to reply to me when I have done. In subsection (2) there are the words, "all other costs incidental to the construction of the same"—that is, to the construction of the main trunk railway. Now, that is a wide expression, and, judging from what has been done by the Government during the last year, "costs incidental to the construction of a railway" is liable to various interpretations. I do not think it necessary to go over again what has been gone over very frequently during the session, in order to show what these incidentals may be thought to be by the Government. Honourable members must know that money has been spent on a great many things not at all incidental to the construction of the railway in any proper interpretation of the term: in fact, the Public Works Statement and those pretty pictures at the end of it show that money has been spent for purposes Parliament never intended it for. Then, we have the cost of rolling-stock and other necessary equipment of the railway. Now we are taking over a very large quantity of rolling-stock from the Government—the Government is practically selling that rolling-stock to the North Island Trunk Loan, and applying the money that rolling-stock costs to general purposes; and, so far as any money is allocated for that particular purpose, it certainly is going to be spent for general purposes, and not in the construction of the railway. Of course, in the matter of the purchase of Native land a clear £100,000 goes in a direction never contemplated. The North Island members do not ask for it, and it will never carry out the object that the Colonial Treasurer professes it will. In the debate before the adjournment to-night I pointed out that the transactions in Crown lands have not been of such a profitable character as to lead the North Island members to accept the proposal of the Government

th any amount of gratitude. I feel sure e Government will administer these lands as ey do the Crown lands, and, if they cannot ake a profit out of the administration of e Crown lands, administration rather leadg to a deficit, the same thing will apply these lands along that North Island Trunk ne still more forcibly, because, from my knowdge of the country, and from the evidence ven in 1884 before the Committee on the orth Island Main Trunk Railway, we know at these lands are not up to the average of nd throughout the whole colony, but that ey are much below the average. There is a eat deal of pumice-land along that line, and e have it upon good authority that the land e purchase of which is now being negotiated of an inferior character. Therefore we have ason to conclude that any transactions that ke place in land along that line will not be a profitable character, and, instead of its ing a princely endowment, it will mean that he money that will be taken out of that loan buy land will never be recouped to the loan fterwards. Now, I think I have shown two r three purposes foreign to the object for hich the lean is authorized, and I wonder y what process of reasoning the Treasurer rrives at the conclusion that hospitals and haritable aid are a fit subject for which to appropriate a loan authorized for railway purposes. It is a very small percentage; but, then, that ½ per cent. has no right to be spent for that bject. If we want to endow the hospitals of he country, let us buy up land and endow hem, but do not let us be asked to take money ut of this special loan for that purpose. Then e find that the remainder, or 97½ per cent., may be spent on the construction of the main trunk railway, branch railways, tramways, and roads connected therewith. I venture to say that, when the Parliament of 1882 authorized a million of money to be raised for the North Island Trunk Railway, it was never contemplated that any of that money should be spent on roads, tramways, or branch-lines in connection with it; and this is, I maintain, a misappropriation of the money authorized to be raised by that loan. I shall oppose that, and I believe the North Island members will oppose subsection (5) of clause 4, and also the whole of clause 5. I feel that I should not be doing my duty to my constituents, who are interested in this railway, or to the colony as a whole, if I did not oppose that clause, which proposes to divert this money to purposes altogether foreign to railway construction.

Mr. SUTTER.—I understood that the question was, whether we were to report this debate in Committee. That was the object in reporting progress; and I hope honourable members will think about that, and not waste the time of the House. I trust the speaking will now come to an end, and that we shall come to a decision whether we are going to report the discussion in Committee or not. Honourable members near their homes, and who can go and come through the session, ought not to take up the time of the House speaking to the electors on going into Committee. If we go into Committee it will all be spoken over again, and we have now wasted two hours, whether we go into Committee or not.

Mr. KERR.—I should think the North Island members have had enough talking. This debate has, I think, now been going on for nine days. Honourable members on this side of the House have said very little. The honourable member for Egmont commenced by asking, if the £100,000 for land-purchase was taken out of the million loan for the North Island Railway, what would be done with the £800,000 to be voted for public works? The honourable gentleman told the House that there was not a farthing of that £800,000 in existence, and now he says he is quite willing to take that £800,000 to buy this land along the North Island Main Trunk line. He does not care about the South Island. As long as he can rob the South Island and take the money to the North Island he does not care what happens. It is well known that, in 1883, when the Three-million Loan was borrowed, that also was ear-marked. I remember looking forward to having some of that money to make the line from Belgrove to the Coast. Of that loan, £40,000 was set apart for this railway, and only £14,000 was spent by the honourable member's Government. What did he do with the balance? I will guarantee that it was not spent in the South Island. It was spent in this Island, and a portion of it in Taranaki. In Taranaki railways apparently exist only to take the honourable gentleman backward and forward to and from his constituents; the lines there carry nothing. The honourable gentleman said the North Island members would rise above taking the land endowment. He knows very well that on the land sold in the North Island there is a loss to the colony of from 25 to 50 per cent. In other words, if an acre of land is sold for £1, the colony loses 10s. by it. It takes more to survey and road the land than the land is worth. They do not want the land to pay. They know very well that they have got a good milch-cow in the South Island, and they know that if the sale of land pays there they will get their share of the money. The honourable gentleman went on to say that there are some members in this House who look on everything he says as being dictated by selfish motives. I suppose he was referring to members on this side of the House. The present Government are doing their best to do what is fair and honest to the country. I have a good right to speak on this occasion, because the present Government have never spent a single shilling in the district I come from. A small sum was put down for Marlborough and the West Coast, but the North Island and Otago members joined, and crushed the weak; but the day will come when they will be sorry for it. There is no doubt about that. The day will come when we will help ourselves. Very little money was spent in the provincial district from which I come, and people asked what was the matter; and it was always said, "You cannot expect anything else as long as the

honourable member for Egmont is at the head of affairs;" and the people sent me here for the express purpose of supporting this Government, because this Government has dealt fairly with the country as a whole. In Taranaki they got 25 per cent. of the Land Fund to help to make a harbour, and they have paid their own debts with the money; they have actually paid their rates with it, and £100,000 of this money is all but gone.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the honourable member is going away from the question.

Mr. KERR.—I will come back to it again. At the time Parliament voted this money the Province of Taranaki was small indeed; but, since that time, its population has increased tenfold. Well may we ask, "How is it that the Taranaki harbour works come to be so specially favoured in the matter of land-endowment?" as I feel sure that, when the Bill was under the consideration of this House, it was never intended that that part of the colony should be so exceptionally treated by granting it 25 per cent. of the gross proceeds of land sold within such a wide area of country in aid of the construction of its harbour works. The present Government should at once step in and protect the other parts of the colony from such an act of injustice being perpetrated; and the members of this House, too, should also rise to the occasion, and insist that this wasteful expenditure shall cease, and that the taxpayers of New Zealand shall not be robbed by the further appropriation of the Taranaki Land Fund for the extension of these works. I well remember when the first three-million loan was raised for war expenditure in Taranaki. It was well understood that the proceeds arising from all sales of confiscated land were to be applied in liquidation of that loan. But what has been done, Sir? The honourable member for Egmont and his Government have robbed the Middle Island of the most of that loan, for it is well known that the taxpayers of the South Island had to bear the most of the burden, and more particularly the Province of Nelson. It will not be denied that the people of Nelson received the panic-stricken settlers of Taranaki with open arms, and that they received the greatest hospitality at a critical time, fleeing as they were from the ravages of a disastrous Maori war, and when they were not in a position to help themselves. Now, Sir, how has the honourable member for Egmont repaid Nelson for her noble treatment towards the settlers of Taranaki? Why, by putting sums on the estimates from year to year for the construction of railways and roads, and failing to expend the moneys voted by Parliament in favour of these much-required works. And where, may I ask, was the money that was voted in favour of Nelson expended? Why, in New Plymouth and its surroundings. The honourable member for Egmont did everything in his power, both this year and last year, to defeat our efforts in getting the East and West Coast Railway, and I can assure the honourable gentleman that the people of Nelson will remember all this. But the honourable member for Egmont is not even satisfied to let the injustice which he has inflicted upon Nelson rest there, but he has the audacity to ask this House to further injure Nelson and Marlborough by voting £100,000 for the purchase of Native lands for the construction of the North Island Main Trunk Railway. The honourable member for Akaroa said that a million of money was spent on Native lands before, and that very little was got back in return. Of course it returns little when the land is bought in the honourable gentleman's district. In the Local Bills Committee the other day the Surveyor-General said that on every acre of land sold in Taranaki there was a loss to the country of 10s. That province still has that 25 per cent., which, I say, belongs to the colony. Will the honourable gentleman give that up? The honourable member for Akaroa spoke in his usual manner. I know what that honourable gentleman wants. He would not care if ten millions of money were borrowed, so long as he was Treasurer. The honourable gentleman now wants to get the Government into a net, so that he may pull the top-string. I do not think the Treasurer will be caught like that. Honourable members know that the Treasurer does not hear well, or they would not dare to say what they do about him. The Treasurer is trying to act faithfully and honestly, but honourable members will not let him. I do not know what this "car-marking" means, but I suppose the honourable member for Egmont wants to fix the Treasurer so that he cannot spend one farthing of that money on anything else but the North Island Main Trunk line. The statement of the honourable gentleman about the Otago Central was only made to get supporters round him. I am sure the North Island members will feel, some day, that they have done Christchurch, Nelson, and Westland an injury; but the day will come when we shall be able to help ourselves and make our own railways, and they will pay better interest than the Taranaki lines do. It has been stated from the first that it was a premeditated affair to cut off the weak parts and get the money to buy the Middle Island Railway. As long as they get the money they do not care one straw about anything else. That any men who call themselves men can come on the floor of this House and attack the Colonial Treasurer as they do astonishes me. They treat him in a most disrespectful manner, and I can tell them that if I were capable of taking a seat on those benches they would not treat me like that. They do not dare to attack other Ministers; but, simply because the Treasurer is not in a condition to take his own part, they attack him, both inside and outside the House, in a most shameful manner. It is just because they want to get his seat, and I venture to say that if he were to go to England to-morrow there is not a member on the Opposition benches who would not be very glad to take his position; but I trust he will sit where he is for a long time, and keep them in their present position. I may say that during the recess I

rent through the country from one end to the ther, and the people everywhere, both north nd south, candidly told me, "We have an onest Government in office now, and we want o keep them there, for we have had enough of he others." I hope we shall go into Committee n this Bill and get through with it.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—I shall not follow n the line of the last speaker, but want to ome directly to business. I am one of those who have always wished to see this loan placed way from the hands of Ministers. I believed hat we had done so, and when I heard that he Government were going to take some of the oan I was very much astonished. I will read a few words from the Act which was passed in 1882. The title of that Act is,—

"An Act to authorize the Borrowing and Raising of Money to continue the Construction of the Main Trunk Railway of the North Island."

Then comes the preamble,—

"Whereas it is expedient that the construction of the main trunk railway of the North Island should be proceeded with as soon as circumstances will permit: And whereas the obstacles in the way of carrying on the extension from Awamutu may be shortly removed, and it is expedient that money, as required, should be available for such construction."

We then have the enacting clause, which is clause 3, and which says,—

"Such agents shall have full power and authority to borrow and raise, in Great Britain or elsewhere, by bonds, debentures, scrip, or otherwise, such sum or sums, not exceeding one million pounds sterling in the whole, as the Governor in Council may from time to time or at any time direct and determine, for the purpose of constructing the said main trunk railway, or the payment or repurchase of short-dated debentures issued under this Act."

Now, the only purpose for which we were to borrow that money was to construct the North Island Trunk Railway, and, if it was not tied up sufficiently by that Act, I fail to see that it will be any more tied up by the Bill which is now before us. I will read how we are going to tie it up. The preamble says,—

"Whereas by 'The North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Act, 1882,' it was provided that the Government should raise a loan not exceeding one million pounds sterling in amount for the construction of the main trunk railway of the Northern Island, and it is expedient to make further provision for limiting the application of the moneys so to be raised."

Then we go on to enact,—

"All moneys borrowed under the authority of the said Act shall be carried to a separate account in the Public Works Fund, and shall from time to time be applied to the construction of the said railway, in such amounts and within such periods only as shall be provided by any Act or Acts to be passed by the General Assembly appropriating the said moneys; and it is hereby expressly declared that it shall not be lawful for the Governor to recommend to Parliament the appropriation of any part of the moneys so authorized to be borrowed to any other purpose than the construction of the said railway as defined by this Act."

I imagine that we can come down next session and repeal this Bill just as easily as we could the Act of 1882. But it is not tied down at all, for the Bill only provides that the money shall be carried to a certain account, and, just as the Treasurer operated on the general account last year, so will he be able to operate upon this. I see also in this Bill something which gives him power to take away a large amount of money from the purpose for which the original Act was passed. We have, to begin with, "the cost of determining and surveying the line of the railway." It is very well known that the cost of surveying will be very heavy, and it was always understood that that cost was not to be taken from the amount to be devoted to the construction of the line. The cost of constructing the line was estimated at £1,350,000, and we may put down the cost of surveys at £20,000. Then we have, No. 2, "all other costs incidental to the construction of the same." I suppose that means such things as the snagging of the Wanganui River; so I think we may safely put that down at £30,000. The Minister for Public Works makes a jeering expression; but I can tell him that I have not such implicit faith in him or any of the Ministry that I would take his denial for more than it is worth, and I am sure we may put those items down at £50,000. We have, next, No. 3, "cost of rolling-stock and other necessary equipment of the railway." That was not included in the estimate, and I think we may put it down at £100,000. The Minister for Public Works laughs again; but I fancy it is because he is not very well pleased at these things coming out. Then, No. 4, "the cost of acquiring Native or other land for the use and occupation of the same." That was not put in the loan, and we did not say anything about it, because we thought the land was to be given to us. Then, No. 5, "the cost, to an amount not exceeding one hundred thousand pounds, of acquiring Native or other lands lying within the boundaries described in the schedule to 'The Native Land Alienation Restriction Act, 1884;'" and No. 6, "the cost of raising the loan." These will in all amount to £300,000; so that this is a Bill to take £300,000 from the North Island Trunk Railway and spend it on other purposes. We cannot get away from the fact that it is a Bill to take that money away, and when we have passed it the Treasurer can laugh in his sleeve, and the Minister for Public Works can again make the peculiar expression of surprise which he made just now. I warn the House and the country that that is what we are doing. We talk of "ear-marking" the loan, but this Bill is just cutting it in two—cutting off its head; and, by-and-by, we shall find that, by the natural process of events that are going on now, another £100,000 or so will be taken, and we shall be left with about half a million to construct a railway which is estimated to cost £1,350,000. And then, in the dark days which are coming, when we shall

have about a quarter of the railway completed, we can look back with pleasure to the days when the Colonial Treasurer sat upon those benches, and I am sure the whole country will feel proud of him.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, I will begin by complimenting the honourable member for Akaroa, who has come down to-night with a great borrowing policy—a great advance on the sentiments which he has previously uttered in this House. If I understand him rightly, he thinks we should borrow, without limit, whatever may be required for the purchase of Native lands, and for opening up roads for the purpose of settlement. I believe the honourable member will come to borrowing for railways, in time. I can understand the objection of that honourable gentleman or of any other honourable member from the Middle Island to this proposal, because they might fairly say it is a new departure; but my difficulty is to understand the objection of honourable members whose interests and the interests of whose constituents will be benefited by the proposal in question. I cannot help thinking, if the word "bosh" be a parliamentary term, that the objections urged by those honourable gentlemen to the taking of this land can only be denominated by that short word of four letters. There is the honourable member for Egmont, for instance, who is always so reluctant to ask for anything for his part of the world. If we were to offer him this land as an endowment, say, for the Patea Harbour, would he refuse it? Was he reluctant to take the 25 per cent. of the Land Fund of Taranaki for the construction of the New Plymouth Harbour? That honourable gentleman no doubt is an exception; but, as far as I know, three out of four members of this House are constantly coming to the Government and asking them for endowments for various purposes. It is absurd that these honourable gentleman should object to taking land for the purpose of endowing a railway to create a trunk communication from one end of the Island to the other. The honourable member for Newton has fallen into a trap. He thinks he is going with the stream when he raises the objection; but I tell him the day will come, and is not far distant, when he will find that the opposition he is making to this magnificent endowment will be regarded as mere folly.

Mr. PEACOCK—Will the honourable gentleman allow me to explain? I distinctly disclaimed any objection to an endowment for this purpose; I did not dispute the desirability of making such an endowment; but I objected to taking part of the million loan for the purpose of making it.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The honourable gentleman must make the best of his belief, and I do not want to prejudice him; therefore let that go. The honourable gentleman says the endowment is not tight enough. I say, if there is any way to make it tighter and more precise I am willing to accept it. The intention is to apply that land unreservedly to works for that great railway, and for opening up land adjacent to it; and, if it is not made tight enough now, make it tighter. Then, the sapient member for Thorndon sees in the Bill no endowment for the railway except to the extent of 2½ per cent. of the land. In future, I shall certainly not be surprised at any eccentricity on the part of the honourable gentleman, for if he cannot understand this simple clause he must have great difficulty in understanding many of the subjects that are brought before the House. The clause is to dedicate the land to the purposes of the railway and to opening up the country connected with it; and the 2½ per cent. for charitable aid is merely put in for this reason: that it has always been customary to devote portions of land in different parts of the colony to charitable purposes; and, now that we are making this endowment so tight, it is considered that, unless we put in this 2½ per cent., it would not be possible in the future to take any of it for charitable purposes. Therefore we put in the provision here, apparently unnecessarily; but the fact is that so specific is the endowment of the whole that unless we reserve this 2½ per cent. it cannot be done afterwards, and a large part of the colony would be free from that contribution which other parts of the colony are subject to. Honourable members will therefore understand that there is nothing in the contention that this is anything but an endowment in the interest of the line, that that interest is not included, and that it is free for the purposes of public works in the district. Now, Sir, I want to say a few words about the honourable member for Egmont. The honourable member for the Waimea was kind enough to say that I am very much put upon, and am not able to take my own part. There is a good deal of truth in that; but it is not so much that I am not able to take my own part as the strange means of protection—the ægis—which is thrown over certain honourable members who indulge in virulent talk. The honourable member for Egmont was particularly mild to-night, and yet he could not get up without saying something insulting to the Government. He said I was making a false excuse, and that members of the Government never got up without doing so. That was the substance of what he said, and a more insulting remark could hardly be made. And yet, if I applied that to the honourable member, what would be the consequence? His friends would howl and say how hardly he had been handled. I am inclined to ask myself if I should treat the honourable member, and other honourable members like him who indulge in innuendoes and insinuations on almost every occasion when they speak in the House as if they were spiteful children or scolding women, or whether I should deal with them on a footing of equality. The way I have stood it this session has astonished me, I must say. The honourable member said I pretended to be virtuous in not using this loan. But I did not pretend to any virtue. I told the House the fact, that we had not used the loan. I did not say that we had a temptation to do so, but I said there was a strong reason for doing it,

but that we did not do it. This is no new thing. I said the same thing in the Financial Statement, and I will read an extract from the Financial Statement to prove what I say:—

"The expenditure out of the fund during the year was £1,287,086: this, and the other two amounts mentioned, from which shillings and pence have been eliminated, deducted from the total, will leave a balance to credit at the end of March last of £768,780, which includes advances in the hands of imprestees. As pointed out on previous occasions, there is always, because of these advances, less money really available for expenditure than appears from the gross balance. The obligations which remain to be fulfilled make it necessary that fresh means should be promptly provided. At present the only other means existent is the North Island Trunk Railway Loan. The law, unwisely, as I think, allows this loan to be used for any purpose authorized by Parliament to be provided for out of the Public Works Fund. Thus, if the loan were negotiated, the proceeds would be available for defraying the expenditure authorized by the usual Imprest Acts. The Government have been desirous to avoid enabling the money to be diverted from the purpose for which it was unquestionably intended. At some risk, therefore, I have avoided negotiating it. The early meeting of Parliament will enable a decision to be more promptly arrived at regarding a new loan. I should like to send Home the necessary authorities for raising such loan in time to enable them to be used at an early date."

Now, what does the honourable member for Egmont say to-night? He says that I was pretending to a virtue that I had no right to, because there was no inducement to negotiate the loan early in the year. He said there was ample cash in the chest to go on with, and therefore there was no reason for negotiating the loan. Am I correctly rendering the honourable member's remarks? The honourable member is not courteous enough to say "Yes."

Major ATKINSON.—I did not quite understand you.

Sir J. VOGEL.—If I am not, he would have said "No."

Major ATKINSON.—I am sorry I took any notice, then.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Now, I find that the honourable gentleman is on the horns of a dilemma. Either he is intentionally deceiving the House or he is showing an amount of ignorance on the subject which does not do credit to an ex-Treasurer. He tells us that there was plenty of cash and no necessity to negotiate the loan early in the year. I explained the other night that this was not the case. I explained it in such terms as the honourable gentleman ought to have readily understood, considering the time he held the office of Treasurer; and not only that, but there is the record here in the Financial Statement, in the Public Works Account for the year, and the balance is shown as at the end of March, and that states there is a balance of £678,000. But how is it made up? It is made up of £174,000 in cash, £77,000 imprest, and £517,000 in investments.

Major ATKINSON.—Hear, hear—which was cash.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The honourable gentleman ought to have remembered that.

Major ATKINSON.—He did remember it.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The honourable gentleman knows very well that there are no less than £800,000 of guaranteed debentures which are not sold and never are to be sold, because they are the means of obtaining advances readily. What he calls "plenty of cash early in the year" means, then, that we had the sum of £500,000 represented by guaranteed debentures in the Public Works Fund. It means that the Government must go on borrowing against them month after month. But is that a desirable way to treat them? Look at the way the colony suffered in connection with the Five-million Loan through the delay in floating the loan till the last moment. When the honourable gentleman says there was no inducement to the Government to negotiate the loan early in the year he has said what will not bear examination. As regards the rest, I do not know that there is anything to answer. If this endowment is rejected by honourable members from the North Island they will only regret it once, and that will be always; and those who do so to-night will, in years to come, think of what I am saying to them now, and will ask themselves how they could possibly have voted against such a thing. It has been said by one honourable member that the money is not ready now. What has that to do with it? I need not remind honourable members that there are some districts in the colony that have been settled for thirty years, and yet they want money.

Mr. BRUCE.—I think the honourable gentleman must have misunderstood my remarks. I said the money would not be available for the purposes for which he intended it for the next twenty years.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Supposing it will be twenty years, I cannot understand why we should prevent others who come after us in twenty years from the enjoyment. We shall in a few months have a very large tract of land in our possession, and, if it is subjected to lease, an income will arise from it long before twenty years, perhaps before twenty months. Perhaps the honourable gentleman will explain why he fixes on twenty years.

Mr. BRUCE.—What I said was this: that, when we take into account the rough character of the country which it is proposed to set apart as an endowment, and add the cost of the survey and roading to that, it is not at all likely that any benefit will accrue for the purpose for which the Colonial Treasurer intends it before twenty years.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Because some of the country is a little rough he tells us that it is going to remain unprofitable for twenty years. That does astonish me. I implore the honourable member to take a more hopeful view of things

—to substitute for "years" "months." I shall not go into other questions which have been raised on this occasion. I may say, before I conclude, that, when the honourable member for Egmont asks the Government, as he has been in the habit of doing on almost every occasion, to abandon the measure that is particularly before the House to do something else—sometimes it is to bring down a Statement, sometimes to bring down a new proposal—we are not able to put faith in his assurances of support if we were to take his advice. Even last night what did we see? Although he supported most of the items in the schedule to the Loan Bill, yet, from party exigencies, or the demands of his followers, when the division was called for he walked out of the House.

Motion agreed to.

Major ATKINSON.—I will now move, That the proceedings in Committee on the North Island Trunk Loan Bill be reported in *Hansard*. My reasons for doing so are these. We already, in all questions of Supply, report the debates in Committee: that is to say, discussions on small salaries and matters of that sort are reported. We have on various occasions directed reports to be made of proceedings in Committee, wherever the questions were of great importance. I call to mind the question of the East and West Coast Railway. That was reported in *Hansard;* and there were several other matters that were reported which I could refer to. And I, for one, would like to see it laid down as a rule of this House that all discussions relating to important money matters should be reported, especially matters connected with Loan Bills. It seems to me a great principle that, when we are proposing to put large burdens on the people, the reasons given for our votes should be recorded in *Hansard*. The public, undoubtedly, are very much interested in this subject, which is one of great importance. The House itself, by having debates in Committee of Supply reported, recognizes that money matters are of an exceptional character, and therefore should be dealt with in this special way; and the debate in Committee on the question of the East and West Coast Railway was reported, and several others.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I do not think it is at all necessary or desirable that the debate in Committee should be reported. There have been endless opportunities for honourable members to expose their views, and *Hansard* itself is a living record that they have not been at all averse to taking advantage of it. We have placed no restraint upon them; they have gone over and over the same subjects. If, Sir, I had called your attention to it, you would not have allowed the references made to previous debates; but I purposely avoided doing so. I thought, If we give enough rope there are certain consequences that will follow. Many of the speeches made require no answer: as a Judge sometimes says, "It is not necessary to hear counsel on the other side." It is in the interests of honourable members themselves as well as in the interests of the House that this proposal should be negatived.

Sir J. Vogel

Mr. SEDDON.—I think the Colonial Treasurer is slightly in the wrong in not letting the honourable member for Egmont and those who follow him debate this Bill *ad nauseam*, and have it reported in full, because, if that be done, the electors of the colony, having so much of it, will not read more than a few lines of each speech, and will pass over the rest as simply repetition. I would like the honourable member for Egmont to be consistent. We have heard him, at the commencement of this session, and in other sessions, lay down the rule that on the second reading of a Bill the principle should be discussed, and that there should be no discussion on the committal of a Bill. And we have upon the Order Paper this session the very same thing laid down as an amendment of the Standing Orders. On this North Island Trunk Loan Bill we have had a discussion on the second reading, we have had it discussed on the financial proposals, we have had it discussed on going into Committee, and we shall have it discussed in Committee, and on the third reading, and then we shall have it discussed on the question, "That the Bill do now pass." I can see now that the subject will be so fully discussed that, instead of anything being taken from it that will benefit the readers of *Hansard*, they will simply, as they have done before, turn over the pages and search for something more instructive and profitable. The honourable member for Egmont and his supporters, in delaying the session during the last month, have been speaking to the electors of the colony—preparing for the next election. But we shall have ample opportunity on the public platform, during the time of the elections, to supply a complete answer to every word they have said in this debate. If I vote at all, I shall vote with the honourable member to allow the proceedings in Committee to be further reported, because I believe that will have exactly the opposite effect to that which he intends.

The House divided on Major Atkinson's motion.

AYES, 33.

Beetham	Johnston	Russell
Bruce	Lake	Stewart, W. D.
Bryce	Locke	Te Ao
Buchanan	Macarthur	Thompson, T.
Buckland, J. C.	Mitchelson	Thomson, J. W.
Buckland, W. F.	Moat	Trimble
Conolly	Montgomery	Wakefield
Dodson	Moss	Whyte.
Fergus	Newman	*Tellers.*
Grey	Peacock	Atkinson
Hamlin	Richardson, G.	Barron.
Hobbs		

NOES, 41.

Allwright	Fraser	Kerr
Ballance	Garrick	Larnach
Bevan	Gore	Levestam
B.-Bradshaw	Hakuene	Macandrew
Brown	Harper	McKenzie, J.
Cadman	Hatch	McMillan
Cowan	Hursthouse	O'Callaghan
Duncan	Joyce	O'Conor

Ormond	Ross	Turnbull
Parata	Smith	Vogel
Pearson	Steward, W. J.	Walker.
Pere	Sutter	*Tellers.*
Reid	Taylor	Dargaville
Richardson, E.	Tole	Guinness.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Fulton	Lance
Hirst, H.	Holmes
Fisher	Pyke
Rolleston	Stout
Wilson.	Reese.

Majority against, 8.

Motion negatived.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 4.—Definition of cost of construction.

Mr. SUTTER moved the omission of subsection (5)—£100,000 to be taken for purchase of Native lands.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the subsection be retained."

AYES, 34.

Ballance	Ivess	Richardson, E.
Bevan	Joyce	Smith
B.-Bradshaw	Kerr	Stewart, W. D.
Brown	Larnach	Taylor
Cadman	Levestam	Tole
Cowan	Macandrew	Turnbull
Garrick	McMillan	Vogel
Gore	Menteath	Walker.
Guinness	O'Conor	
Hakuene	Parata	*Tellers.*
Harper	Pere	Duncan
Hatch	Reid	McKenzie, J.

NOES, 30.

Atkinson	Locke	Ross
Beetham	Macarthur	Russell
Bruce	Mitchelson	Te Ao
Bryce	Moat	Thompson, T.
Buchanan	Montgomery	Trimble
Buckland, W.F.	Moss	Wakefield
Conolly	Newman	Whyte.
Dodson	Ormond	*Tellers.*
Grey	Peacock	Barron
Johnston	Richardson, G.	Sutter.
Lake		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Holmes	Hirst, H.
Lance	Fulton
Mackenzie, M.	Dargaville
Pearson	Fergus
Reese	Wilson
Seddon	Thomson, J. W.
Steward, W. J.	Hobbs
Stout.	Rolleston.

Majority for, 4.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 5.—How land reserved for the railway may be dealt with.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be a clause of the Bill."

AYES, 28.

Ballance	Joyce	Taylor
Bevan	Larnach	Thompson, T.
Buckland, W.F.	Levestam	Tole
Cadman	McKenzie, J.	Turnbull
Cowan	McMillan	Vogel
Gore	Menteath	Walker.
Grace	Newman	
Guinness	Parata	*Tellers.*
Hatch	Reese	Duncan
Ivess	Richardson, E.	Kerr.

NOES, 20.

Atkinson	Locke	Ross
Beetham	Macarthur	Sutter
Bruce	Montgomery	Trimble
Bryce	Moss	Wilson.
Buchanan	Ormond	*Tellers.*
Conolly	Peacock	Buckland, J. C.
Hislop	Richardson, G.	Lake.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Brown	Mackenzie, M.
Dargaville	Moat
Garrick	Barron
Hakuene	Johnston
Harper	Dodson
Holmes	Hirst, H.
Lance	Fulton
Macandrew	Mitchelson
O'Conor	Grey
Pearson	Fergus
Seddon	Thomson, J. W.
Smith	Whyte
Steward, W. J.	Hobbs
Stout.	Rolleston.

Majority for, 8.

Clause retained.

Bill reported with amendments, and read a third time.

BEER DUTY BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

New clause.—Manufacture of cordials and aërated waters in breweries prohibited.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 25.

Ballance	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Cowan	McMillan	Thompson, T.
Gore	Moat	Tole
Grace	Montgomery	Turnbull
Ivess	Newman	Vogel.
Joyce	Parata	
Kerr	Reese	*Tellers.*
Larnach	Reid	Dodson
Levestam	Richardson, E.	Walker.

NOES, 10.

Bruce	Lake	*Tellers.*
Conolly	Menteath	Buchanan
Guinness	Ross	Buckland, W.F.
Hislop	Trimble.	

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Duncan	Wilson
Stout	Rolleston
Sutter.	Peacock.

Majority for, 15.

Clause added to the Bill.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 4th August, 1886.

First Readings — Third Reading — Native Lands Rating — Otago Harbour Board Leasing Bill — Deceased Persons' Estates Duties Bill—Public Bodies' Leaseholds Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Application Bill, Beer Duty Bill, Deeds and Instruments Registration Bill.

THIRD READING.

Hutt and Pitone Gas Company Bill.

NATIVE LANDS RATING.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA, in moving the motion standing in his name, said he did so because the Natives were desirous of knowing what amount of duty was payable against their separate blocks of land.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL seconded the motion *pro formâ*.

Motion made, and question proposed, "That there be laid upon the table of the Council a return of Native lands and reserves, showing the amount of duty paid upon each block by the Government under the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act, with the date of each such payment."—(*Hon. Mr. Taiaroa.*)

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY asked the honourable the mover what advantage could be derived in having this return compiled. It would cost over £200, and would take not less than six months to prepare, and would be very troublesome to obtain. Moreover, it would be of very little use to any one when it was obtained.

Motion negatived.

OTAGO HARBOUR BOARD LEASING BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER moved, That progress be reported, and leave obtained to sit again.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 20.

Bonar	Lahmann	Pollen
Brett	Mantell	Scotland
Campbell	Martin	Walker
Dignan	McLean	Whitaker
Fraser	Menzies	Williamson
Johnson, G. R.	Miller	Wilson.
Johnston, J.	Peter	

NOES, 13.

Acland	Holmes	Shephard
Barnicoat	Peacock	Shrimski
Bathgate	Reynolds	Swanson
Buckley	Robinson	Williams.
Chamberlin		

Majority for, 7.

Progress reported, and leave obtained to sit again.

DECEASED PERSONS' ESTATES DUTIES BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—When I moved the second reading of the Deceased Persons' Estates Duties Bill yesterday I was asked whether there was any occasion for the provisions which are referred to in the machinery of this Bill, to set at rest doubts as to the sufficiency of certain payments of duty made under the Deceased Persons' Estates Duties Acts. I find that in the Act of 1881, in section 35, a provision of a somewhat similar character is enacted; but machinery for carrying that provision into effect seems not to have been provided in the Act. I am informed by the authorities who have the control over matters of this character that from day to day estates are brought into their possession, and nothing in the shape of duty can be obtained from them. Only the other day, in the case of an estate which is well known, it was returned as valued at £750, whereas it should have been £25,000. With reference to another point that has been raised, as to the provision enabling persons to be examined in regard to the disposal of an estate liable to duty, I have no desire other than that every latitude should be allowed persons under examination; and in Committee some provision may be made by which such examination may be rendered not so stringent. I therefore ask that the Bill may be read a second time.

Bill read a second time.

PUBLIC BODIES' LEASEHOLDS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I am not at present in a position to say as much as I should have liked to do on this matter; but if the Council will allow this Bill to be read a second time now, according to the course suggested yesterday by the Hon. Mr. Menzies, who has an important contingent notice of motion on the Order Paper, to refer the Bill to a Select Committee, the discussion can be taken on the principle of the Bill when it is reported from the Select Committee, on the motion to go into Committee of the Council. The Premier, who could supply me with certain information which I require in regard to this Bill, is, unfortunately, ill in bed, and I am not able to obtain that information. I think, as I have already said, that it will be desirable to take the discussion on the Bill on the motion to go into Committee, and the second reading can be formally agreed to now. I have a considerable amount of information on the subject, but not all that I require.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—I hope the course indicated will not be adopted. This is a very important Bill, and honourable members know nothing of it whatever. It is customary, on moving the second reading of a Bill, to give reasons for bringing it forward. In reference to this Bill, not one word has been said; and, when we look in *Hansard* for an account of what has occurred in another place, we do not find a single word of a report of any sort. A Bill of this importance is introduced, and we are asked to read it a second time without a word of explanation being vouchsafed to us. I move, That the debate be adjourned.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I shall object to that. It is very unfair, I think, that I should be placed in that position. I understood yesterday that there was a strong desire on the part of the Council to take the course that I now propose. For myself I would prefer to adopt the other course. With reference to the remarks of the honourable member who has just spoken, I understand that the reason why this debate was not reported is that the *Hansard* reporters ceased to work. The speeches seem to have been reported in the papers, but are not reported in *Hansard*, for the reason, as I understand, that I have given. I am desirous of getting the fullest information on this subject, and the discussion can just as conveniently be taken on going into Committee as on the second reading. I believe that is the desire of the Council; and we shall be facilitating business by adopting that course.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I concur that that course is the best and most convenient. The Bill is a very important one, and the result of our deliberations upon it will have a very serious effect for good or evil on a large section of the community in the country districts. Seeing that the Hon. the Colonial Secretary has said nothing about the merits of the Bill, I do not think I ought to enter upon them; but I will say this much: that it contains probably as great a number of debatable points as any Bill that we have had to decide this session, and all of these require to be carefully investigated; and the most convenient way of doing so is to refer the Bill to a Select Committee. After the Bill has been read a second time, seeing that it meets with the approval of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, I shall then move that the Bill be referred to the Select Committee of which I have given notice.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I do not think it right to take the Hon. the Colonial Secretary by surprise: if the honourable gentleman had objected to the Colonial Secretary's proposal he should have stopped him at the proper time. I have no objection to the course now proposed to be taken. I hold that to agree to the second reading of a Bill is to affirm its principle; and, if honourable members are not ready to affirm the principle of the Bill, then it should be thrown out on the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—So far as the principle of the Bill may be held to be the providing of powers for leasing lands vested in certain public bodies that do not already possess those powers, I thoroughly agree with the principle of the Bill, and am prepared to vote for the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—When the question was before the Council yesterday it was fully understood that this was the course that the Council desired to adopt—that is, to read the Bill a second time, to refer it to a special Select Committee, and to take the discussion on the principle of the Bill when the report of the Committee was brought up. The Hon. Mr. McLean was not in his place yesterday when the matter was brought up, and therefore is not aware of what took place.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I only contend that the principle of the Bill should be confirmed by the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—It is a very usual thing to refer Bills to a Select Committee, and then take the discussion on them when the report is brought down. I hope the Council will agree to the course that is recommended.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I was unwilling to take any part in this discussion. I was quite prepared to accede to the personal request of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, and allow what he suggested to take place. But I cannot allow the statement which has just been made by the Hon. Mr. Reynolds to go uncontradicted. I myself took the strongest possible objection, on the grounds of the practice of this Council, to the adoption of any such course. I hold there should always be a discussion on the second reading of Bills of this kind. There are Bills that are referred to Select Committees in the regular order of things after the first reading; but, when Bills are not going on that course, I hold there ought to be an explanation of the principles of the Bill. and also a discussion, so as to guide the Committee in the conduct of the business confided to them. However, I do not now offer objection to the course that is proposed; I am quite willing to yield to the request of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary: but, at the same time, I cannot allow statements of the kind I have referred to to go without the clearest possible contradiction.

Bill read a second time.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I now move, according to the notice which appears on the Order Paper, That the Public Bodies' Leaseholds Bill be referred to a Select Committee; to report within three days: to consist of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, the Hon. Mr. Holmes, the Hon. Mr. G. R. Johnson, the Hon. Mr. Peter, the Hon. Mr. Williamson, the Hon. Mr. Shrimski, and the mover.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I hope we are not going to begin a discussion on the Bill in this way just now. I understood that the request of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary was that the second reading should be agreed to formally, but that there should be no discussion on the principle of the Bill to-night.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—Hear, hear.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I understood that

the Bill was to be allowed to go to a second reading, and that the discussion would be taken to-morrow, on the motion to go into Committee, and that afterwards my honourable friend would move his motion.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I think that is the proper course to take.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I have no objection to that course; but I understood that at this late period of the session, to use a hackneyed phrase, we have very little time to spare. If the Committee were appointed to-night it might begin its labours to-morrow; but, if not appointed till to-morrow, I am not certain that it will complete its labours so early. But, as the Hon. the Colonial Secretary is desirous of this being done, I will withdraw this motion and allow the debate to be adjourned, as that is considered to be the best course.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I object to the debate being adjourned. I would like to refer honourable members to Standing Order No. 166, which says,—

"After a Bill shall have been read the second time, the same shall be referred to a Committee of the whole Council, for the consideration of it in detail, on motion without notice; whereupon the Speaker shall put the question, 'That I do now leave the Chair,' which being resolved in the affirmative, the Council resolves itself into a Committee of the Whole on the Bill. But if, after such second reading, it be deemed expedient, the Bill may be referred to a Select Committee, in which case a Committee for that purpose shall at once be appointed, with the requisite instructions."

When the report of the Select Committee comes up, then, on the motion to go into Committee on the Bill, a debate can take place on the principles of the Bill. By adopting this course we shall have better information, from the deliberations of the Select Committee, to go upon, and the debate can then embrace the whole subject. I think we should not delay any longer, but should proceed in accordance with Rule 166, which specially provides for a case of this kind.

The Hon. the CHAIRMAN (Acting Speaker).—I think the course mentioned by the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker is the best.

The motion for the appointment of a Committee was then agreed to.

The Council adjourned at twenty minutes to ten o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 4th August, 1886.

First Readings—Bills discharged—New Zealand Agricultural Company—Taieri County Subsidies—Assault by Police-Sergeant—Unemployed—Native Reserves—Education Statement—Goldfields Report and Statement—Roxburgh Bridge—Kaikorai Siding—Gold Export Duty Bills—Joint Library Committee—Waimate Village Settlement Bill—Rabbit Bill—District Railways Purchasing Bill—Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill—Government Life Insurance Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Special Powers and Contracts Bill, Settled Land Bill.

BILLS DISCHARGED.

Magistrates' Courts Bill, Alienation of Land Bill, Stock-driving Bill, Codlin Moth Bill, Workmen's Wages Bill.

NEW ZEALAND AGRICULTURAL COMPANY.

Mr. BALLANCE said he would lay on the table a return, ordered on the motion of the honourable member for Auckland East, "of the correspondence relative to the employment of Mr. Pearson, a Commissioner of Crown Lands, in valuing lands purchased by the New Zealand Agricultural Company." The return was "Nil." There were no records in the Lands Department; and, upon reference to the other departments, it had been found that there were no records in any of them on the subject.

Sir G. GREY thought Mr. Pearson himself ought to be written to; because if what was alleged to have been done had been done it was a very improper proceeding, and he should not be allowed to rest under the blame now lying on him. He should be asked by whose orders he acted, or whether he acted without orders.

Mr. BALLANCE said Mr. Pearson was no longer in the Government service. He noticed from a *Hansard* proof that the honourable member for Auckland East had said the other day, when asking a question on the subject, that he (Mr. Ballance) was Minister of Lands at the time. The honourable gentleman ought to know, as Premier of the then Government, that he had not held the portfolio of Lands, but that it was held by the honourable member for Port Chalmers. He knew nothing whatever with regard to the transaction, and there were no records of it at all. The honourable member for Auckland East should himself know as much of the matter as any other member of the then Government, except, possibly, the Minister of Lands in that Government.

Sir G. GREY said it was impossible that the Premier could have known anything about it. Only the Minister of Lands could have known.

Sir G. GREY subsequently asked the Minister of Lands, When the promised return of the correspondence relative to the employment of Mr. Pearson, a Commissioner of Crown Lands, in valuing lands purchased by the New Zealand Agricultural Company, will be laid before this House? He would simply say that Mr. Pearson ought to be written to to have an opportunity of clearing himself in the matter.

Mr. BALLANCE said he could add nothing to what he had already stated—namely, that there was no record in the office.

Sir G. GREY still thought Mr. Pearson should have an opportunity of explaining; for, although he was not now in the Service, he was

etired officer, and this justice should at least done him.

TAIERI COUNTY SUBSIDIES.

Mr. FULTON asked the Government, When e Taieri County Treasurer may expect to eive the subsidies due, it being alleged that are has been paid only 75 per cent. on the ount of rates on the outlying districts, and thing whatever on the rates of the Road ard districts?

Sir J. VOGEL would take it as a favour if e honourable gentleman would write to him the subject. It was purely a departmental atter, and he had not had time to attend it.

Mr. FULTON would be glad to do that.

ASSAULT BY POLICE-SERGEANT.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister of Defence, he has received any reports relative to the aviction, at the Resident Magistrate's Court, hristchurch, of Sergeant Wilson, of the Christurch Police Force, for assaulting the "messy"? The father of the boy was a conituent of his, and a communication he had ceived from him, and the reports of the apers, showed that it was a case into which e Government should make inquiry. An sault of a serious character had been comitted on the boy, who had been dismissed ithout any ceremony from the office he had eld for eighteen months as "mess-boy." He hought the humblest person in the colony ad a perfect right to appeal to this Assembly r inquiry into any hardship or injustice he lt had been inflicted on him, and it was ecessary that publicity should be given to ases of this kind, in order that those who had little brief authority to exercise should be aused to exercise it in a just and fair manner. They all knew that unless there was some conrol over weak-minded men of that character uch men were very likely to abuse the trust mposed upon them. He hoped, if the Governnent had not received any report on this natter, they would obtain one, and make such nquiry as would satisfy all parties.

Mr. BALLANCE said the department had not received any official report on the matter; but he understood from the newspaper telegrams that the sergeant of police had boxed the boy's ears, and, on being summoned by the lad's parents, had been fined 1s. Of course the full report might put a different aspect on the matter, but in the meantime it would be premature to express an opinion on it. The honourable gentleman, he was sure, would give him credit, as head of the department, for a desire to do justice in the matter; but, at the same time, it could not be a very serious offence, as the accused was fined only 1s. The sergeant had had his punishment as well as the boy.

Mr. TAYLOR said the sergeant was bound over in £25 to keep the peace for six months, and the Magistrate made some strong remarks on his conduct.

Mr. BALLANCE had not seen that.

UNEMPLOYED.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether arrangements will be made for the payment of the unemployed each week, instead of each fortnight, as at present?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said he would have the matter looked into, and would comply with the request if the expense was not too large.

NATIVE RESERVES.

Mr. MOSS asked the Minister of Native Affairs, Whether, before leasing reserves administered by Government for the Natives, it has been customary to consult the Natives interested, in order to ascertain whether they wished to lease such reserves, or to keep them, or any of them, for their own use? His question related more particularly to land on the west coast of the North Island. It was said that a considerable portion of the land leased was open land, which the Natives would have preferred to keep for their own purposes.

Mr. BALLANCE did not know what reserves the honourable gentleman referred to in this question; but probably he referred to those under the West Coast Settlement Reserves Act.

Mr. MOSS.—Yes.

Mr. BALLANCE might explain, then, that at one time these reserves were leased without the Natives giving their consent, the power having been given to the Public Trustee by law to do that; but he (Mr. Ballance) had considered it his duty to give a promise to Natives on the Coast that, where owners or grantees of reserves did not give their consent, reserves should not be leased; and since that time the consent of the grantees had been required in each case.

Mr. MOSS would like to know whether there were many reserves of open land left to be leased. Was it not a fact that now pretty well the whole of the reserves were leased?

Mr. BALLANCE replied that there were large areas of land on the West Coast not yet let, and which were not in the beneficial occupation of the Natives. The honourable gentleman would, no doubt, understand that there was a large extent of bush-country, and this was not leased, and would not be unless the owners came forward and expressed a wish that it might be leased. He might add that some of the chiefs had expressed such a wish.

Major ATKINSON asked if he was to understand that, in cases where a few Te Whiti-ites objected to the leasing of a reserve, the Minister would decline to have it leased, although the majority of the grantees were in favour of having it leased.

Mr. BALLANCE replied that, in cases where the leading men asked that reserves might be leased, he should recommend that the reserves be leased, notwithstanding the objection of a few persons under the influence of Te Whiti; but he should require the assent of the leading men of the hapu.

EDUCATION STATEMENT.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Premier, Whether

the Government will supply free of cost to the various Education Boards and School Committees in the colony copies of the speech made by the Hon. Sir R. Stout, Minister of Education, on "Education in the Colony of New Zealand"? The speech made by the Premier was one which should be read by all connected with education, especially by members of Education Boards and local Committees, and therefore it could with great advantage be circulated among them.

Sir J. VOGEL said he quite agreed with the honourable gentleman as to the desirability of circulating the Statement; but as yet only three thousand copies had been printed, and if honourable members demanded as many copies as they did last year there would not be sufficient to allow of the circulation proposed by the honourable gentleman. He had sent to see if the Statement was still in type at the Printing Office, and, if so, he would at once order some more to be struck off; and, in any case, it was a question whether some more should not be printed.

GOLDFIELDS REPORT AND STATEMENT.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister of Mines, Whether he will supply free of cost the several schools of mines in the colony with the report on the goldfields of the colony, together with the Inspector of Mines' report and the Minister of Mines' Statement? He asked this question because these Statements contained some interesting information, which it was very desirable should be circulated, in the interests of the mining industry.

Mr. LARNACH replied that some time ago he had given instructions that these various papers should be circulated, as desired by the honourable member; but there had been some delay, because it had been thought well to have the papers all bound together, in order to make the information more compact. He might add that Dr. Black's report was to be included.

ROXBURGH BRIDGE.

Mr. PYKE asked the Minister for Public Works, What has been, or is being, done to have the contract for the Roxburgh Bridge completed?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that this contract was let on the 23rd of last month to Mr. McCormick; and he was informed that arrangements were being made for the vigorous prosecution of the work.

KAIKORAI SIDING.

Mr. BARRON asked the Government, If they will make further inquiry about the proposed railway-siding at Kaikorai Valley, with the object of having the siding constructed without further delay, if found to be desirable in the public interest?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said there would be no objection to making further inquiry into this matter; but, from what he had been given to understand latterly, there was not much necessity for the siding in question.

Mr. Seddon

GOLD EXPORT DUTY BILLS.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. LARNACH, it was resolved, That a Committee be appointed to inspect the Journals of the Legislative Council with relation to any proceedings upon the Bills to repeal and reduce the export duty on gold, and to make a report to this House: such Committee to consist of Mr. Pyke, Mr. Seddon, Mr. Guinness, and the mover; three to form a quorum.

JOINT LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. BALLANCE, the name of Mr. Menteath was added to the Joint Library Committee.

WAIMATE VILLAGE SETTLEMENT BILL.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I understand that the honourable member for Lincoln desires particularly, in consequence of some recommendation of a Waste Lands Board, to move the removal of Order of the Day No. 29, "Waimate Village Settlement Bill," from the Order Paper. I understand that the honourable members in charge of measures between No. 23—which ends the Government measures—and No. 29, are willing that their orders shall be postponed in order that this may be carried. On that understanding, I would move, That orders of the day numbered from 7 to 28, inclusive, be postponed till after Order of the Day No. 29.

Mr. FULTON.—I should like to know if other members would have the same privilege.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I think some further explanation should be given.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I have only to say that the honourable member for Lincoln has charge of some resolution coming from the Waste Lands Committee which cannot be moved whilst this order of the day remains on the Order Paper.

The House divided on the question, "That Orders of the Day Nos. 7 to 28, inclusive, be postponed till after Order of the Day No. 29."

AYES, 40.

Ballance	Grace	O'Conor
Beetham	Guinness	Richardson, E.
Bevan	Hislop	Samuel
B.-Bradshaw	Hobbs	Smith
Brown	Ivess	Steward, W. J.
Bruce	Kerr	Taylor
Buchanan	Larnach	Tole
Buckland, J. C.	Macandrew	Vogel
Cadman	Macarthur	Walker
Cowan	Mackenzie, M.	Whyte.
Dargaville	McKenzie, J.	
Duncan	McMillan	*Tellers.*
Fergus	Montgomery	Fraser
Garrick	Newman	O'Callaghan.

NOES, 32.

Allwright	Grey	Joyce
Atkinson	Hamlin	Lake
Barron	Harper	Lance
Buckland, W. F.	Hirst, H.	Locke
Conolly	Hursthouse	Mitchelson
Fisher	Johnston	Moat

loss	Ross	Trimble
earson	Russell	Turnbull.
eese	Sutter	*Tellers.*
ichardson, G.	Thompson, T.	Fulton
olleston	Thomson, J.W.	Seddon.

Majority against, 8.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—I move, That the 'aimate Village Settlement Bill be dis-arged from the Order Paper. I am doing is simply as a matter of public duty, as hairman of the Waste Lands Committee d a member of the Waste Lands Board Canterbury. A unanimous expression of inion has been given by both of these dies; and the following resolution has been rried by the Waste Lands Committee with spect to a petition asking that certain lands ould be purchased by the Government for a llage settlement:—

"That this Committee recommends the ob-ct desired by the petitioners; and also desires express the opinion that in such cases the overnment should, on the recommendation the Waste Lands Boards, take steps to ob-in land for settlement in accordance with e existing law."

The House is well aware that there is such a wer under the existing law; and the Waste nds Board of Canterbury had passed a reso-tion to the following effect:—

"That it appears to the Board desirable to tablish a village settlement in the neighbour-od of Waimate; they therefore recommend e Minister of Lands to enter into an agree-ent for the purchase of the land reported on by Mr. March—namely, part of Section 64 and Sections 5646 and 6307, containing to-ther about 624 acres, in conformity with the 8th clause of 'The Land Act, 1885.'"

Now, I have been personally a very strong lvocate of the Government taking some such tion under this clause, where the Waste nds Boards of the colony are unanimously favour of it. I have on several occasions ought the subject up in the Waste Lands oard of Canterbury; but they found a diffi-lty in making a recommendation, simply cause they had no offers to lay before the overnment. Now an offer has been made by gentleman in this neighbourhood; and on this ler being received by the Waste Lands Board Canterbury a gentleman was sent down there inspect the land and report on its suitability d to call a meeting of those persons desiring obtain sections of this land. No less than rty-three, nearly all married men with fami-s, were amongst those who attended the eeting and pledged themselves to be pur-asers of this land if it were once proclaimed village settlement under the Act. The land s been reported upon by this gentleman; and all who know the land and who have in-ected it it is said to be suitable and that it ould be a profitable investment, and it would event this terrible cry from the unemployed nich is continually coming from this part of e country. I shall move a motion on the subject when the House is going into Committee of Supply.

Mr. TURNBULL.—No one can doubt the purity of the honourable member's motives, and his desire to promote the interests of the people; but, at the same time, I am very much surprised to find the Government lending themselves to this. It is a most extraordinary act. A private individual wishes to sell his land, and wishes to have so much Government expenditure there, and the honourable member himself wishes to have so much Government expenditure there. It may be that the expenditure will do good; but a more unfair or unjust thing could not possibly be done. If the House arrives at the conclusion that that principle should be carried out, let the Government advertise throughout the country and get offers of land. I am sure that, if it did so, land would be offered at a much lower sum. I believe the price at which this land is offered is £10 or £12 an acre. The Government has abundance of land where railways pass through, and where permanent employment could be found for the unemployed. Then, why should the Government purchase this land at such an extraordinary price? It seems unjust to every individual in the country who has land to sell, and most unjust to the whole community. This land is offered by a gentleman named Studholme. If this proposal were brought before the House in the shape of a Bill, it would be rejected instantly; but now it is brought down under the auspices of one of the most popular members in the House, on the recommendation of the Waste Lands Board; and it is a dangerous position, and I hope the House will not be led away. If the Government take a proper view of the matter, they will purchase land in every direction where there are unemployed, and will not single out any particular locality. It would be most suicidal on the part of the Government to take such a step as this. I think it is most suspicious to take such action as this at the end of the session.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The honourable member for Timaru is quite under a misapprehension if he thinks that the Government has at all given any approval to the motion of the honourable member, or is concerned in this question. But the facts are these; and you, Sir, will be able to bear me out: Yesterday I suddenly found that you were putting a resolution for postponing a large number of the notices on the Order Paper. I have never seen anything like that successful, and there is always an angry dispute with other members concerned. But I found that the matter was so far gone that I asked the House to allow it to be put off until to-day. I told the honourable member for Lincoln that, as it was postponed yesterday, I would give him an opportunity to-day. But there was no approval whatever of the motion. The proposed resolution has not come under the consideration of the Cabinet.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I cannot see what bearing this discussion has on the question.

The question before the House is that a certain Bill be discharged. I see no objection to that. It will be time enough to discuss it when the matter comes up again.

Mr. SEDDON.—I think the honourable member for Port Chalmers is somewhat astray. The discharge of this Bill from the Order Paper has a good deal to do with the question that is contained in the Bill, because we are told by the mover that he intends to intercept Supply with a motion taking an expression of opinion from the House upon this subject, and we know that so long as this Bill remains on the Order Paper he cannot take that expression of opinion. And if we are to take the last division as an indication, the honourable gentleman will be successful in carrying a motion that the Government should purchase this land. I say this is unfair, and I caution honourable members against being led away by a side-issue. This matter should be discussed fairly on its merits. There was a Bill before the House dealing with this subject, brought in by the honourable member for Auckland East; and the fair, straightforward way of discussing the subject would be on such a Bill. Honourable members should not be asked to give a preference to an individual who in times gone by, and lately also, has exercised great power in the Legislature, to the detriment of the colony. There have been several Bills before the House dealing with the settlement of land. Will the Government give the same right to the honourable member for Auckland East to have his Bill discussed? The House should deal with this question as a whole, and not piecemeal. I hope the House will not allow this Bill to be discharged.

Mr. BRYCE.—The honourable member for Kumara has really anticipated and expressed very well a great deal of what I wanted to say. Why should this order be discharged? Because the honourable member for Lincoln wants to bring forward a certain resolution. Now, I say that if this very large question is to be discussed and affirmed by the House it ought to be discussed and affirmed on a Bill. I object altogether to the resolution that the honourable member intends to bring forward instead of his Bill—not on its merits; but I think, if the Government are to take action in such a matter as this, it ought to be by a Bill solemnly affirmed by both branches of the Legislature and approved by the Governor, and not by a resolution such as it is proposed to introduce. It is for that reason I object to the discharge of this Bill, and I fully indorse a great deal that has been said by the honourable member for Kumara.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—Unfortunately, at the present moment there are a great many more sellers of land than there are buyers, and I do not think at this stage of the session we should waste a couple of days in discussing a question of this kind. There is an instance down south at present in which a company offers to sell its land for settlement for £12 or £13 an acre, and yet that same company wished to have the land valued under the property-tax at £5 per acre. This system is sure to open the way to a great deal of jobbery, and if the House agrees to it members will have cause hereafter to lament their action in regard to it. I think it is a matter which should not be dealt hurriedly with; and, as we are all looking forward to getting away soon, I hope we shall not open the door to a protracted discussion of the question.

Mr. BALLANCE.—It appears to me that there is some misapprehension on this subject. The impression in the minds of honourable members appears to be that the honourable member for Lincoln is to bring forward a resolution to compel the Government to purchase this land. The honourable member for Kumara says the question should be discussed on the Bill itself; but, if I understand the matter aright, the honourable member for Lincoln is proceeding in accordance with the provisions of the Land Act of last session—namely, that a resolution can be submitted to both Houses for the purchase of land if the Waste Lands Board recommends it. The honourable member for Lincoln is pursuing that course; and the only mistake he has made is that this resolution should have been brought down within ten days after the opening of the session. Speaking from memory, I believe that is the case.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—Yes.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Then, if that is the case, no resolution of this kind can at this stage of the session have any effect. I do not see any objection to discharging the order of the day, and leaving the honourable gentleman to pursue his own course.

Mr. SEDDON.—Why should it require a special Bill to be brought in, if a resolution is all that is necessary according to law?

Mr. BALLANCE.—I really do not know. The Government has no control over Bills which honourable members choose to introduce. We thought it only right to give the honourable gentleman facility to bring down a resolution; but, on looking into the matter further, I think it is now too late.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—I may explain that I have looked into the question; and this resolution is simply a recommendation to the Government to make the purchase. If they should think it advisable to do so, it will be for them to lay a resolution before the House within ten days after it meets next session. This is only a recommendation to them that they should look into the matter.

Mr. SUTTER.—I am astonished at the honourable member for Waimate taking such a step as he has done, after what has already taken place on the floor of this House. This is simply an attempt to smother discussion, and to bring the matter up in another way, so that the people of the country may not see what is being done. The land to be bought under this Bill at £12 an acre is the property of Mr. Michael Studholme, the man who was mixed up with Major Steward in the case of the Waimate Railway debentures. He is, or, at least, was, guaranteeing an overdraft in the

nk for Major Steward to the tune of £250; d, if he can get the Government to buy this nd at the price named, no doubt Major eward is to get a commission for the sale, as did for the sale of the debentures.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think the honourle gentleman has any right to refer to the ivate affairs of honourable members in dissing a public measure.

Mr. SUTTER.—It is no secret in any way; d what I want to say is, that it seems to me at there is another commission sticking out mewhere here. I may be wrong, but it looks ry like it. If this man wants to sell his land can sell it very well to the people who, we e told, are so anxious to take it up. Why, en, come to this House and ask the Governent to buy it? If the House only knew the ms of money which have been advanced to e District of Waimate in making roads rough this man's land, it would be very uch astonished. I should like the Governont to say what amount of money has been ven to this man already. Men who are undernod to be employed in doing work on the waste nds of the colony, and who should have been engaged, have been employed instead in aking roads on Mr. Studholme's land. I ink the House should have known that, and at it is in order to smother discussion that is proposed to discharge this Bill and to ring down a resolution; and I say it is quite lear that the Government is assisting in this atter. The Colonial Treasurer says that he new nothing about it: but he did not discourage it, and the whole of the Government nust have known what was going on in the obbies in order to get the Bill discharged. Why id not the Government take the land under he Property-tax Act if it was put down under s real value? It is reported that Mr. Studolme valued this land under the Propertyax Act at £6 per acre, and the Governnent telegraphed to Frank Slee, asking him o arrange the purchase of this land, so, as far s I can see, to get a commission, and divide t with the member for Waimate. This is the ort of man the Waimate electors get for their epresentative. I should like to know how it as that the Government should have allowed ven the first reading of the Bill; for they must ave known perfectly well what was the value f the land, as I believe their own valuer went own there and valued it. Why was not that nformation laid before the House when the Bill as brought down? I am astonished, and the ountry will be astonished, at the action which he honourable member for Waimate has taken n connection with this matter, and that he hould come here and repeat the same dose hich he gave us on a previous occasion. The ountry is ringing with his name down our ay now, and I am astonished that the Minister f Lands should assist him in such a thing.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I have expressed no opinion whatever on the merits of this case.

Captain RUSSELL.—I should like to repeat the aphorism of Oxenstiern, the famous Swedish Chancellor, "Behold, my son, with how little wisdom the world is governed!" There appears to be scarcely a member of this House who remembers the 168th clause of the Land Act of last session, or, if they had, they would have seen how little reason there is for this storm in a teacup. It is there distinctly provided that what is now so animadverted on shall be done; and all I have to say is that the position of any Government is a difficult one in carrying out that particular proceeding. I do not believe in this perpetual tinkering with the land system; but that clause of the Land Act of last session distinctly says that if a person is willing to sell his land, and if the Waste Lands Board recommends the purchase, the Government can buy the land; and therefore I cannot see why the course now proposed to be pursued should be so animadverted on. I do not believe there is anything in the objection that the resolution must be submitted within ten days of the meeting of Parliament. That only applies when an agreement has been entered into before Parliament meets, but it would not prevent a resolution being brought in at any time during the meeting of Parliament. I disapprove of the system altogether, and look upon it as merely giving facility to people—friends of Ministers—to enter into jobs; but a House which has devoted itself to the passing of liberal land-laws has placed the provision on the Statute Book, and we must abide by it. It appears to me that under this Act the Government may enter into agreements with their friends to buy land if they so choose. I always thought it wrong; but do not let us make a fuss about it now, as we have deliberately given them that power by statute.

Mr. FULTON.—I should like to inform the House of the pressure which has been brought to bear with respect to this matter. A petition came up from the people of Waimate praying that this land might be taken over by the Government at a cost of £12 an acre, the land to be bought from Mr. Studholme. The Waste Lands Committee decided by a considerable majority that there was ample provision in law to deal with the case in proper course, and that it would be highly improper for the Committee to recommend that the law should be broken. But why this pressure to make the Government take the land at £12 an acre in favour of this gentleman or this district? Why should there not be applications made throughout the country from persons willing to sell in suitable localities? But that is not the chief objection I have to the course which it is proposed to pursue in regard to this Bill. It is taking an advantage which, I fear, the Government would not concede to other members with regard to the postponement of the orders of the day so that they may bring forward in some other way matters in which they are interested. I know the honourable member for Auckland East has a Bill on the Order Paper which he would be very glad to get withdrawn in order that he might bring forward a motion on going into Committee of Supply; but he has not been able to do that. If this motion is carried I hope

House will see that the same advantage is given to other members, on whatever side of the House they may be.

Mr. ROLLESTON. — It seems to me that there is a point which has not yet been elicited, and that is that it is not shown where is the necessity for a resolution of the House. The Waste Lands Committee has, it is true, favourably recommended the taking of land in this locality, and there is no question in my mind that the Government of the day will have to make provision for settlement in that district, which is at present occupied by large estates; but the question is, What have we to do with it to-day? Why any need of the House to take up time in the matter? The responsibility of taking or not taking the land rests with the Government, and the Waste Lands Committee has said that the matter should go to the Government, and has indicated an opinion that land might be taken for this purpose—a recommendation in which I agree: but the misfortune of this particular block of land is the individual from whom it is to be bought, and the manner in which the matter has been moved in by a particular member of the House. I cannot understand, again, why the honourable member for Lincoln should have thought it necessary to bring forward such a resolution on the motion for going into Supply. The responsibility must rest with the Government; and no private member should be employed in a matter of this kind. Dealing with private lands can never be properly carried out unless it is done in a fair and open way by the Government themselves; for it will always be open to make charges of abuse if private members bring forward matters of the kind. The honourable member for Lincoln will entirely understand that I do not blame him at all—I know he is anxious in this matter of settlement, and is only influenced by public motives—but I think he has gone a little out of his province. He certainly cannot appear here now as representing either the Waste Lands Committee or the Canterbury Waste Lands Board; but he is anxious about the matter, and has taken a position which any one else might have taken—unnecessarily, as I think, because the responsibility rests with the Government alone.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I hope I may be allowed, in explanation—as there appears to be an impression that the Government are favourable to the resolution—to state explicitly that our allowing these orders to be postponed does not in any way commit the Government to support the resolution, nor had we any idea that it would be discussed now. We reluctantly consented to the postponement, because we thought—so I understood it—that it was in accordance with a resolution of the Waste Lands Committee. So far from supporting the Bill of the honourable member for Waimate, when the matter came up in Cabinet the other day the conclusion arrived at was the same as that of the last speaker—that, if the matter is to be dealt with at all, it should be dealt with by a general Bill, like that of the honourable member for Auckland East, and not in a piecemeal way.

Mr. BRYCE.—Now that twenty-two orders have been postponed in order that it might be moved that this Bill should be discharged, if discharge is refused, should we go on with the consideration of this Bill at once?

Mr. SPEAKER.—No; we should go back to the consideration of Order No. 7.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I think it is most unfortunate that the Government should have agreed to the postponement. It does not appear to me that this discussion can serve any good purpose, or that any good purpose can be served by having Supply intercepted by discussing the resolution to which reference has been made. This proposal appears to me to be a total departure from the principle of the Land Act, which places the responsibility for any purchase of land on the Minister of Lands, and enacts that no agreement he may make shall be binding unless it has been approved by Parliament, before whom it must be laid within ten days of its meeting. Now, what is this proposal but one to catch the approval of Parliament by anticipation without proper investigation, and to force the Minister's hand in making a purchase? The proposal is a most improper one, and the House can only protect itself by rejecting it.

Mr. LAKE.—I am very much surprised at this motion. Though a member of the Waste Lands Committee, I was not present when the resolution was passed, as I was then attending another Committee. But I have looked up the facts, and I find the Committee carried this resolution without a division:—

"That the Committee recommends the object desired by the petitioners to the favourable consideration of the Government; and also desires to express the opinion that, in cases such as this, the Government should, on the recommendation of the Waste Lands Board, take steps to obtain land for settlement in accordance with the existing law."

Now, I do not see the slightest need for raising the question in the House at all, because what is proposed to be done the Government have power to do under the Land Act. This is only one of many instances which have been brought before the Committee this session, in which it has been shown that the Government have desired to shirk their responsibility. What is the object of the resolution? It is to throw on the House the decision of a question involving a certain amount of responsibility. The Government, instead of taking their responsibility, try to shelter themselves under a resolution of the House. They do not express any opinion; and this House, uninformed and ignorant, is asked to take the responsibility off the shoulders of the Government. I do hope the House will not allow the Government to shuffle off the responsibility properly devolving upon them.

Mr. GUINNESS.—I do hope the motion will be withdrawn by the mover. I voted with him in the last division, to give him an opportunity

of explaining his reasons for taking this extraordinary step. We have now heard that explanation from him, and a great deal more from other honourable members; and I think, after what we have heard, that the Government, and all others who voted with the honourable member for Lincoln, are perfectly justified now in voting against him if he does not withdraw the motion.

Sir G. GREY.—I hope the House will not agree to this most irregular motion; and every one must regret that the Government has lent itself to it. Why is this extraordinary favour shown to the honourable member for Waimate? What claim has he on the Government? I think he is the last person whom the Government should go out of their way, at the present time, to do a service to—an irregular service. I leave it to the House whether anything could be more unfair than my own treatment in this matter. I brought forward a general Bill, which, through the conduct of the Government, was never allowed to come on. I lost my chance through their treatment of me. Now, whilst I am left in this position, an extraordinary favour is shown to the honourable member for Waimate. Why? I say that the Government ought not in any way to identify themselves with that honourable gentleman in any transaction of this kind. I really feel that it would be better for themselves to refrain at the present time from being mixed up in a transaction of this sort with a gentleman who certainly has not treated the Government well—who has not treated the Treasurer well, I must say. Then, again, I apprehend that this is not a fulfilment of the law—that the law does not require this to be done. What has been done is this: An extraordinary privilege—an unheard-of privilege, I say—has been given by the Government in suspending all their own business in order that this question may be brought on. Why, if that privilege is accorded to the honourable member for Waimate, is it not accorded to me? I have a Bill which, as is known to honourable members, I am anxious to move in the form of a resolution, which would be almost as well; but when I appealed to the honourable gentleman to whom this privilege has been given—who has a Bill in front of mine—to allow me to move the suspension of the Standing Orders, he distinctly told me he would not.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—I put the question to the honourable gentleman, and he said No.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—No.

Sir G. GREY.—Will the honourable gentleman state what he did say?

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—The honourable gentleman misunderstood me altogether. I said I thought it was too large a question to be entered into, and that I thought it had no chance.

Sir G. GREY.—Therefore it was not to be done. That is the position in which I stand. I do ask the House to set its face against something which I believe is decidedly wrong. It is a subject which from its great delicacy one has a difficulty in speaking on. I really cannot say on it all I should wish to say; but I have an inward feeling, which I cannot express, that something really wrong is to be done to the House and the country—something that ought not to be done. I cannot get over that feeling. I earnestly implore the House not to sanction a transaction of this kind, and I am certain the House will regret it if it ever does sanction it.

Mr. CONOLLY.—I entirely agree with the remarks of the honourable member for Auckland East, and in the conclusion he has arrived at. As he says, it is quite clear that there is something intended by this apparently simple proceeding. The honourable member for Auckland East has asked why the honourable member for Waimate is specially favoured by having all the Government business put aside in order that this special matter may come on. But I ask another question, which I think is equally pertinent: Why is the honourable member not here to take charge of his own Bill? He was here but a few minutes ago, and voted to allow this matter to come on; but he goes out and leaves another member to ask for the discharge of his own Bill. If there is nothing wrong, nothing underhand in this proposal, what would have been more simple than, the other business having been postponed to reach his Bill, for him to move its discharge on the ground that he did not wish it to continue to incumber the Order Paper, it being so late in the session? We know that probably not one of the private members' Bills can come on again this session, because we all hope it is rapidly drawing to a close. But the extraordinary course taken to get the Bill discharged is extremely suspicious, and I almost think the House ought unanimously to reject the proposal, and let the Bill remain on the Order Paper.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—I am sorry that the time of the House should have been taken up in anticipating a discussion which might have come on had I had an opportunity of moving the motion which I wish to bring forward on going into Committee of Supply. It was not my intention to provoke a debate at all, but I simply wished to have an opportunity of bringing the matter forward; and I would like to point out that I did not do this in the interests of the honourable member for Waimate, as certain honourable gentlemen who I am afraid are not impartial have hinted. I have nothing to do with the honourable member for Waimate in this matter, and it seems to me that that suggestion was only thrown out for the purpose of injuring the object which I have in view. The fact is this: that during this session we have not yet had an opportunity of going into matters connected with village settlements, and the question of settling people on the land under the provisions of the Land Act in connection with that subject. During last session we included a clause in that Act enabling the Government to do something; but up to the present time nothing has been done. We have had several petitions

presented to the House this year, which have been referred to the Waste Lands Committee, and recommendations have been made by that Committee; but the matter has not been brought before the House. The resolution which I had intended to move was to this effect: that it is expedient that the Government should take action under the existing law, and that they should enter into agreements, as recommended by the Waste Lands Committee, and should present those agreements to Parliament within ten days of its meeting next session, for the purpose of obtaining the sanction of the House to those agreements. That, Sir, I take to be the proper course to follow, and I conceive that we are acting quite within our duty in taking action to recommend the Government to proceed under the law passed last session. It is a perfectly legitimate object for me to have in view. I was not actuated by any particular anxiety to have a special settlement established at Waimate—I wish to see these special settlements established all over the country; and, if it would meet the views of the House, I would like to say that, if this motion is carried, I will bring down the resolution in this amended form: "That it is expedient that the Government should purchase blocks of land for the purpose of establishing village settlements in suitable localities."

Mr. SEDDON.—You can move that without discharging this order.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—I can only say again that I did not make this motion with any desire of relieving the honourable member for Waimate, but for the purpose of giving effect to the recommendations which have come from the Waste Lands Board of Canterbury and the Waste Lands Committee of this House; and I say that I was justified in taking such action. I am sorry that this motion should have led to such a debate, and that remarks should have been made the only object of which, so far as I can see, was to gratify certain little personal prejudices.

Motion negatived.

RABBIT BILL.

Mr. TOLE, in moving the second reading of the Rabbit Bill, said,—Although this Bill has only just been circulated, I trust that the House will allow me to take the second reading to-day, because its object simply is to give effect to the recommendations of the Joint Committee which sat to consider questions relating to sheep and rabbits. The first recommendation of the Committee was that some steps should be taken to compel owners of runs or other lands infested with rabbits to take simultaneous action with regard to the destruction of rabbits; and it was also recommended that the penalty for failure to destroy rabbits, or to take necessary action with that end in view, should be increased from £20 to £100, but that there should be a right of appeal where the penalty amounted to £10 or upwards. Another recommendation was that there should be, in addition to other remedies and expedients for getting rid of rabbits, provision for the erection of rabbit-proof fences to prevent the spread of rabbits. It appears that this expedient has been adopted in some parts of the colony—notably in Hawke's Bay—and that it has been found an effective method of preventing the spread of the pest. The Bill is simply a machinery Bill to carry out these recommendations. First, the Governor is to notify those districts in which this portion of the Act is to come into operation, and then the management of these matters is to be placed in the hands of a Board of Trustees, to be elected to administer the Act. The Board is to be elected under the provisions of the Regulation of Local Elections Act of 1876. These trustees are to have power to raise money by levying a rate not exceeding 1d. per sheep or 5d. per head of cattle; and the funds thus obtained are to be subsidized by the Government. Then, to enable the Board to carry out the spirit and intention of the Act, the Governor in Council is to have power to issue regulations under the Act. These are the principal provisions of the Bill, and I beg to move, That the Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. COWAN.—This Bill appears to me to be entirely a machinery Bill, and, as the honourable gentleman has stated, it is the result of the report of the Joint Committee. I shall therefore only delay the House a few moments; but I wish to impress upon honourable members the necessity for giving effect to the recommendations of the Committee, because this question is undoubtedly one of the most vital importance to the best interests of the country. It is, in fact, a question of very much greater magnitude than most people are aware of; and I may say that, in my opinion, the Government is itself the party most interested in the proper carrying-out of means to reduce the evils of the rabbit-pest. To give the House an idea of the rapidity with which the pest has grown, I may say that in the first year when rabbit-skins were exported—in 1873—only 37,716 were sent away, the declared value of which, at the Customhouse was £1,263, while every year since an increasing number has been sent away, the result being that the average number exported for the past fourteen years has been 5,269,617. I have the figures before me, and I will rapidly go over them:—

		Numbers.	£
Year 1873	..	36,716	1,263
„ 1874	..	56,504	1,878
„ 1875	..	111,542	3,913
„ 1876	..	311,632	4,418
„ 1877	..	918,236	8,630
„ 1878	..	3,976,409	33,460
„ 1879	..	5,384,506	46,759
„ 1880	..	7,505,616	66,976
„ 1881	..	8,514,685	84,774
„ 1882	..	9,198,837	88,725
„ 1883	..	9,891,805	100,955
„ 1884	..	9,807,665	107,514
„ 1885	..	9,168,114	85,754
„ 1886	..	8,892,372	81,847

average number exported during these een years has been 5,269,617, and the declared value of these numbers which I given is £716,806 sterling. These figures h I have enumerated will, I have no t, open the minds of honourable mem- to the magnitude of this pest with which have to deal; and here I may state that numbers of rabbit-skins exported from the ntry represent a very small proportion of rabbits that have been destroyed; because, now granted, the most effective means of bating this evil is the use of phosphorized , and a very small proportion of the rabbits d by that process are ever found; because, r having taken the poison, they crawl away holes and rough places, and are not dis- red. I hope that the House will pass this , because I think that, when certain amend- its have been embodied in it in Committee, Act will give us a better prospect of coping a this evil than we have at present.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I do not wish to delay House by any discussion whatever upon s Bill. I have simply to indorse the re- rks made by the last speaker, and to ask ourable members, though they are very cious to get the business of the session shed as quickly as possible, to give their t attention to this measure, which is in- ded to give effect to the report which was sented to this House after the Committee d taken a great deal of trouble to obtain the t possible information.

Mr. LAKE.—This Bill has been circulated recently that it is almost impossible to give y opinion respecting it; but there is one use which strikes me as being exceedingly just, and I take this opportunity of asking e honourable member in charge of the Bill explain the operation of it. That is clause t, by which a rate is levied upon the owner or cupier of land. The point I wish to eluci- te is this: In certain districts, of course, the bbits are not a nuisance. The gentlemen ho are debating this matter are mostly con- dering their own localities. In my own dis- ct the question is of a very different charac- r. There the rabbits, in any large numbers, re confined almost entirely to the large ab- entee properties; and what I want to know is, whether it is the intention of the Ministry that arge absentee properties should be allowed to erve as breeding-places for the rabbits, and should not be liable to the charge for their destruction. As far as I can see, any person making use of his land as an actual resident will have to pay the rate, while the person who chooses to let his land lie idle will escape that rate. I shall be glad if the Ministers will tell us what the intention is.

Mr. LANCE.—The fact is that that clause only comes into operation if the ratepayers of the district choose to elect a body of trustees to take over the working of the Rabbit Act. It is entirely optional, and a certain majority is required to bring it into operation.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Before the question of the second reading of the Bill is put I desire to say a word or two upon it. The question has come before me as Treasurer whether we should consent to clause 24, which charges upon the consolidated revenue a pound-for-pound subsidy; and the Government have agreed to do so. What I am about to say is rather my individual opinion than any expression of the Cabinet, but I cannot help thinking that the Committee have altogether failed to deal with the question of eradicating the pest, which I do not think they exaggerate in saying is one of the most prejudicial to the interests of the colony. I think, however, it is fair to the Committee to say that they do not pretend to deal with the question exhaustively. They recommend, in fact, that in settled districts efforts should be made to keep down the pest as far as possible; but the recommendations, so far as they concern the large extent of country held by the Crown, seem to me to be entirely inadequate. I am not at all sure that if the rabbits had been left entirely unmolested and untouched since they came to the country they would not have ceased to a far greater extent than they have done; in fact, I think, in the course of time, they would have died out: whereas the thinning of the rabbits that has been going on during these years has assisted them in surviving more than the ordinary length of time such pests will survive. We have only to go to the experience of Canada to know that within a limited number of years pests of this kind die out from natural disease if they are left unmolested. In a country like this, where the value of pasturage is so enormously important, it is unquestionable that we cannot afford to leave such an evil untouched; but I ask myself, are we dealing with it satisfactorily? Is the money well expended? Large sums of money are expended: are they well expended? I notice that the report recommends what are called the natural enemies of the rabbit — the breeding of ferrets and the importation of stoats and weasels. I am not sure that the importation of those vermin will fail to lead to a greater pest than, or, at any rate, as great a pest as, the other which it is meant to displace. I believe, from a scientific point of view, the Committee are wrong in speaking of those animals as the natural enemies of the rabbits: they are only their enemies so far as their instincts lead them to destroy the rabbits; but I believe, from a scientific point of view, the meaning of "the natural enemy" is an animal that is productive of disease to another animal—that is the natural enemy; and I believe that the natural enemy of the rabbit, from a scientific point of view, is the fox. Now, the question is, Can we eradicate this pest altogether? If so it would be hard to say what would be too large a sum to pay to effect that purpose. The Government of New South Wales, a short while ago, impressed with the importance of the matter, suggested that the colonies should jointly subscribe a sum of £50,000 to offer by way of reward to the person who should succeed in producing a scientific means of eradicating these animals. In Canada, I am in-

formed authentically from the evidence of several persons, the plains are covered with millions of dead rabbits after disease has appeared amongst them, their death being caused by natural disease. There are some people who consider there is no harm whatever in poisoning rabbits, in killing them with ferrets, or in bringing in stoats and weasels to kill them, but who think there is some harm in introducing disease amongst them. That is a fine point of ethics which I do not pretend to understand: I think it is just as lawful to destroy these animals by disease as by poison. The question is, Can we get some one with competent knowledge and sufficient science at his command to go into this question scientifically and ascertain what means can be used for destroying them by disease? If there are no other means than those we have tried, it simply comes to this: that we shall have the pest constantly in the country. If we were to take any portion of the country and destroy all the rabbits there excepting half a dozen pairs, we know that in a very short time they would overrun that country again, even from so small a stock. Now, can any means be found of scientifically dealing with them from the point of disease? I believe such means can be found; but I believe the experiments will be very costly. A thorough investigation would have to be made into the disease which destroys these animals in Canada—that has already, I believe, been suggested by one of the members of the Government of the Dominion—and then we should have to find by experiments to what extent the disease could be intensified, as we know from modern researches diseases can be intensified. Then will come the question of propagating the disease. I have only made these remarks because I think, though the report does make a slender reference to the subject in the last clause, that it does not attach sufficient importance to it. As regards the settled districts, I agree that it is well to expend the money, and to give on the part of the Government in proportion to the amount which those immediately interested are prepared to subscribe; but, if the question is to be dealt with definitely and finally, I think a large sum of money will be required for scientific research, or else the plan suggested by New South Wales will have to be adopted, and a very large reward offered. I should have been glad if the investigations of the Committee had cleared up this point. I believe there is in Auckland a gentleman who is very distinguished in the investigation of the causes of diseases and their effects, and it may be that his assistance might be valuable in investigating the causes of the rabbit disease in Canada. As to that I am not able to express an opinion, but I feel quite sure that we should not be too rash in the way of introducing what the report calls the natural enemies of the rabbit, and that we should try to seek a more thorough and more absolute cure in the direction which I have indicated. I am not opposing the Bill, and I am not disagreeing with a great part of the report, which bears on an evil which is of such enormous importance that the most vigorous measures should be taken. My remarks have not been made with a view to throwing discouragement upon the efforts of the Committee or the efforts of the settlers to kill the rabbits—far from it—but they are made with the view of encouraging investigation into some means for destroying the rabbits completely and finally.

Mr. LANCE.—All the members of the Rabbit Committee, I think I may say, would fully agree with the remarks that have fallen from the Colonial Treasurer, and in the last sentence of the report we wound up in the direction in which the Colonial Treasurer has gone. We believe that all the known remedies at present — our poisoning, and what are known as the natural enemies—are not enough to eradicate the rabbits in this country or any other; but what we say is this: that the increase of this pest is so serious and so likely to interfere with, and is now so greatly interfering with, the great industries of the colony that we cannot afford to go to sleep, or, if we do, the whole country will positively be ruined. Those maps which are hung up in the lobby of the House show thoroughly the extent to which the pest has increased, and they also show that there are still certain portions of the colony which at present do not suffer from rabbits. Our great object is to prevent those portions from being as nearly ruined as the other portions where the rabbits at present exist in large numbers. The Committee recommend that what are termed the natural enemies of the rabbit should be imported; but since that recommendation has appeared before the public we have found that there are a great many great and grave objections to the importation of stoats and weasels: and, if I may be allowed to offer a suggestion to the Government, it would be in the direction of not trying the importation of those animals immediately, but I would ask them, in lieu of that, to do their best to increase in every possible way they can the breeding of ferrets, which are known to be injurious to hardly anything. We had very conclusive evidence upon that point two years ago, when a similar Committee sat. The evidence given on this point was remarkable in two respects: in the first place it showed that the ferrets had succeeded entirely, or almost entirely, in destroying the rabbits from the witness's own country, and in the next place it showed that not in a single instance had he known of the loss of a single lamb by ferrets, although he told the Committee it was quite possible he might at that moment have ten thousand ferrets on his property. In order to ascertain whether ferrets were likely to destroy the lambs, he had given orders to his shepherds to examine the camping-ground every morning where the ewes camped while lambing; and in no instance did they find a dead lamb that had been killed by ferrets. That, to the mind of the Committee, was conclusive evidence that the ferret was not a dangerous animal to lambs. The question arises, When the rabbits are extinguished, what will become of the ferrets? Well, I think there

Sir J. Vogel

is very little difficulty about that. In Mr. B——'s own case he told us that the ferrets were decreasing very much for want of food, and that it was found necessary to kill wild pigs and leave them in the gullies to feed the ferrets, and that, as a matter of fact, the ferrets would follow the plough to feed on the worms when they were ploughing land, so exceedingly hard-up were they for food. What I would ask the Government to do is really to encourage the breeding of these animals as much as possible; and for the present I think, perhaps, it would be wise to abandon the idea of importing stoats and weasels, which might possibly prove a very great injury to the country hereafter.

An Hon. MEMBER.—How?

Mr. LANCE.—It is said they attack children, and so forth. Science should in some way be consulted as to importing some disease that will destroy the rabbits. The Committee had it in evidence that at one time the Falkland Islands were infested with rabbits, and that a disease broke out amongst them; and, as a matter of fact, I believe there is hardly a rabbit there at the present time. We could get rid of the rabbits if we folded our arms and let the whole country be overrun with them, when a disease would break out and exterminate them; but, in the meantime, we should be exterminated ourselves.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I only received a copy of this Bill a few minutes ago; and, as far as I can see, from a passing look at it, it does not carry out the recommendations of the Committee. However, I do not intend at this stage to oppose the Bill, but I may say this: that unless the Minister in charge of the Bill agrees to alter it very much in Committee I shall certainly oppose it, because it does not carry out the recommendations of the Committee, and it will leave us in a worse position than we are in at the present time, so far as the administration is concerned. One of the recommendations of the Committee was that the administration should be placed in the hands of the local bodies. This Bill simply proposes to give the administration to Boards to be appointed for the purpose of preventing the spread of rabbits, and will place the same in the hands of the large stockowners. If it is a good thing to prevent the spread of rabbits, I think it is an equally good thing to destroy them where they already are. So far as I can see, this Bill simply makes the administration worse than it is at present. The Colonial Treasurer has shown how very little he knows about the rabbit question when he says that it would have been a very good thing if the rabbits had been let alone—that if so they would have died out before now. It is quite true that the rabbits would have died out in certain districts if they had been let alone; but before dying out they would have killed every living animal in that district. Before they died of starvation they would have left nothing for other animals to eat. Then the question of their natural enemies comes up. My opinion is this: Do what you will, the rabbits can never be exterminated in New Zealand. All that we can do is to keep them in check as much as possible, and, if we ever expect to reduce the annual expense, it is by the natural enemy. As far as I know, ferrets will not destroy any stock while running wild, and when ferrets become too numerous they destroy one another, if their food-supply runs short. I am quite satisfied that ferrets, as a rule, will not increase very extensively. They have very peculiar ways. If a buck ferret goes into a hole he kills all the young ferrets he finds there; the mothers do the same if their young are touched before a certain age; and I am quite satisfied that they will never increase to such a degree as to do any harm. During the last four years we have spent a large amount of money in keeping the rabbits down, and so far the result is *nil*. Where the population is settled thickly they will not become a nuisance; but all the rest of the country will be occupied by the rabbits. I think that the introduction of the natural enemies of the rabbit will be the best possible way to prevent their increase. I hope the Minister in charge will agree to amendments being made in the measure in Committee.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON.—Like the honourable member for Moeraki, I have only just read this Bill; and it appears to me in its present form to be very objectionable; and to carry out the objects of the Bill will be very expensive. Assuming that it may be desirable to introduce local government with regard to this measure, I would suggest that, in place of these local Trustees, and in place of the rabbit districts, the existing local bodies should be utilized for this purpose—the County Councils or Road Boards in place of the Trustees, and the counties or road districts in place of the rabbit districts. At present this colony is a very paradise for Returning Officers. We are smothered with elections already; and here is a proposal to start a fresh local body, with all the paraphernalia of elections, chairmen, rates, and so forth. It is virtually triplicating local government, and on a matter which might be dealt with by existing local authorities; and when this Bill goes into Committee I shall endeavour to have it amended in the direction of handing the control to one of these bodies.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—I think it is to be regretted that a Bill of such an important character should be introduced at this late period of the session. It is almost impossible for honourable members who have just received the Bill to give careful consideration to it. What appear, to my mind, to be the objectionable features of the Bill are these: that it gives enormous power to persons who are possessed of large flocks, and it gives plurality of votes, which has been protested against in this House over and over again. I observe that a stockowner possessing from one hundred to one thousand sheep is to have one vote, whilst those possessing twenty thousand sheep are to have five votes. That means this: that, while very probably, one lazy sheep-farmer has allowed the rabbits to increase, to the detriment

of the whole neighbourhood in which he lives, he would have five times as much power as the industrious settler in regard to dealing with the nuisance. And these settlers are to have a very objectionable rate placed upon them in order to destroy a so-called pest, which to them is no pest at all, because the rabbits in settled districts do no more harm than sparrows, and we might as well pass a law to prevent the spread of sparrows as pass a law to prevent the spread of rabbits. An honourable member representing the Wairarapa laughs. He does not understand what I mean by a settled district. I do not mean a district where there are enormous areas of magnificent land held by one or two persons. I mean a district where there are farms of from fifty to three hundred acres. In such districts rabbits cease to exist. In the part of the colony in which I live we have had rabbits for twenty-five years. They afford a certain amount of amusement and sport for the young men and children of the village; but they have never increased beyond a reasonable limit, and never will as long as the population remains there. This seems to me to be a very harsh proposal: it enables some persons to neglect their duty of keeping down the rabbits on their large properties, and it puts a severe tax upon those who have done their duty in keeping the rabbits down. I regretted to hear the Colonial Treasurer say that he did not consider it advisable to import the natural policeman of the rabbit. I am satisfied that there are only three modes in which this rabbit-pest can be handled. In the first place, by simultaneous poisoning: that is the chapest and most satisfactory way of reducing the pest. In the second place, a certain amount of money might be judiciously expended in erecting rabbit-proof fences between infested districts and clean districts; but I think the most practical preventive of the spread of the rabbit is to introduce that animal's natural enemy. The beautiful climate and abundance of food in this country favour the multiplication of the rabbit family, and unless their natural enemies are introduced to check them they will take possession of the country. I have never been in England or in any country where stoats and weasels are numerous, but I have endeavoured to find out whether they do any real amount of damage to human beings or to sheep. I deny that they do so. There are instances of children being destroyed by weasels and ferrets, but we might as well pass a law to prevent the increase of rats as object to the introduction of weasels and similar animals on that account, because I have heard of children being destroyed by rats. Ferrets are likely to do more damage to human beings than are stoats or weasels, because the ferret is a semi-domesticated animal, and is not so shy in his habits as weasels and stoats. I think the stoats and weasels will do more good in exterminating the rabbit than has been done by the expenditure of large sums of money on other attempts which have been made to eradicate the pest.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—There is no question that this pest of rabbits is one of very great magnitude, and what was said of the prerogatives of the British Crown at one time may be truly said of them, that "they have increased, are increasing, and ought to be diminished." I think that one great defect in the working of the present Act is that the Inspectors either have not sufficient power or the exercise of that power is interfered with by the local persons of authority. I believe that if these Inspectors exercised their functions with energy and independence the nuisance which at present exists would not long be of so serious a character. I think the policy of any Act of this kind should be to give no person a vested interest in the propagation of rabbits. That may be laid down as a very sound axiom in this matter. Where you have Inspectors, and rabbiters, and other men whose salaries or mode of living are dependent on the continuance of this pest, you may rest assured that the pest will not disappear as readily as it should do. From my experience in the South I can say that there is not that energy displayed in the extermination of rabbits that there should be; and I venture to say, further, that the various reserves are merely nests for the propagation of the rabbit. I think the Crown should be under some special obligation in connection with the extermination of rabbits on Crown lands and reserves, which at present does not prevail. I think that some payment by results should take place, and that, instead of a salary being paid to a particular person for a year, his income should be somewhat dependent upon the success which attends his efforts, and that if rabbits continue to exist for long in the district his salary should not be so large as in other circumstances. I am sorry that the Bill has been brought down so late. In fact, I regret to notice that the more important business is now being entered upon; and it is deeply to be regretted that, just as we are all anxious to depart, these important measures should be brought down, when the House is really not in a frame of mind to carefully consider them. This is a matter of vast importance, and this colony has lost millions upon millions of money through the prevalence of these rabbits, and no pains should be spared to exterminate them in every way possible.

Mr. TOLE.—This pest is so ruinous that immediate action should be resorted to; and the sooner the Bill is passed the better. It is the desire of myself and the Government to make it as perfect as possible, and to make it carry out the recommendations of the Committee. I have made a note of the suggestions of honourable members, and I shall consider the question raised by the honourable member for Motueka as to the plurality of votes. The honourable member for Moeraki has spoken of divided administration under this Act. I would point out that it is provided that the Board shall have exclusive charge of the administration of this Act and the main Act. With regard to the question of unoccupied lands, mentioned by the honourable member for

ipa, that is an important matter, and I ll give it consideration.
Bill read a second time.

DISTRICT RAILWAYS PURCHASING BILL.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—The object of the strict Railways Purchasing Bill, of which I w move the second reading, is to authorize Government to purchase the Waimea ins Railway, which is one of very consider-le importance. It is not my intention to into all the details of all the correspondence at has taken place between the Government d the company, because last year papers re laid upon the table showing all that had ken place up to the end of last session. me considerable time after the session, as nourable members will have seen from the rrespondence laid on the table this session, gotiations were again opened with the com-ny, with a view to carrying out the instruc-n of the House to the Government in the sion of 1884. The Government took the me course with regard to this matter as was ken last session with regard to the other strict railways, which the Government has ce acquired: that is to say, they referred e provisional agreement which had been come with the company to the Public Accounts mmittee; and, as honourable members are ware, that Committee has taken a consider-le amount of evidence, and has brought down report to the effect that the agreement is e that they recommend the House to adopt. put it shortly: This line was constructed by private company to open up a large amount comparatively level land fit for cultivation, great deal of it being now under cultivation. he line, unfortunately for the interests of the lony, was allowed to be constructed by a pri-te company, and it forms a sort of connect-g-link between two Government lines. For e convenience of the travelling public this ne has to be made use of by tourists and by all hose business takes them from Dunedin and e east side of the Island towards the Lake ountry; and the fact of this line being in the ands of a private company compels the Go-ernment to run their trains in such a way that ey are put to very large expense to enable em to satisfy the demands of the public. he length of the line is some thirty-seven iles, and, as far as the Government are aware, e actual cost of the works of this railway as somewhere between £90,000 and £95,000. hat is in respect to cost of construction; and e accounts of the company, which have been udited from time to time, show that, from one ource and another, the line has cost the com-any some £108,000. The revenue derived from is railway has varied a good deal. The first ear the line was opened the net revenue was nly £755. I should state that during the first our years that this line was opened for traffic e company had no rolling-stock with the xception of two engines, and it had to depend n the Government for rolling-stock. The rrangements for the hire of this rolling-stock were fixed at what might be termed a fair rate looking at it from a Government point of view, although the company contested it from time to time as too high. The proceeds of the working of the railway during those four years averaged £800 a year. The following year the arrangements broke down, and for some time there was hardly any through-traffic, owing to the refusal of the company to pay the amount charged by the Government. When the negotiations for the purchase of the line broke down last year the clamour was so great on all sides that the Government had, practically, to give way, and to so arrange their trains that the public could get through in a reasonable amount of time, and without unreasonable delay at the junction of the line at Gore with the main trunk line. An arrangement was then made which put the Government to considerable additional expense, and which had the effect of relieving the company from a considerable amount of charge for the hire of rolling-stock. Owing to that relief, and to the fact that a large additional area of land had been brought under cultivation, the profits ran up last year to about £2,000. I am informed that about two thousand additional acres of land have been brought under cultivation during the last two years, the produce from which has caused the receipts to very largely increase; and the effect of the present arrangements for train-running results in a considerable extra traffic over the line. In the first place, if this purchase is made, the Government estimate, from the information in their possession, that at least £1,000 a year will be saved on train-mileage owing to the Government being free to arrange the running of their trains. It will also, on the other hand, as honourable members are aware is the case with the other district railways, have the effect of giving immediate relief to a large number of ratepayers, inasmuch as they will have to pay only 2 per cent. instead of, as at present, 5 per cent. The offer which the Government saw their way to make to this company, after protracted negotiations, was £33,000 in cash, and to take over the responsibility for two amounts of security, of £75,000 in all, which are now held by the Government Insurance Department. The company persistently held out for an increase. They demanded some £4,000 more; but I did not see my way to recommend the Government to offer them such an amount: and eventually it was considered worth while to meet the company half-way by offering £2,000 extra in consequence of the trouble which had existed, and also to get rid of the additional mileage and knocking-about of the rolling-stock which was taking place. The Bill is drawn up on the lines of the Bill of last session, under which the other district railways have been purchased. I think I need hardly say any more on the subject now; but if further information is asked for I will do my best, in reply, to furnish it.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—What are the rates charged on this railway as compared with the rates on Government railways?—I mean, the

rates on which the present profits have accrued.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—I believe those rates are not much higher now. They were considerably higher, but they have been reduced, until, now, they are not much higher than on other Government branch-lines.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I was on the Committee which inquired into this matter, and I gave considerable attention to the subject. The Minister has stated everything fairly as far as he has gone, but there are things which he has not explained. Honourable members have in their hands the evidence that was taken, and as I touch on the subject I shall quote from that evidence. The Government propose to give this company for the purchase of their line £110,000 in cash, and also the amount needed to redeem the debentures of the company held by the Government Insurance Association, which would be about £13,500, with regard to which I shall speak presently. Therefore it is not only the £110,000, but, in addition to that, £8,000, at the lowest—or, it may be, £18,000—to redeem the debentures, that it is proposed to pay the company. Mr. O'Connor, the Under-Secretary for the Public Works Department, in his evidence, says that, as an engineering work, this, if made as a new line, would be worth £90,000 to £95,000 to make. He says, also, taking into account the whole of the rates which are not collected, and which come to about £15,000, and taking into account the guarantee of the Government and the amount they have to receive from the ratepayers, it is worth to the company, as a commercial transaction, not more than £97,000. Then he goes on to say that, considering everything, if the Government could work it they could do so more advantageously than the company could, and it would be worth to them £102,000. Now, the Government propose to give £110,000 in cash for it, and to pay a premium on the debentures. How do the Government arrive at that £110,000? They say that it is necessary to give that in order to relieve the ratepayers of half the rates due to the company. The rates due on the 31st March amounted to upwards of £15,000, and before I have finished I shall refer to the persons who have to pay these rates. In the meantime, I wish merely to point out that £15,000 is due, and, although it was not given in evidence, still it was known to one member of the Committee that all that was raised in the year before last was £23. I think it is relied upon by the owners of the railway and by the Minister for Public Works that, if the Government purchase the line, they can work it more cheaply than it has been worked by the company. It is contended that by fitting in the Government trains on their own line with those on the line proposed to be purchased they would probably save £1,000 a year, and the estimate of that amount capitalized is given as £25,000; so it is said that by buying the railway they would make a capital sum of £25,000 by fitting in their trains to work with the line. That question of the £1,000 a year saving is one of very great importance in considering this question. Mr. O'Connor was asked about it, and in his evidence he said that the cost of renewing the sleepers would be very heavy—that the expense of renewal has been very light for the last five or six years, but that in the future it will be very heavy. Then, the fares are exceptionally high, and honourable gentlemen will see that, as this railway is the connecting-link between Gore and Elbow, the fares on the line have very largely increased the profits of the railway. This is a matter which the experts on the part of the Crown had to consider from a commercial point of view; but we have to consider it as political men, and we have to ask ourselves, Is there any probability of these fares being maintained at so high a rate? We know that there is no possibility of it, and that the moment the railway passes into the hands of the Government there will be an outcry for a large reduction in the fares. This is a matter of importance, because we can see that, to gain £1,000 a year, it will not be done by working the line more cheaply, but by working it in with our own railways. Still, there is, against that, the heavy cost of renewing the sleepers, and the absolute reduction in the receipts from the lowering of the fares. I venture to say that the cost of renewing the sleepers, and what the country will lose by lowering the fares, will be much more than the £1,000. Therefore the £1,000 a year which Mr. Maxwell, the General Manager of Railways, says the Government will gain by fitting in our trains with this line will be far more than covered by these heavy expenses. During the last of the five years that the railway was running the company made £40. My honourable friend the Minister for Public Works said that, in consequence of the Government not arranging matters, the company were not running the line for some time, but were putting in sleepers; but the evidence shows that the sleepers will require renewal. Then, the company has pledged debentures worth £40,000 to the Government Insurance Association. They are 6-per-cent. debentures, running for twenty-three years; and also debentures worth £35,000, bearing 6½ per cent. interest, and running for ten and a half years. It was given in evidence that the lowest amount that would redeem these debentures, according to the calculation of an actuary, is £8,000, while the highest amount would be £18,000. The calculation is arrived at in this way: that, if the Insurance Association invest the money at 5 per cent., then £8,000 will be sufficient to redeem them; but if they could not invest at more than 4 per cent. it would require £18,000 to redeem them. But it is exceedingly difficult to get good investments at 5 per cent. Recognizing that difficulty, and assuming that the money would be reinvested at 4½ per cent., there will be a premium of £13,500 required to pay for redeeming the debentures from the Insurance Association. We therefore give at least £123,000—for what? For the purpose of purchasing a railway that our own officers have shown, by a carefully-prepared report, which is supported by evidence, is not worth to us

colony more than £102,000. The report of the officers shows that they have gone into the question carefully and exhaustively, and in a business-like and impartial manner which does them credit. Now, as to relieving the ratepayers, we know there was due from the ratepayers to the company on the 31st March, 1885, £15,000, and up to this time the amount is about £17,500. It is proposed that the company shall collect only half of this, and the other half the Government will pay the company. Let honourable members understand that.—(No.)—Yes; the company will collect half the rates owing, and we are asked to give the company £110,000 directly for the line, instead of its estimated value of £102,000; so that the £8,000 extra is about equal to the other half of the overdue rates. Now, whether it is a just thing to relieve these ratepayers, whether large or small men, from an obligation which they undertook with their eyes open, and to relieve them at the cost of the colony, is a question which this House may entertain. But this railway was made with the hope, the belief, the intention, that it would make the land there more valuable. When the question of the rates pressing on the settlers was raised the New Zealand Agricultural Company notified by advertisement that the lands sold by the company would be sold free from the liability to a railway rate—that the company would pay the rates on that land. Now, we could not get out, in the Committee, evidence as to the amount of rates owing on land in respect of which that obligation was given. With such means as were available to me, and with the help of the honourable member for Hokonui—who, though holding views opposed to my own on the question, yet sees the justice and fairness of all information on the subject being afforded—I have got a few figures on the question. Under the 80th clause of "The District Railways Act, 1877"—and which it is necessary to consider before we can see how much the ratepayers have to pay—it is provided that—

"If the profits of the company, after paying for the yearly cost of maintenance and the working expenses of the railway, amount to seven per centum per annum, then no rate shall be levied. But, after the expiration of five years from the opening of the railway for traffic, not less than thirty per centum of the gross receipts derived from the railway shall be deemed to be profits derived from the working thereof; the meaning of this provision being that not more than seventy per centum of such receipts shall be expended in the working and maintenance of the railway."

I have not been able to go very far back, but I find that the amount of rates accrued in 1882 was £4,744; in 1883–84, £4,867; and in 1884–85, £5,401. Thus, through the operation of the clause I have referred to, the amount of rates required for the year last ended fell to only £2,474, so that the amount of rates leviable now is less than half of what was required for the fifth year. Therefore, while the cost of working and maintaining the railway will increase considerably, the amount of rates that can be collected will be less. But I do not attach so much importance to the amount of rates collectable in the future as to the fact that the Government propose to give the company half the amount of rates now due—that is, some £8,000. As to the proportion between the amount of rates for which the Agricultural Company is liable and the total amount, I could not get all the information—I could not go back to the time the company purchased the land; but I have gone back three years. Despite the obligation undertaken by the company to pay the rates in respect of the land sold by the company, the amount remaining to be paid by the other ratepayers in proportion to what is due by the company appears to be greater than it was three or four years ago, because we are not able to ascertain how much the company is liable for on account of land sold by it since. In 1884 the total amount of rates leviable was £4,067, and of this the Agricultural Company had to pay £2,530. In 1885 the total amount of rateable property was £754,240, of which the company owned £347,743; and we know the company has now to pay rates not only on that, but on the land it has sold since it made the undertaking I have mentioned; and, remembering this, I believe a full knowledge of the exact facts would show that the Agricultural Company owes two-thirds of the total amount of rates overdue—possibly as much as three-fourths. That company must owe, on the most moderate computation, at least £10,000 of the total amount of rates due; and this proposal means that we are to relieve that company of half that liability, and put it on the colony. In other words, it is proposed that we shall give that company £5,000 of the hard-earned money of the colony—that great company, a company which, according to its own prospectus issued in London, selected the land and bought the valleys in such a way that it was impossible for any one else to buy the hills. Now, in the first place, we are going to relieve this large company and other large landowners—Education Boards, and others—of their liability for overdue rates by paying them out of the hard-earned money of the colony; and then we are asked to extend the power of collecting rates by the Government from these people for twenty years. But does any honourable gentleman for a moment believe—judging by our experience in the past—that we shall be able to collect these rates over that period? Will not the first thing these ratepayers do be to ask for concessions? Knowing what pressure they can put on this House, and knowing how impressionable we are, they will, quite naturally, say, at first, "Reduce the rates on the railway." They will get that; and that will bring the profits down to nothing, or to very little; and the outlay on the line will be greater, if it be kept up and renewed as the Government lines are. Then, in a year or two the ratepayers will say, "Why should we pay rates for what is a Government line?" and they will get the

rate taken off. I am sure, judging from the past, that the same causes will bring about the same effects. Now, it is in evidence that the line is not worth more than £97,000 to the company, and is not worth more than £102,000 to the Government; and this proposal is to give the company £110,000 for the line; and, then, if the debentures are redeemed, or if interest is paid on them for the period of their currency, we give at least £13,000 more on that account; so that what we are really going to do is this: We are going to pay £123,000 for a railway that our own officers, who are perfectly competent to judge, have said is only worth £102,000. My vote on this question will go with the minority, as it has gone with the minority before; but I have confidence that, without any desire to prevent a transaction which might, under certain circumstances, be desirable for the company, without any desire at all to prevent this company getting the utmost it is entitled to, and without any desire at all to bear harshly on the ratepayers, or not to take their difficulties into consideration, I ought to raise my voice against this expenditure of public money in the purchase of this railway—against giving the amount which it is proposed we should give for it; and, although I will not go to the extent of characterizing it as a fraud upon the colony, I say that it will be a great wrong to the colony; and, though it may be carried by a vote of this House, the country will see that these things cannot be done with impunity.

Mr. COWAN.—The honourable member for Akaroa has given expression to his opinion as an opponent of the Bill, whereas I appear as a supporter of it, and I shall endeavour to controvert the statements which the honourable gentleman has tried to impress upon the House. The object of this measure is to give effect to an agreement entered into between the Minister for Public Works and the Waimea Plains Railway Company for the purchase of their railway. The terms are: £45,000 in cash, the Government taking over the loan which the company had obtained from the Government Insurance Association. I may here state that the honourable member for Akaroa conveyed the impression that the price was to be £110,000 cash. No doubt the Bill provides for such a contingency; but that is merely permissive, because it is possible that the Government Insurance Association will not accept repayment of the loan till maturity. Up to the present they have declined repayment; and therefore the Government has taken power to pay interest to the Association for its remaining term. In briefly going over the remarks of the honourable member for Akaroa I shall take first the last portion of what he said—namely, his reference to the ratepayers. The contention of the honourable gentleman was that this Bill relieved the ratepayers to the extent of a large sum, but he did not state that the sum was as large as it really is. The exact balance of which they are to be relieved is £1,[illegible]. That is the sum which is due for rates that have accrued between 1886 and 1886, both inclusive. The company were entitled to recover that sum, but all they have recovered has been £23. Now, with regard to this question, I may say that the policy of relieving ratepayers of district railways was settled last year, when we passed clause 19 of the District Railways Purchasing Act. The policy embodied in that clause was accepted and confirmed by this Legislature; and I say it is not open to us, on this occasion, seriously to discuss the matter further than relates to the question of amount. The clause reads thus:—

"On completion of the contract for the purchase of any railway under this Act, one-half of all rates payable for the period prior to the thirty-first day of March, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-five, under any authority given by the Minister for Public Works for the levying of such rates, shall be remitted."

That clause is re-embodied in this Bill, with this addition: that the year 1886 is also included in the period with respect to rates. I therefore submit—with due deference to the honourable member for Akaroa, who has such extended experience in this Legislature—that the question as to whether we are to relieve the ratepayers in any district created under the District Railways Act has already been decided by this Legislature, and that it is not now open for us to consider it. With regard to this question, however, I may say that the position which the honourable gentleman took up in reference to large ratepayers is hardly fair. This list which I have in my hand certainly includes—and that is a misfortune—the Agricultural Company as the largest debtor of overdue rates; but the list of ratepayers not only includes that company, but over three hundred and fifty settlers. It is on their behalf that I, as the representative of the district in which they live, appeal to the House to consider favourably the provisions of this Bill. No doubt many of these individual settlers are liable for trifling amounts; but, in the aggregate, and looking at the times through which the agricultural interest has passed during the last four years, the amount is large, and the collection of the rates due would certainly depopulate the district. I therefore submit that the relief should be given to these unfortunate ratepayers, because it has been settled under the Act of last session that they should have such relief, and also because such relief is urgently necessary under the circumstances of the case. Another reason which I submit to the House in favour of these ratepayers is this: that a very small proportion indeed of them have purchased land from the Agricultural Company or are tenants of the Agricultural Company. Four-fifths of these individuals have been purchasers from or are direct tenants of the Crown or of the Education Commissioners of Otago, a large portion of whose reserves are within the Waimea Plains Railway District. There is another point which I submit to the House in favour of these individuals—namely, that they took up their land without their liability to this railway-

te being an expressed obligation upon the nd. That is a point which I urge upon the ouse to consider; and the same argument fers to the occupiers of those lands which ere taken up from the Education Commisoners. I think, looking at the case from that int of view, that the country is bound, even on no other ground to relieve the ratepayers that is, putting aside altogether the provions of the Bill of last session. Then, in addin to what I have already said, there are her reasons. A large number of the rateyers are residents of the Borough of Gore and e Township of Lumsden, and are not at all pendent upon this line. They are served by e Government line. That is another reason hy this injustice should be removed. Another ason is that the Government has commenced branch line from this railway towards ritzers to the completion of which the Gonment is bound, so as to keep faith with e numerous settlers in that district who ve taken up land on the faith of this line ing pushed on. Then with regard to the rms of the purchase. Honourable members e aware that the provisions are that the rchase shall take place as from the 31st arch last, and that the price is £110,000—amely, £35,000 in cash, the Government takg over the loan of £75,000 the company ve from the Insurance Association—which presents a payment equal to £2,972 per mile, d in that amount is included a number articles embodied in the schedule, among hich are two locomotives, which are valued riously at from £2,500 to £3,000. We have in evidence that the commercial value of this ne is £97,000. In the evidence given by Mr. 'Connor, in answer to question 64, he says at he reckons "its value as a commercial enrprise, taking into account everything the mpany is entitled to get from the ratepayers nd everybody else," at £97,000. That is a oint that the honourable member for Akaa took up; and I do not blame him for aving done so, because it is contained in this vidence; but I will proceed, shortly, to show, om the same evidence, that the reply given this question by Mr. O'Connor is not onsistent with his evidence as given in nother place. In reply to question 54 Mr. 'Connor says, "I think the value of the ailway as an engineering- and constructionork is between £90,000 and £95,000;" and hat does not include the amount paid for nterest during course of construction, which, n answer to question 158, Mr. O'Connor estinates at £6,000. If we take the mean beween £90,000 and £95,000, £92,500, and add o that, what is surely an asset, the overdue ates, £17,509, we have the sum of £110,009, vithout any interest during construction. Mr. 'Connor also says, in another place, that he line is worth £102,000, irrespective of overine rates, those rates being £17,509, or, as he ays, it is worth £118,000 if the Government ets the overdue rates. Further on, in answer o questions, he says, "If all the overdue ates become the property of the Government, then the value of the line is £117,634, *plus* nearly £3,000." So that in that portion of the evidence he raises the value of this line to £120,634. These are points which the honourable member for Akaroa put from his point of view; and I desired to state to the House from my point of view what is established by the figures. Another very material portion of this evidence is that of Mr. Maxwell, who thinks that, if this railway were not in existence, if it could be placed there for £110,000 it would undoubtedly be a proper thing for the Government to make it. Mr. Maxwell, therefore has come to a conclusion which seems to correspond with the value which the Minister for Public Works has offered to the railway company; and, in addition to this, Mr. Maxwell asserts that the possession of this railway by the Government is worth to them, in the working of their system of railways, a sum equal to £1,000 a year. That, capitalized, is £25,000, and that is a sum which I think I am perfectly entitled, from the position I take up as a supporter of this Bill, to utilize, as I will by-and-by. The honourable member for Akaroa said the possession of this railway by the Government would "probably" mean the saving of £1,000 a year in the working of the present Government lines. I entirely object to that. The honourable gentleman said Mr. Maxwell put it down as a "probability." Honourable members will see that, in question 29 of the evidence, Mr. Maxwell says, "I have no doubt we could save £1,000 a year on trains running on the Government lines." There is no "probability" about that. In answer to question 46 Mr. Maxwell again says, "If we take it into the system and work it with the Government lines we should save £1,000 a year." Again, no "probability" about that. There is the position the General Manager of Railways takes up. He says the possession of this railway by the Government would effect a saving of £1,000 a year in working their own service. It is not for me to explain how that comes about; but, from the position he holds, Mr. Maxwell's opinion in that respect is certainly worthy of the consideration of this House. The honourable member for Akaroa also objected, when speaking as to the value of the line, that the cost of renewal will in future be very heavy. But the same argument applies to all railways of the same age. This line has now been worked five years, and I venture to say it has not been neglected. I do not assert for a moment, and I do not wish the House to understand, that this line will be subject to fewer renewals than other lines of the same age; but certainly it will not require any greater renewals than other lines of the same age in the country. The last balance-sheet of the company has this among the items of expenditure during the year: "Maintenance and repairs, £2,459 15s. 7d." That was for the year 1885-86; and that, I think, shows that this company has been paying a certain amount of attention to their line. The revenue of the railway for the year ending the 31st March last was, according to the balance-sheet—which I have here—

£27,829 9s. 9d., comprising, from goods £5,440 3s. 5d., and for passengers £2,389 6s. 4d. The working expenses totalled £5,795 6s., which is equal to 74½ per cent. of the receipts; and there are several items under the "Expenditure" heading of the balance-sheet which will disappear as soon as the line is owned by the Government. These are—County rates, £281 12s. 6d.; property-tax, £95 17s. 8d.; and rating expenses, £219 17s. 1d. There is also an item, rolling-stock, £363 14s. 10d. That item will disappear, but I imagine that, if this railway-line becomes the property of the Government, a percentage should be added to the working expenses for the use of general rolling-stock. These items which I have enumerated come to over £500; and, with that reduction, and a possible reduction in the item of salaries—which in this case are very large, and include a paid secretary, in Dunedin, and a staff of officials who travel with every train—I think, with possible reductions on this rate of expenditure, that the expenses, instead of appearing as 74½ per cent.—I have authority for saying—could easily be reduced to something like 65 per cent.; and, without reference to the other advantages which the possession of this line would give to the Government service, that would leave, upon last year's revenue, a margin something like what has been yielded by the general system of railways—namely, between £2 10s. and £3 per cent., and an addition to this is the annual payment to the company by the Government of 2 per cent. of guaranteed interest, which amounted last year to £998. In all, the probable return from this purchase looks like nearly 4 per cent. With regard to the redemption of the loans, of course, that is a question which was made very much of by the honourable member for Akaroa; and no doubt the position he took up was perfectly correct, in so far as concerns the terms upon which the Association holds those loans. The actuarial value can easily be found. It has been stated, as the honourable member for Akaroa said, that that value may amount to any sum between £8,000 and £18,000. I know, myself, that the Insurance Association will not take payment for these loans for a premium of less than £9,000; but, as I said before, provision is made in this Bill for carrying them on, and provision is also made that any excess of interest paid upon those loans of 4 per cent. shall be shared equally between the ratepayers and the Government. Now, that is another safeguard which this Bill carries. Under the District Railways Purchasing Act of last session the ratepayers and the Government are liable to divide the loss up to 4 per cent.; but this Bill provides that the ratepayers and the Government are liable not only to 4 per cent., but to an increased percentage represented by the difference between 4 per cent. and the interest—namely, 6 per cent. and 6¼ per cent.—on the loans. That excess of interest will be added, I understand, to the working expenses of this railway, and the matter will be accurately worked out. It can easily be done, and I do not anticipate any difficulty will arise from this view of the case. I would merely say this, in conclusion: that when I had the honour to be returned to this Parliament, in 1884, the question of taking over this railway was one of the burning questions at that election, and at the hustings I had to give expression to my views. I then undertook to do what I could to obtain for my constituents relief, and when I came to Wellington I at once took steps to put the matter before the Government. The Government then informed me that the question of purchasing one of these district railways could not be entertained, but that if the question of purchasing the lot was brought before them they would consider the matter. I and those other members of the House interested in this question then put our views into shape, and submitted them to the Government, with this result that prior to last session agreements were entered into with each of the district railways of the country, with the exception of the Waimea Company; and I say, without hesitation, that the Waimea Railway is the district railway that it is of most consequence to the Government to possess, and I hope I have shown this House to-night that that is the case. The result of last session was that in the District Railways Purchasing Bill every one of the district railways was included except the one that I was interested in. The Government and the company broke off negotiations on not very good terms, when they had come very nearly together with regard to terms for the purchase of this railway prior to last session; and the House will have seen, from the paper laid on the table, that I have had something to do with bringing about this agreement. Well, I may say I found it a very hard matter indeed to bring the Government and the railway company to terms at all. The company had been very stiff in insisting upon their legal position, and in insisting upon the value of their line. Well, this agreement has been come to, and the original views of the Government as to the price to be given for this line have been slightly increased, principally, I may say, through my exertions. However, that has been done solely to bring about relief to those unfortunate people. I would now, again, state, in reference to the position the honourable member for Akaroa took up with regard to the individual ratepayers, that it is the misfortune of these 350 people that they have this large company among them; but I think that is no reason why we should refrain from doing justice to those 350 ratepayers. Then, with regard to this probable addition to the price which the honourable member for Akaroa referred to consequent upon the redemption of these loans, I would respectfully suggest to him that I could fairly put against that a portion of the capital-value which £1,000 a year profit to the general service of the railways represents. If he insists upon that point, I certainly think that a fair position for me to take up, and to put one against the other. However, I trust to the fairness of the House to look at this question from a broad point of view, and to do that justice to the ratepayers in the Waimea District

ich the House has done to the ratepayers the other district-railway districts in the ntry; and that can be done by giving effect this Bill. I have very much pleasure in pporting the Bill.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I wish to say one rd of explanation as to what I said as to the ue of the railway. Mr. O'Connor said that 17,000 would be the value of the railway—t is, if the Government had the right to lect and could collect the £15,000 of rates. quote the following from Mr. O'Connor's dence:—

"74. You say the total amount the Governnt could afford to pay is £102,000 *plus* the al amount of rates, £15,600, making a total £117,600, which you would offer to the comny?—Yes, if the Government were prepared collect the whole of the rates."

"75. Then, when the Government offer 10,000, they practically give them the value the railway, and pay half the rates?—Yes. I understand it, in that case the company uld get the value of the railway to the vernment—about £102,000—*plus* the £8,000 back rates, which they would agree to forego, d which the Government would also forego to ratepayers."

And the answer to the next question is very ar and distinct:—

"76. Will it not come out, practically, that Government will have to pay the other lf of the rates?—Yes: assuming that the lue of the railway to the Government is ly £102,000, it would practically amount that."

I did not mention £117,000, because Mr. Connor said that £102,000 was the full value the line to the Government. Of course, if Government collected the rates they could ord to give £15,000 more.

Mr. PEACOCK.—Perhaps it will not be unteresting if I express, in a very few words, the ition which the minority of the Committee k up in regard to this matter. The evince before the House will show that Mr. Connor, the Under-Secretary for Public orks, estimated that the commercial value of is line was £97,000, but to that he added amount of £5,000 to represent the liability ich the Government have in its present posin, so that to the Government he said the e will be worth £102,000. Then, the sum ich was proposed to be given by the Governnt was £110,000, or £8,000 in excess of that lue. It must be borne in mind that the rates e by the ratepayers amount, in round numrs, to £16,000—the exact amount is £15,600. erefore, if £8,000 is roughly taken to repreent half the value of the rate due by the rateyers, that brings the amount up to £110,000. just wish to bring this before the House: that, hile the whole of the arrears of rates due is 15,600, the Government propose to purchase £110,000; so that the Government is pracally paying for the ratepayers the sum of 3,000. The company reserve to themselves e right to enforce payment of the other half the arrears due. The question arose as to the capital value of an annuity representing the difference between the rate of interest paid to the Insurance Association and the rate at which the Government can raise the money—that is, the difference between 4 per cent. and the 6 per cent. payable by the company for the £40,000, and the 6¼ per cent. for the £35,000, due to the Association. The capital-value of such an annuity for the particular terms those loans have to run was represented as being £8,000. If you add this £8,000 to the £110,000 which is proposed to be given by the Government it brings up the price to be paid by the colony to £118,000, less what may be recovered from the ratepayers. Perhaps, while I am speaking on this point, I may refer to the evidence given by Mr. O'Connor. Questions 84 and 87, and the answers given by Mr. O'Connor, are as follow:—

"84. You say that at 4 per cent. the present value would be £18,000 additional. What did Mr. Gavin think about it?—He was, I think, of opinion that the Insurance Association could reinvest their money at 5 per cent.—that they could get at least that as an average rate, and that they ought therefore to take a premium of £8,000 for converting these debentures into a 4-per-cent. security."

"87. So that the actual cost to the Government of taking over these £75,000 of debentures would be, at the least, £8,000?—The Government might not redeem them at all: they might let them run on as they stand at present, unless the Insurance Association is willing to sell at at a reasonable price; and so long as the mortgages continue the ratepayers would pay half the interest on them."

I understand that the honourable member for Hokonui stated that the Insurance Associawere not prepared to let these debentures go at less than £9,000. Mr. Maxwell, referring to this question of Mr. Cowan—"If the Government can get the railway for £110,000, seeing also that the company agrees to forego about £7,860, rates due to it, is the price a reasonable one to ask?"—says,—

"I have to remark as follows: If the company asked the Government for £110,000 cash, and did not ask the Government to take over any liabilities, the request would be a reasonable one, I think. But it appears that the Government is asked to pay £35,000 cash, and to take a liability of £75,000, due to the Insurance Association. Having regard to the rate of interest at which the colony can get money, and the rates payable for the Insurance loan, it would appear that the sum asked by the company considerably exceeds £110,000."

Now, the question is not in any way altered, as the honourable member seemed to think, because the Insurance Association would not accept such a sum in order to relieve the debentures, because if the rate of interest has to be paid it is as broad as it is long, and it comes to the same thing in the end. The honourable member stated, as a reason for the increased price being given, that interest was not allowed on the cost of the line. I would simply remark, on that point, that, in regard

to other lines taken over by the Government under the District Railways Act, interest was not allowed to them. Of course, when speaking of this sum of £8,000 as the value of the annuity, if this Act is passed the shareholders have to pay one-half. Therefore the net amount which should be given by the Government, considering this liability, would be £106,000; and that would be taking the most favourable view of the matter. The proposal made in Committee was that the actual cash price to be given, including this £8,000 of which I have spoken, should be £110,000; but, if you take the half which the ratepayers would be liable to pay, that would be £4,000 less than the £110,000 proposed to be paid under the Bill. That was the position which the minority of the Committee took up when the proposition was made that £110,000 should represent the cash value. I think I have put the matter before the House as representing the position which the minority of the Committee took up in that mattter.

Mr. SUTTER.—I may say, in speaking to the Bill itself, that I shall certainly do my best to strike out clause 7. When the original Act was brought in, the Treasurer told the House that there would be no money wanted for these railways—that the country would not be called upon to repay anything except the 2 per cent., as provided in the Act under which the company worked. I see in the Act of last year that the same power is given as is given in this Bill. I shall move in Committee to strike that out. I wish to draw the attention of the House to the statement of the honourable member for Hokonui about the 350 ratepayers. A great many of them have only to pay 5d., 6d., and 7d.: very small sums indeed. Three-fourths of the whole of the rates are payable by the Agricultural Company. I would ask honourable members if they are prepared to relieve that company of the rates they owe. Part of the other ratepayers, in taking up their land, knew perfectly well that this rate had to be paid: a considerable quantity of the land was paid for during the last twelve months. Those ratepayers knew perfectly well the position they were placed in. If the Government buy the railway under the present arrangement, not a single penny of the rates will ever be paid. The honourable member for Akaroa stated the case very clearly. He said that pressure would be brought to bear on this House to remit the whole of the rates, and that we shall be remitting these rates to the Agricultural Company, an English company with English capital, meanly asking to be relieved of rates for a railway which has enhanced the value of their land immensely—a wealthy company. That is what we are asked to do. Mr. O'Connor says that the railway, as an engineering work, is not worth more than from £90,000 to £95,000, and as a commercial concern £97,000: and now we are asked to pay absolutely £131,000.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. SUTTER.—I beg your pardon: that is what it comes to. That is the sum you will have to pay for this railway. Mr. Maxwell was asked, in writing, what he thought this railway was worth. He says it is worth £102,000. He ought to know the value as well as anyone, and yet we are asked to pay £131,000! If the honourable member for Akaroa said, pressure will be brought to bear to relieve the poor taxpayers. Now, if the ratepayers were working settlers I would not object; but I do object to representing 350 ratepayers as the ratepayers in the farming interest in that district. The greater portion of the land consists of quarter-acre sections in two townships. Most of the ratepayers pay small amounts, from 5d. a year up to 15s. or 16s. a year. The great body of the rates is payable by the Agricultural Company, and we are asked by the Minister for Public Works to remit half those rates to a company that has no connection with the colony at all. We are to hand the money over to them, and they will keep it. I shall certainly do my best, if the Bill is read a second time, to strike out, in Committee, this cash proposal. We have no business to deal in cash in any way. It was only on the representation that no cash would be paid that the Bill was passed last year, and we were told that debentures at 4 per cent. for twenty-one years would be issued to buy these railways. We have paid, in some instances, all the cash that the debentures are worth, and we are likely to pay cash also for others. It is left entirely open to the Government of the day to pay money for the whole of the railways, and I certainly shall oppose it in every form I can.

Mr. PEACOCK.—I wish to make an explanation. In speaking as I did as to the capital value of the annuity representing the difference of interest with regard to the debentures in the possession of the Insurance Association, I spoke of the difference between 4 per cent. and 6 per cent. and 6¼ per cent. respectively. I should have said the difference between 5 per cent. and 6 per cent., 5 per cent. being the rate at which the Insurance Association would be presumed to be able to reinvest the money if they accepted the capital sum for the debentures in their possession.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I do not think it is at all likely the Insurance Department would do anything of the kind. If they did, they would not be looking to the interests of their clients. The value of money to the colony is 4 per cent., and the value of our security has to be calculated at 4 per cent. The moment we take over this debt it is not a question whether the Insurance Department could place the money at 5 per cent., but it is this: We have to pay interest at 4 per cent. on our Consolidated Stock; but we should have to pay, for ten years, 6 per cent. and 6¼ per cent.; and the Insurance Department would be neglecting the interests of its clients in a most marked manner if it attempted to take a worse security in order to get 5 per cent., and thereby pretended that it was making a profit. The fact is, we have to add to the amount in the Bill £18,000 to represent the difference between what we shall have to pay on these bonds until maturity and 4 per cent. There-

our calculation of the cost will differ materially indeed from that set before us. ill call the attention of the House to the ous valuations that have been made. First have the construction value, varying from ,000 to £95,000. I presume that means t, with material cheap as it is at present, with our improved facilities, and lower es, we could do the work at from £90,000 95,000. I am not going into the question t the honourable member for Akaroa so put before us as to putting the railway proper repair. Then the question of the mercial value is taken. Here I maintain t the commercial value should be taken n the present and prospective net income. t is set down here at £97,000. I have not the data before me to correct this if I were s. But this railway paid a profit in 1883 of 4, and in 1884 only £12 14s. 6d. A calcula- was made by the department two years that it could be brought to produce £2,000, ich it has done since. But there does not m to have been set aside a proper propor- of the income to keep the railway in re- r. But I will take the profit at £2,000 per um. The market value of £2,000 at 4 per t. is surely not £97,000, but only about half that, or £50,000. Then we have another ap, and we have positively made the value the Government £102,000. I presume the 000 is got by looking at what the present vernment lines might gain by the facility t the Government would have in working new line. But we are not even satisfied h that figure. We must, forsooth, put half overdue rates to it and add £8,000 more, king it up to £110,000. But we are not m satisfied with that. In our liberality, in r love for this particular company, we add 3,000 of difference on the bonds between the nd the 6¼ per cent. which we are charitably to for ten and twenty-three years respectively d the 4 per cent. at which we can borrow in London market. So we bring this railway to £128,000; and the net result we may ex- ct in the course of the next generation will be nething like £2,000 a year, which will pay erest at the rate of about 1½ per cent. So t the honourable member for Hokonui, who d that the dividends might be expected to be m £2 10s. to £2 15s., has made a very gross stake. I venture to say that this railway ll pay about as poorly as any line of railway have got. Then I come to another point. ere is, in addition to the waste and extrava- nce that I have just described, another most travagant thing in this Bill. The Govern- ent agree to pay the sum of £35,000 in cash the company. Now, one would imagine at, if we are going to raise £35,000 in addi- n to the other loans proposed, we ought do it along with our other loans, and get it the cheapest rate possible. But what do we in this Bill? In order to raise this money, is provided,—

"The Colonial Treasurer may sell all or any the debenture-bonds hereby authorized to be sued in order to realize the amounts required for the purposes hereinbefore set forth, provided that none of the said debentures shall be sold at a lower price than seven per centum below par."

Now, we can sell our bonds at about par in the London market; but here we are taking power to give somebody or other a commission of 7 per cent. Are we so rich that, in a loan of £35,000, we can afford to throw away 7 per cent. for nothing at all, in order, probably, to gratify some whim either of the Colonial Treasurer or of some one else? It is downright waste. There never was a more extravagant proposal placed before any Legislature, or one more full of jobbery in some direction or other. I want to say a word or two about the Agricultural Company in relation to this. The honourable member for Akaroa quoted some figures up to the latest date; but he seemed to be uncertain as to the proportion that the company would have to pay of the total rates. I have had to go back to a speech I made in 1884 in order to get two or three figures. I find that I quoted the rates on the 31st March, 1884, at £4,744. The company then owed—and, it seems, still owes—£3,003; so that for every £30 the company pays the ordinary ratepayers had to pay £17: that is, the company owes about two-thirds of the total rates. Now, what are we going to do? We are going to throw into the lap of this company the difference between 2 per cent. and 5 per cent. at once: that is to say, we give them at once a premium of £1,500 a year for doing no earthly service to this colony. What has that company done for us, except bring discredit on the name of New Zealand? Here I would mention what, at any rate, is a rumour. I do not know for a certainty what I am going to refer to, but it certainly has been talked about. How is it that we did not get this Waimea Plains Railway before? Was it not owing to the personal squabbles between the directory of one and the directory of another company? Did it not arise from the fact that the railway company would not sell to us till some arrangement had been made between the directors of that company and the directors of another company? I venture to say that is true, although it has hitherto been only a rumour; and I presume the arrangement, whatever it was, has now been made. It was said freely that it was some dispute about old commissions with regard to the promotion-money of the Agricultural Company. I say the colony ought not to be bandied about between the directors of two companies neither of which is creditable to the colony. The honourable member for Hokonui talks about the hardship to three hundred and odd ratepayers; but there are two hundred of those whose grievances are not very heavy. They have a railway passing through their land, which they required; and, if they had no actual knowledge of the arrangement, they had a constructive knowledge of it, for it is understood that all men know the law under which they live. At any rate, two hundred of these people have no great grievance, for the amount of their rates ranged between

3s. 4d. and £1 in 1884. There are some large ratepayers—one to the extent of £326 and odd, and another £132 and odd; but the greater number of them were evidently owners of small town-lots, and that sort of thing. I say we are giving immediate relief to the extent of £1,500 a year to these people for having done no service whatever to the colony. There is no doubt that in a year or two similar pressure will be brought to bear on the Legislature again to get rid of the remaining 2 per cent., to that which has already been brought to bear to get rid of the 3 per cent. which it is now proposed to take off. There is no doubt that the ratepayers will knock at our door, and they will be admitted. Then, what will that mean? That this company, which, I say, has brought discredit on the good name of New Zealand, instead of having a benefit to the extent of £1,500 a year, will get a benefit to the extent of £3,000 a year. I ask, again, what has the company done that we should be so liberal to it? I think the Bill, from its first inception to its appearance in its present form, is discreditable to all concerned. It is extravagant in every direction, and I hope the House, before agreeing to it, will take some time to consider it.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I was very much amused at one remark which the honourable member for Hokonui made, and that was that he had a very hard tussle to induce the directors of this railway company to sell. There is such a thing in gaming as what is called "bluff," and there was no question in the minds of many of the members of the Public Accounts Committee that these directors have been playing a very considerable game of "bluff." Very naturally and very wisely, they have held out for as much money as they could possibly get. I think it will be wise on the part of the colony to buy this line. It is part of the ordinary lines of the colony, and should never have been constructed by a company; therefore I think it ought to be bought. In addition to that, we voted the other night for an extension of this line, and it would be exceedingly disadvantageous to have a bit of a private line between two Government lines. I shall therefore vote for buying this line. Personally, I know, from charges which have been made, that the line has been worked at a high cost, and most unsatisfactorily; and for that reason also I am prepared to vote for buying it. But I think we are asked, in this Bill, to give a great deal more for it than it is worth, and that in this particular game of "bluff" the company has secured a great deal more than the Government. It would not be worth while to go over again the points which have been dwelt on by other members of the Public Accounts Committee, but it must be clear to any man of sense that if the directors of this company find that they can get no more than £102,000 they will be glad to take it. Of course anything above that amount will be a windfall to them. With regard to the ratepayers, there can be no doubt that if we give £110,000 for the railway they will largely benefit. I always looked upon the District Railways Act as a very great blunder, because the people in the districts where they were constructed had to suffer by having to pay rates, while people in other parts of the colony had their railways made for nothing. Therefore it would be only an act of generosity on the part of the colony to give them some relief. But we are asked in this Bill to give too much. We are not only to pay £110,000, but the colony is also to make a present to the shareholders of £8,000, at the lowest calculation, and possibly a great deal more. It might possibly be justifiable to give £110,000 to these people, in view of the trouble they have been put to; but I do not see why the colony should pay this extra premium on the Insurance bonds. What that would be I do not know, as it would depend very largely on the negotiations with the Government Insurance Association, but it is estimated at from £8,000 to £18,000; and, if we pay that, by so much is the colony poorer and these shareholders richer.

Mr. WILSON.—I shall be quite prepared to agree to the company being given £110,000 for this railway; but, as other honourable members have pointed out, it is proposed to give more. The honourable member for Taranaki has stated that, in his opinion, the Government Insurance Association would not take back the £75,000; and I agree with him. It is a very good investment, and the Association is not likely to give it up. I should like to point out the exact amount it is proposed that the colony should give. Supposing we should have to pay 6 per cent. for twenty-three years on £40,000, and assuming that we are paying 4½ per cent. for loan-money—and that is a very liberal allowance—we shall be paying 1½ per cent. for twenty-three years on £40,000, which would amount to £13,800. Then, if we have to pay 6¼ per cent. on £35,000 for ten years, and taking our money as worth 4½ per cent., we shall be paying the Government Insurance Association 1¾ per cent. more than we are paying for our ordinary money, and that would make £6,120; making the total that we should have to pay in interest £19,920. I would point out also that, although it is supposed that the ratepayers would be liable for half of that amount, still, as other honourable members have pointed out, we are scarcely likely to collect it; and, besides, they are only liable for twenty years, after which their liability ceases; so that for the last three years the colony will have to pay the whole of this interest. However, take it that the ratepayers are liable for half, then the colony will have to pay £9,960, or nearly £10,000, during that time. I therefore quite agree with those honourable members who think that is too high a price to pay for the railway, and I shall vote against it.

Mr. BEETHAM.—I have listened carefully to what has fallen from honourable members, and it is very evident that in the Public Accounts Committee there was a considerable minority of members whose opinion was that in paying £110,000, and these incidental sums, increasing the total possibly to £118,000, we should be paying too dearly for this rail-

way. But I oppose this proposition on other grounds. I opposed the purchase of the district railways from the first, and shall always oppose it, because I consider that, when money is so much wanted in other parts of the colony where there are no roads or means of communication, it is not the duty of the Government or of this House to purchase railways which are already serving as highways and means of communication, and which are already in the possession of the colony, unless the very strongest financial reasons are shown for doing so. That is one of the chief reasons why I oppose this measure. I do not go into the question of the Agricultural Company, or any other company; but I say the colony should not purchase this railway unless the strongest financial reasons are given, and I have not heard any satisfactory reasons up to the present time for considering that this particular railway is worth the money indicated. Harbour Boards have to pay heavy interest on their money; local bodies have to levy heavy rates to pay interest on the money they borrow: why should not the ratepayers in those cases be relieved just as much as those who are rated for private railways? I am sorry to have to go against the report of any Committee, because I think the strongest reasons should be given for doing so; but we have heard the opinions of a large minority on this Committee who were opposed to the purchase of this railway, and therefore I shall vote against the Bill.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, I feel it my duty to oppose the purchase of this railway. I do so with regret; but I cannot help seeing that the public of New Zealand have been called on to pay very large sums indeed for the purchase of private railways, and, almost without their knowing it, a very large augmentation is being made to the public debt. There can be no doubt that the payment of the large sums of money I allude to and the interest upon them will fall very heavily on the whole population, and necessarily the largest part of the population are what I may call the poor people of the country. It is upon them and their families that these heavy charges will fall. This will go on year after year—it is difficult to place a limit to the time at which these charges will cease to oppress the people of New Zealand: some of them are perpetual. Already we are so burdened that I think there is no honourable member listening to me who does not feel the present load of taxation very severely: in fact, to many persons it has almost amounted to blighting their hopes. Now, is it just of us to entail charges of this kind on the people of New Zealand if we can help it? I confess—I say it with unwillingness, but I feel it to be a duty to say it—that I do not think this Government is a Government which should impose these charges for the Waimea Plains Railway on the people of the country. I would rather see that they had left to other persons the dealing with this question. It has been pointed out by several speakers that the persons who will greatly benefit, who will almost mainly benefit by this transaction are those who compose the New Zealand Agricultural Company. It is clear that a perpetual charge of many thousands of pounds is to be entailed on the colony for the benefit of that company, and some speakers have even pointed out that it is probable we shall have, in a few years, to pay for ever annually £3,000 to relieve that company of the charges imposed on it. Now, what service has that company rendered to us? The honourable member for Akaroa called attention to that, first of all. What have they done which entitles them to look for these benefits from us? I think that, instead of their having a claim on our gratitude, we have a claim on their gratitude. Let me put before the House, in the simplest language I can use, the reasons which have induced me to arrive at that conclusion, and which, I think, may induce this Government themselves to drop this question and leave it to other persons to deal with. Now, the New Zealand Agricultural Company arose in this way—I take the greater part of my information from their own prospectus—I would rather that they described themselves than that I should attempt to do it: Negotiations went on for some time between certain gentlemen, and at last we find that, efforts having been made to float a company, a contract was made as to which I will give their own words, so that I can state nothing exaggerated or put in a wrong form. We are told,—

"The contract for the acquisition of the properties is dated the 9th day of December, 1878, and made between the vendors, namely, George Meredith Bell, Joseph Clarke, Patrick K. McCaughan, Henry Driver, William James Mudie Larnach, Malcolm McNeill, and Alexander McNeill, of the first part; Sir Julius Vogel and the above-named William James Mudie Larnach, of the second part; and Robert M. Robertson, as trustee for the company, of the third part."

And then, in reference to the properties, we are told,—

"The properties have recently been valued by Mr. W. H. Pearson, Commissioner of Crown Lands, Southland, and Mr. Horace Bastings, a member of the House of Representatives and of the Otago Waste Lands. This valuation, with maps of the estates and detailed particulars of the properties, can be seen at the office of the company."

Now, as to that, I think the company and the Government did do us a certain wrong, because I do not think the services of the Commissioner of Crown Lands in Southland ought to have been afforded to a company to put a value on their property in the London market which, perhaps, may have been, unintentionally, in excess of its true value. It appears to me that we, as the Government of a young nation, ought not to be called upon to give the stamp of the authority of a person in this position to any particular company. I am quite certain that any poor man going into the offices and saying he was about to form a company, and asking to have such an advantage, would have been refused the

privilege that was afforded to this company. I would put it to honourable gentlemen, Is there hardly one of us who would have dared to go to the Government and ask them to do such a thing for him? I think the answer must be No. Well, the next step in the transaction, as far as I can ascertain, was this: that a Loan Agent, sent by the Government to London and paid by the colony, became one of the promoters of the company in London. Now, I do not say that the members of the Government of the day were aware that their Loan Agent was about to become a promoter of this company; but, to my mind, it is quite clear that we ought not to have had our names, as a Government, mixed up in a transaction of the kind—that care should have been taken that a person holding so highly responsible a position should not at the same time have the power to become a promoter of a company of this sort. My view may be wrong; but I hold to that view, and I think I ought to state to the House that such is my view. Efforts were then made to start a company in London, and the promoters put forward their views: and this becomes a rather interesting question. Several of the objects for which the company was to be started were stated in the prospectus in this way:—

"The objects for which this company is established are,—

* * * *

"To provide for the religious, sanitary, and educational welfare of persons settled on the property of the company, or in its employment, and in particular by providing churches, chapels, schools, reading-rooms, wash-houses, baths, parks, places of recreation, and by granting money."

Now, these were rather attractive terms to hold out, but I confess I would rather, myself, as a New Zealand colonist, that great officers of State employed by the colony should not be engaged in putting forth terms of that kind. I think that is hardly what we should wish to be done. Again, I say, I may be wrong, but I cannot help taking that view of the subject. Then, in order to let the public know exactly what was taking place in London, and how our public servants were drawn into it, I will read this, further, from what was put forth in the prospectus:—

"The owners of the properties which are to be purchased by the company, feeling assured that the same can be better developed as a whole by a company with a large capital and extensive resources than as separate individual properties, have determined to invite the public to participate with them in what they are convinced is a thoroughly sound enterprise, and on terms which they are satisfied will bear rigid inquiry and investigation. They are therefore promoting the company by their agents in London, Sir Julius Vogel and Mr. Larnach—himself a great owner—who will sit as two of the directors of the company.

"The whole of the preliminary charges of the expenses of establishing the company up to and including the allotment of shares will be borne by the above-mentioned agents of the vendors, so that the company will start without any preliminary charges to be repaid out of future income."

The company started on these principles. I am little acquainted with companies, but I believe, myself, that those who went into this company could not have been very wise if they thought they would escape the payment of the preliminary charges in this way. I think that they might have seen that the vendors of the land would take care to add enough to the purchase-money that they were to get from the pockets of those joining the company to recoup to them the preliminary and other charges they bore, and perhaps make the company pay quite as heavily as it would have paid if it had borne those charges direct. I do not think the shareholders were afforded any pecuniary advantage in this way. Great opposition was made in London by the Times newspaper to the starting of the company; and I am informed—I cannot state it from my own knowledge—that it was not until the present Minister of Lands, then a Minister of the Crown, visited the property and sent Home a telegram in regard to it that the promoters were enabled to float the company successfully. The honourable gentleman visited the property, and I have no doubt of the accuracy of the telegram sent Home. However, I have no doubt that it was owing to that, in part, that the company was floated. This company was undoubtedly, connected in some way with the Waimea Plains Railway Company. I cannot state the exact connection between them, but there can be no doubt that some connection did exist between them. Such were the steps taken up to the starting of the company. But I should say, further, that the company put forward in their prospectus one thing, alluded to by the honourable member for Akaroa, as to which I should like to read the promoters' own words to the House, because I think here we have a fair ground of complaint against the company. I think that, instead of their having a claim on our gratitude, we have a fair ground of complaint. It is quite evident that, if anything unusual or beyond what other persons were allowed to do was done in reference to the selection of the land sold to the company, and to the public, every individual in the colony was hurt—I do not mean hurt in his person, but a great wrong was done to the future of the colony for all time, because an act of that kind, an act of unfair selection of land, undoubtedly must produce a baneful effect for many years to come: it is a long time before it can be worked off. Yet, in order to induce persons to take shares in the company, this is a statement made:—

"The freehold lands around the leaseholds were selected with a view to prevent competition for the leaseholds, so that there can be little difficulty in securing a renewal of the leases from time to time as they fall in."

Now, I say that any Government which allowed selection of land to be made in that way or upon that principle did a gross wrong to

colony, and so did the selectors; and I that it was not a proper thing for public vants to put forward in a public prospec- issued in London a statement that a ng of that kind was done as quite usual, d that it had done no harm whatever. I nnot help thinking—I again say I may be ong—that the company has no claim on us to ddle the colony with the payment of £3,000 a ar for many years, after it has treated us in at manner. Now, these leasehold lands were t bad lands—I should wish to state that to House. The statement made in the pro- ectus in that respect is this:—

"The leasehold lands contain 141,000 acres. ey consist of well-grassed hills and valleys of h quality, but rather too steep for plough- g. Their sheep-carrying quality, however, capable of great improvement by English ass and clover-seed being scattered upon em."

It will thus be seen that the leasehold lands secured by means which I think ought not to ve been used for the purpose—were lands of nsiderable value; and in that way again, I ink, a great wrong was done to the country. nd I go further, and say that in my opinion I may be wrong in this again, but I cannot lp thinking it—high public servants who gage in pursuits and avocations of this kind rm relations with one another which must be disadvantageous to the public service in which ey are also engaged. I might just point out at one of the sellers of this property, one of e original owners, and who was one of the rsons who paid a considerable sum to the romoters, some of whom were high public rvants, was recently appointed to a high osition in the Civil Service, whilst there ere other gentlemen, who had been for many ears in the service, who had strong claims to romotion. He has been appointed in Dun- din to an office worth £1,000 a year, with ertain extra allowances; and I cannot dis- miss this from my mind: that, perhaps un- onsciously, a desire did exist in the minds of hose who helped him to help him because hese connections which I have alluded to ad existed. And then this leads me to an- ther point, which I think it is of the greatest mportance to the House to consider: we hould bear in mind that it is almost certain hat those who promote these companies must eceive handsome sums of money as promoters, nd we should consider what must have been he value of the public offices of the colony, f great additional commissions of this kind ould be made by people who held public offices. Altogether, this is a matter which, to my mind, is one of very great importance; and I feel con- vinced that it would be better for us that the present Government should not attempt to pass this Bill. They might leave it over for another Government, who have not been mixed up with these transactions, to deal with it. If the Government do try to pass it through, then I am firmly satisfied that this House ought to resist giving to this Agricultural Company a sum of £3,000 per annum in per- petuity at the expense of the people of New Zealand. To the utmost I will resist it, and I say that it is a wrong thing to do; and I hope that honourable gentlemen will join with me in saying that the rich and poor—the very numerous poor—of New Zealand, shall not, in times of distress like the present, be called upon to pay a large sum in aid of this com- pany, formed by gentlemen in New Zealand under the circumstances which I have stated to the House. I have done my best, using no exaggerated language whatever, and I ask honourable gentlemen, for the reasons I have stated, to stand up with me and resist the imposition of this charge, approaching a per- petual charge of £3,000 a year, upon the people of New Zealand for the purpose of bestowing a donation upon this Agricultural Company.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I do not think there is any member of this House who would advocate giving the New Zealand Agricultural Company one single farthing in connection with the pur- chase of this railway; but it appears to me that the honourable gentleman cannot look at this question upon its merits, but must always drag in a lot of matters entirely foreign to it. Now, if every word he has said were true in regard to the Agricultural Company—though I am prepared to dispute many of his statements —the question of the expediency or the policy of passing this Bill would not be affected in the slightest degree. The honourable gentleman has made a number of insinuations against people who were connected with this Agricul- tural Company, and he asserts, in broad terms, that the promoters have received a very large amount of commission. That may be perfectly true; but, then, persons who are mixed up with these companies generally do receive a large amount of money. Promoters of these com- panies generally do receive a large amount of money.

Sir G. GREY.—But they are not servants of the public.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I am coming to that point at once. I say, from my recollection, that there were promoters and promoters of the Agricultural Company. There were persons connected with that company who possibly did receive certain commission for organizing the company; and there were promoters, like the honourable member for Auckland East, who, I have no doubt, did not receive one farthing for commission or anything of the kind. If my memory serves me aright, this question of allowing the Agent-General at that time to be connected with the company was discussed by the Government at the time, and the honour- able member for Auckland East gave his assent to the Agent-General associating himself with the company.

Sir G. GREY.—I simply deny that, positively. There are gentlemen on the other side of the House, who succeeded us, who can testify what my decision was, immediately I heard that the Agent-General was connected with the com- pany.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I am speaking from my own recollection, and also from the recollection

of other colleagues of the honourable gentleman at the time. This question, I repeat, was amply and fully discussed, and the honourable gentleman did give his sanction to the company.

Sir G. GREY.—I again deny that, and I ask the honourable gentleman to produce correspondence that passed.

Mr. BALLANCE.—It was not done by correspondence. It was done amongst Ministers, and it was done deliberately. I say I am not depending on my own memory alone. I have spoken to several of the gentlemen who were colleagues in the Ministry with the honourable gentleman and myself at the time, and their recollection is the same as mine—that the honourable gentleman did give his sanction.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member for Auckland East has twice denied the statement, and it is usual to accept a denial under such circumstances.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I am simply giving my recollection.

Mr. SPEAKER.—But the honourable gentleman has denied your statement as to what he did, and you repeat it.

Mr. BALLANCE.—It is simply a question of memory, and I am stating what my recollection is.

Sir G. GREY.—Well, I ask the honourable member to produce any telegrams that I sent.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I do not know of any telegrams having been sent, but, if there were any sent, they can be laid on the table. And now the honourable gentleman says that certain encouragement was given: and it is true that encouragement was given. And why was it given by certain members of the Government? It was fully discussed at the time; because they believed that it would be a desirable thing to have these enormous estates that were without population cut up and distributed amongst an agricultural population. That was the only reason why certain colleagues of the honourable gentleman gave encouragement to the organization of that company; and I believe that the honourable gentleman gave encouragement to the company at the time for the same reason. I say that that was a perfectly legitimate motive, and a motive which ought to meet the approval of the House. No doubt that was the honourable gentleman's motive.

Sir G. GREY.—I deny that I gave any encouragement.

Mr. BALLANCE.—With regard to the reference to the Minister of Mines, here is another point. As far as my recollection goes, I distinctly understood, at the time that the honourable gentleman went Home, that it was—with the approval of the honourable member for Auckland East, who was Premier—arranged that the honourable gentleman should have the privilege of attending to his own business as well as being one of the Loan Agents. That is my recollection upon that point.

Sir G. GREY.—May I be allowed to say that that is entirely incorrect, and that——

Mr. SPEAKER.—The Minister of Lands not having given way to the honourable gentleman, he must reserve his remarks until the honourable gentleman has concluded.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I say again that, although those who were associated in business with the company no doubt did receive whatever was usual in the way of commission, so far as the honourable gentleman's colleagues were concerned they assisted it from the same motive that actuated himself,—a public motive,—and without any prospect of reward and without receiving one penny. We have heard a great deal about the Agricultural Company, and numerous insinuations have been made in this House against honourable members; but I venture to say that, if honourable gentlemen will take the trouble to examine the facts and correspondence in this matter, they will see that the assertions which have been made by the honourable member for Auckland East are entirely without foundation. I believe that the company was started in a perfectly legitimate manner, and that to say there is any disgrace connected with it is simply to say that it is a disgrace to be unsuccessful. As far as I can understand, the Agricultural Company rests upon exactly the same basis as any other mercantile concern, and I fail to see why the honourable member for Taranaki should have said that it is a disgrace to the colony. I am not aware in what respect that is true. It is true enough that the large profits which were expected have not been realized; but that is not a disgrace to those who were connected with floating the company. Had it not been that the price of land fell the company would have done very well, and then we should have heard it spoken of as as great a credit to the colony as many other mercantile concerns. And now I come to the purchase of the railway, and I may say that the reason why I gave my vote as I did in the Public Accounts Committee for the purchase of this railway was the desirability of having the link between two Government lines of railway acquired by the Government. I know very well the difficulty of connecting these two lines, the difficulty of running goods over a line belonging to a private company which separates two Government lines, and in respect to the traffic upon which no agreement can be arrived at. There is scarcely a public man in the colony who has not agreed that it would be well if we could purchase this line, for the same reason. In fact, if my memory serves me, the honourable member for Auckland East went to Gore during the last recess, and made a speech there in which he expressed an opinion to the ratepayers that it was desirable to have this question settled. Is that true or not? When I was there I saw the ratepayers, and I saw the grievance under which they were labouring. I never found a body of men in my lifetime who seemed to be so depressed. Enterprise did not exist. A dark cloud seemed to hang over the district, and no successful settlement could be expected so long as that cloud was allowed to remain. It seemed to me, when I saw the state of things which

existed down there, that it was absolutely necessary that something should be done to put an end to it. I never saw such a strong feeling against anything as the feeling which existed in that part of the colony against the rating liability with respect to this railway. This line is likely to be a profitable line to the colony. Last year the amount of net revenue received from it was £2,000, and the year before it was £12. That shows that the railway has been making great progress during the year, and it appears to me that, having taken such a departure as that, it is likely to pay well in the future. Then, we are told that if the line is acquired by the Government—that is the evidence of the General Manager of Railways—it is likely to be the means of a saving in working expenses of the railways of £1,000 a year; so that there is no difficulty, it requires no great stretch of imagination, in supposing that in a short time the line will be paying 4 per cent., when the charges upon the ratepayers may be removed altogether. From that point of view, I say it is a very desirable thing to acquire the line. Now in regard to the Bill itself. I do not know but that the Bill might reasonably undergo some amendments in Committee. For instance, with regard to clause 7, some have considered that the cost of the line should be paid in bonds and not in cash. That is a matter entirely for the consideration of the House, and I think that might be taken into calculation. Then, with regard to the price, I am inclined to think, looking at it from the point of view I have indicated, and the prospects of the line, that the price is a fair one; but, if the price is, in the opinion of some, too high, I think in Committee that might be fairly taken into consideration, and a better bargain made for the colony. But I look at it from a public point of view, apart altogether from the position of the companies. Here is a large body of settlers on a large tract of country, and it is desired to relieve them from the burden of this rate, to relieve them from the depression which it causes; and on that account I am prepared to vote for the second reading of this Bill.

Sir G. GREY.—Sir, the explanation I wish to make is that I will ask the Minister of Lands, will he have laid upon the table the letter appointing the Loan Agent, and will he allow copies to be laid upon the table of the telegrams and letters which passed between the Agent-General and myself upon the subject of his choosing whether he would be Agent-General of the colony or managing director of the company? I would say this: It has been said that I made a speech at Gore, in which I said I thought it desirable to have this question of the Waimea Plains Railway settled. So I did, and so I do, most sincerely; but I think it should be settled upon good terms, and not upon terms in the interest of the Agricultural Company. I should prefer to see other persons settle it—not a Government containing so many former directors of the Agricultural Company; and I will cheerfully assist in any arrangement which I think is a fair one; but I cannot agree with such an arrangement as is now proposed.

Mr. BALLANCE.—In reference to the question asked, if the honourable gentleman will give notice of the question, or call for any returns, I have not the slightest doubt that the Minister in charge of the department will place all the papers upon the table of the House.

Mr. BRUCE.—I should just like to say a word or two in explanation of the vote I am about to give to-night on this, as it appears to me, very important measure—important not so much from the amount involved as from the principle involved. I was one of those who, rightly or wrongly, supported the purchase of the district railways last session, for various reasons which it is not necessary for me to enter into to-night; but not the least of those reasons was this: that I considered it extremely desirable that the colony should become possessed of all the railways. From that point of view I should like to vote to-night for the purchase of this railway; but I may say I have listened very attentively to the speeches during the debate, and, after listening to the exceedingly lucid speech of the honourable member for Akaroa, I came to the conclusion that, under this measure, we are asked to give a great deal more for this line than it is worth to the colony. I should be quite prepared to give £102,000 for it. It has been valued as being worth that by one whose opinion is thoroughly reliable; but, at the same time, as custodians of the public purse, I and those who think with me do not think we are justified in voting for the second reading of this Bill.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I do not wish to say much upon this matter. It seems to me that the question of the origin of the Agricultural Company, and the previous transactions in connection with this land, have very little to do with the main question before us at the present time. They, however, come in incidentally, and I shall have a few observations to make as to what passed upon that point, because questions have been raised and statements made which I think are not quite in accordance with the recollection of members of this House. What I do wish to say before this question goes to a division is, that I have looked at the papers with every desire to see the conclusion of this wretched affair of the district railways, and I should have been glad to see this railway acquired, if it could be done in the interests of the public; but I am bound to say that, after going through all the papers, I have come to the same conclusion that the last speaker has come to, that the colony would not be justified in giving more than £102,000 for this railway if it buys it at all. Anybody who reads these papers fairly can, I think, have no doubt whatever that the amount the company are asking is in excess of what they would take and of what they are entitled to get for the railway. The Minister for Public Works, I would suggest, should inform the House what are the rates now paid upon the railway as compared with the rates paid upon the Government lines; be-

cause the profits of this railway as shown upon the documents, and the calculations which have been made regarding them, proceed on the basis of paying much higher rates than are charged on the Government lines; and there is no doubt that, as soon as ever the Government takes over this railway, it will have to be worked at much the same rates as the other Government railways. There is no doubt about that, and that, as soon as ever the Government takes over the line, the question of rates will come up again; and the taxpayers of the colony really are going to be very much more serious losers than appears at first sight upon this transaction. The honourable member for Auckland East has given the history of the initiation of this company, and has been met with direct denials by the present Minister of Lands, who was the Colonial Treasurer in the Ministry of which he was the Premier. I took occasion, while that was passing, to look up what was the understanding in the Legislature at the time with regard to the position of the different Ministers in this matter, and I am bound to say that the recollection of the honourable member for Auckland East is borne out by the documents, and by the statements of members of his Ministry at the time in the Legislature. The statement which was made by Sir George Whitmore in the Upper House with regard to the understanding, is as follows: First of all, he stated that the present Minister of Mines went Home on his own affairs—on his own private affairs—among them, no doubt, the floating of this company; and he went on to say,—

"The first intimation we had of the transaction was a month or two after Mr. Larnach went to England, and it came in the form of a private letter received in Wellington, inviting the Premier, and also Mr. Ballance and others, to take shares in the company. The applications were in all cases refused at once."

You will find the speech in *Hansard*, Vol. XXXI., p. 33, July 17, 1879. It appears, from this statement, that at that time there was no knowledge in the Cabinet of this particular company, or of these transactions, so far as Sir George Whitmore's speech goes. Whatever the transaction was, it was not known, and the honourable member for Auckland East was not at the time aware of the existence of the company. The first intimation, according to Sir George Whitmore, that he had of the transaction was a month or two after Mr. Larnach went to England, and it came in the form of a private letter received in Wellington inviting the Premier, and also Mr. Ballance and others, to take shares in the company, which was refused at once. This question has only just arisen, and I have not had time to look at the documents; but I have no doubt they show positively and in no unambiguous terms the determination of the Premier, Sir George Grey, that the Agent-General should take his choice between having anything to do with the company and being Agent-General for the colony. I have no time to read through the evidence given before the Committee of last year. The honourable member for Auckland East will be able to see it in the proceedings of the Committee on Sir Julius Vogel's claims last year, from which it will be found, I am sure, that what my recollection of the matter is, and what has been stated by Sir George Whitmore, is correct—that the Premier of that day immediately dissociated himself from the whole thing when he found there was a probability of private business being mixed together with public business by the Agent-General. In the *Hansard* of 1879 honourable members will find the whole of this in the speeches of the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse in the Upper House. The telegram from Mr. Ballance runs as follows:—

"Wellington, 1st February, 1879.

"Turned first sod Waimea Plains Railway, 27th January. Line through magnificent country, waiting settlement by proposed Waimea Company. Success must contribute prosperity colony, and remunerate proprietors.

"Vogel, London." "BALLANCE.

The other objectionable features, of course, were—that members of the House were brought into the prospectus, and statements made in England in regard to the undertaking, which led the public to take a favourable view of the enterprise, which, I think, has not since been justified by the success of the company. I feel, with regard to the transaction generally, that it will be a warning to the Legislature not in future to mix itself up with private transactions. I am sure the trouble that has accrued from these district railways, the trouble that has accrued in the short space of a few months through the transactions with the Insurance Association, the trouble that has accrued in connection with every single undertaking where the Government has mixed itself up with private companies, is a sufficient warning to lead us to determine never again to have anything to do with transactions of the kind. I cannot vote for this Bill; though what I would like, personally, to see is a finish to the whole of these disagreeable affairs, because, with every good intention on the part of the Minister for Public Works to bring this negotiation to a successful issue, I think he has been led to enter into an agreement which will not stand the light of examination; that he has been—it may be, entirely unintentionally—led on to make promises of a larger sum to this company than the public taxpayer ought to be called upon to give for this railway.

Mr. BARRON.—So far as the best expert evidence that could be obtained in the inquiry before the Public Accounts Committee is to be relied upon, it would appear that the reported purchase of this railway has been adjusted on the fairest terms possible as between the company and the Government. Looking through the correspondence which led up to the agreement between the company and the Government, one cannot help being forced to the conclusion that the company was not eager to sell, or the Government to purchase; but that the honourable member for the district, instigated by the landowners, was particularly

anxious that the transaction should be entered into, in order to relieve the ratepayers. There is an amusingly pathetic portion of the correspondence to be found on page 10, and it is very suggestive, when one takes it into consideration with what has already transpired in reference to district railways. In the telegrams from Mr. Cowan to the Minister, the Minister does not seem so eager to enter into the negotiation as the honourable member for Hokonui desired, in the interests of his constituents. And so he remonstrates with the Minister in this way: "You forget the fact that Waimea is the line of greatest consideration to Government to possess of all the district lines, and it was on its back that the other lines were considered." The honourable gentleman did his very best in the interests of his constituents to get the District Railways Act brought under the consideration of the Ministry and the House, with the one desire that he would be able, by that means, to find support for the purchase of the Waimea Plains Railway, in order to relieve his constituents from the pressure of the rates thrown upon them by the line being in the hands of the company. Unfortunately for the honourable gentleman, he was used to pass that unwise Act, and his line was left out. While I find that there is very little in the preliminary correspondence to warrant what many honourable members have said about the eagerness of the company to sell and of the Government to purchase, I do not think the adjustment of the price which is set out in the agreement and in the Bill before us is fair to the colony. If the line is worth, at most, as is shown by expert evidence, £110,000, I do not see why a portion of that money should be paid by the Government rather than by the Agricultural Company and other ratepayers, who are certainly entitled to pay it. When they acquired their land it was, presumably, with a knowledge of the law. Presumably, those who purchased after the line was sanctioned, at the instigation of the Agricultural Company, knew they were, in acquiring that land, certain to be called upon to pay rates to the Railway Company; and I mean to say that the £8,000 which it is proposed to relieve the landowners of should fairly be paid by them, and not by the colony. If the Bill passes its second reading I shall endeavour, so far as it is possible, to effect such an amendment as will give the company less by £8,000 than the cash payment set out in the Bill. On the other hand, I shall endeavour to restore to them the right to collect that sum from the ratepayers, who are justly entitled to pay it. Meantime I shall oppose the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—It seems to me a pity that, on a question like this, which is really a practical one, honourable members cannot settle themselves down to express their views on the matter without finding it necessary to charge those who promote the Bill with jobbery and corruption. I was surprised to hear the honourable member for Taranaki apply those terms to this Bill, and hear him apply them in the way in which he did. I am not at all surprised to find the honourable member for Wairarapa North take up the position he has taken, for he has persistently objected to the purchase by the Government of any of these district railways, although he does not realize the position the Government are now in as compared with its position when he opposed the Bill originally. I take it the Government are still under the direction of Parliament in regard to the purchase of these district railways. If the ratepayers are to only pay 2 per cent., it does not matter what sum they will be relieved of; and therefore I cannot see the force of the statement which has been made in regard to the relief of the Agricultural Company or the ratepayers as to this £8,000. There seems to be a pretty general opinion that this line is intrinsically worth £102,000, and that the Government are justified in paying that sum for the line. It has been alleged all round, except by the honourable member for Foxton, that the Government and the country were going to bear the whole of the loss which might accrue from the difference in the interest between 6 and 6¼ per cent. on the £75,000 and the 4 per cent. which the purchase-money is to bear. The honourable member for Foxton has noticed that this Bill provides that the difference in interest—2 per cent.—is to be charged to the working expenses of this railway, and consequently the loss will be shared alike between the Government and the ratepayers, should there be any deficiency. The honourable member for Geraldine has referred to the question of tariff rates. I showed this afternoon that I was within the mark when I said that the average rates are about 25 per cent. in excess of those on the Government lines. Although there are some short local rates on the line, the bulk of the traffic is through-traffic, and these rates are fixed at very little higher than those charged on the Government lines. I may say that last year the company consented to the conditions laid down by the Railway Department to work on a through-rate, but the Government were forced into the position of supplying all the carriage-stock used on the line free of charge, which was equal to £800 per annum. I mention this because it goes to show that, if this line comes into the hands of the Government, it is in evidence that very much better results will accrue, because the heavy management and other expenses will then cease to exist. It is the general opinion, in the House and out of it, of all those who have the success of the railways at heart, that this concern should become Government property. Surely it is worth while to endeavour to bring about some arrangement with this Bill, and, in Committee—if the House is still of opinion that the price is too high—there should be an expression of opinion as to what price this House should give to complete this matter. I should like to see the Government put in a stronger position than they now are in. As I stated in my opening remarks, the Government have taken considerable pains in this matter. I think the correspondence which took place last

year and this year goes to prove that, at all events; and, if steps can be taken by this House to show what the will of Parliament is in the matter, I think some satisfactory arrangement can be come to.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Are we to understand that, if the Bill gets into Committee, the Government are prepared to accede to any modification of the amount?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—I am not inviting any action of that sort at all; but I say that I would wish to get an expression of opinion as to how far Parliament is prepared to go. Sooner than see this Bill fall through, I would prefer to see something of the sort done.

The House divided.

AYES, 28.

Ballance	Ivess	Reid
Bevan	Joyce	Richardson, E.
B.-Bradshaw	Kerr	Richardson, G.
Duncan	Levestam	Stewart, W. D.
Fergus	Macandrew	Tole
Fitzherbert	McKenzie, J.	Walker.
Fraser	Moat	
Grace	O'Callaghan	*Tellers.*
Hatch	Parata	Cowan
Hirst, H.	Pere	McMillan.

NOES, 23.

Allwright	Hamlin	Rolleston
Barron	Lake	Thomson, J. W.
Bryce	Macarthur	Trimble
Buckland, J. C.	Mackenzie, M.	Whyte
Buckland, W. F.	Montgomery	Wilson.
Conolly	Ormond	*Tellers.*
Fulton	Peacock	Bruce
Grey	Reese	Sutter.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Brown	Hislop
Cadman	Mitchelson
Dargaville	Russell
Gore	Hursthouse
Guinness	Fisher
Harper	Moss
Holmes	Dodson
Lance	Thompson, T.
O'Conor	Pearson
Smith	Beetham
Steward, W. J.	Hobbs.

Majority for, 5.

Bill read a second time.

GOVERNMENT LOANS TO LOCAL BODIES BILL.

The Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill was introduced and read a first time.

Sir J. VOGEL, in moving the second reading of the Bill, said,—A similar Bill to this was sent up from this House to another Chamber, and was there passed, with alterations; but, being a money Bill, it had, in accordance with a well-known practice, to be laid aside owing to alterations having been made in that Chamber. We are now asked to pass it, with the alterations made in the Council; and I should like to point out what those alterations are. I may also say that I have introduced two alterations of an insignificant character. There is an alteration in clause 27; but it is one simply in words. That is the clause which provides relief for local bodies which have issued debentures under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act. It will read in this way:—

"In order to afford relief to local bodies which have issued debentures under 'The Roads and Bridges Construction Act, 1882,' the Treasurer shall, at the request of any such local body as to any such debentures falling due after the passing of this Act, receive from the local body in satisfaction thereof debentures under this Act amounting to the present value of the outstanding debentures, computed at four pounds ten shillings per centum."

That is precisely the meaning it had before, the wording only being altered. Then, in accordance with a promise made while the Bill was going through this House, that this provision should also apply to boroughs which had already issued debentures under the Roads and Bridges Construction Act, the following paragraph is added to the clause: "For the purposes of this and the next succeeding four sections, the expression 'local authority' shall include a Borough Council that has issued debentures under the Act therein mentioned." The meaning of the clause is not in the slightest degree altered. Then, there is a new clause, which I myself have introduced—clause 36: "The stock inscribed under the provisions of this Part of the Act shall be inscribed in the names of the custodians of securities under the fourth section of 'The Public Revenues Act, 1885.'" The object of this clause is that the stock inscribed shall be in the names of the Colonial Treasurer, the Colonial Secretary, and the Controller and Auditor-General. Clause 37 has been altered in the other House, and this is a material alteration. The first part of the clause was left out, and the change is to this effect: that, instead of the amount of the loans being fixed from year to year by this House by resolution only, the amount has to be fixed by Act, so that both Houses may have a voice in it; but it still remains as before that, unless otherwise fixed, the amount is to be £200,000. Then, there is another provision in subsection (4) of section 38, to this effect: "No such debenture shall be sold at such price as to produce to the purchaser an interest of more than five pounds per centum on the price paid." There can be no objection to that, as there can be no idea of selling debentures at less than 5 per cent. Again, there is a provision that the aggregate sum to be borrowed from the Post-office Savings-bank shall not exceed £250,000. That was added by the other House. Lastly, there is a new clause which I propose to introduce, and which will be free from any objection. The Bill already provides that the debentures received from local bodies may be put into inscribed stock, and the clause which I propose to introduce is one that will allow the Government debentures also to be inscribed. It reads in this way:—

"The Treasurer may cause any scrip or debentures which may be issued under this Part of this Act to be converted into stock, and inscribed in the manner provided by 'The New Zealand Colonial-inscribed Stock Loan Act, 1882,' or may, in lieu of issuing such scrip or debentures, cause an equivalent amount to be inscribed in the manner aforesaid; and all the provisions of the said last-mentioned Act, excepting those contained in the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth sections, shall apply to stock inscribed under the provisions of this section."

These are the alterations in the Bill, and I think they deserve the approval of the House.

Bill read a second and a third time.

GOVERNMENT LIFE INSURANCE BILL.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Sir, the object of the Government Life Insurance Bill, of which I now move the second reading, is to give effect to the recommendations of the Select Committee of this House which recently sat to examine questions relating to the Government Insurance Association. I may also say the recommendations of the Committee closely tallied with the decision arrived at by the policy-holders as expressed by a poll, and this Bill closely conforms to the recommendations of the Committee, with one or two small exceptions which I will mention. It is provided that the Bill shall come into operation thirty days after it has passed. It re-enacts the old Government Insurance Act, which was repealed by the Act of 1884, when it was decided to hand over the management of the institution to a Board of Direction partly nominated by the Government and partly elected by the policy-holders. Certain clauses of the Act of 1874 are not re-enacted by this Bill, because they are embodied in the Life Insurance Policies Act passed in 1884; but to all intents and purposes the Act of 1874 is again brought into operation. It is provided that the present salaries of officers shall continue as they have been fixed by the Association until otherwise ordered by Parliament; and I propose, before the session ends, to bring down appropriations for the House to fix the salaries and expenditure. It is proposed that the present General Manager shall be the Commissioner under this Bill, and that the old officers who were in the service before the Act of 1884 was passed shall continue, with the same status and privileges as they have hitherto possessed; but, with regard to new officers taken on since then, it is proposed that they shall have only such status and privileges as they were given by the terms of their appointments under the Association, but that otherwise all the officers shall be under the discipline and provisions of the Civil Service Act. Clause 9 of the Bill is one of importance, and I hope, for the sake of the policy-holders, the House will see fit to pass it. The quinquennial valuation for the period ended on the 31st December last by actuaries in London has been proceeding for some months; but the result of their examination cannot be known before the end of the present session, and the object of the clause is to enable the Governor in Council to allow a sufficient amount of the profits to be divided without referring the matter to the Assembly next session, as that would involve a year's delay, and the policy-holders would be very much aggrieved at it, as they are anxious that the division should be made as promptly as possible. As regards the question of investment, the Bill nearly follows the recommendation of the Committee. It is proposed that not less than half the funds shall be invested in Government securities, and in such debentures of local bodies as may be approved by the Governor in Council. It is also proposed that not more than half the moneys shall be invested in first mortgages of freehold land, and that no mortgage shall be for more than an amount which is left blank in the Bill, but which blank the Government will propose shall be filled up with the words "four thousand pounds." The Committee recommended that any single amount lent should not exceed £10,000; but I will explain in Committee why the Government consider that amount too large. The Board proposed for making these investments is the Board suggested by the Committee; but we have added to it the name of the Solicitor-General. It is proposed, according to the recommendation of the Committee, that three shall form a quorum of the Board, and that all members present shall be unanimous as to any investment to be made. These, Sir, are the main features of the Bill. I do not think it necessary to go into other questions, as they have been gone into most fully in the report and evidence of the Select Committee; and if it were desirable to do so I should simply repeat to the House the evidence I gave the Committee, and, as that will appear in the Appendices to the Journals of the House, I see no reason why I should also add it to *Hansard*. I now move the second reading of the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

On the motion, That the Bill be committed,

Mr. MONTGOMERY said,—This Bill is before the House in consequence, no doubt, as the Treasurer stated, of the report of the Select Committee which was appointed to deal with this matter. Now, that report was very generally concurred in; but there is one point in connection with it on which I wish to say a few words. Before I go to that particular point I wish to allude to the causes which have led up to the necessity for this change. In 1884 we hoped that, by making a change from a Government institution and placing the business in the hands of a partly-elected Board, we should strengthen this institution throughout the country, that there would be more business brought to it, and that, generally speaking, it would become more popular, and would fulfil more completely the intention its founder had in establishing it. But, almost immediately after the Bill was passed, large purchases were made of buildings and sites for buildings. I have a word to say about these purchases. I do not intend to refer to the purchase made in Wellington, because that was made from the Government, and we have

it in evidence that it was an advantageous purchase for the Association. Then, there was a purchase of land in Christchurch, which had a frontage of 60ft., and had buildings two storeys high upon it. That was purchased for the Association; but it was not all that was intended at the time, for another purchase was made. Alongside that land was another section having a frontage of 23ft., and that was purchased with the intention of erecting upon it large and conspicuous buildings, some four storeys high, which, it was held, would be attractive and bring people to the office. And let me say at once that that building of four storeys high was to be for the accommodation of only four clerks. The building was purchased from Mr. Maling, and immediately it was purchased it was let to him again for a term of years at a certain rental; so that the Association did not occupy the building which they had purchased. Their intention was to occupy this four-storey building which they intended to erect adjoining Mr. Maling's building. Then, in Dunedin the Association purchased a site and buildings for £35,500, the buildings not being in very good repair. The peculiar circumstance in connection with that transaction was this: that the price asked for the property by the sellers was £35,000, to which the person employed on behalf of the Association got them to add £500, in order that he might get commission out of it. I refer to the gentleman who was employed by the agents of the Association. The agents of the Association got nothing, but the agent they employed got part of this £500 in this way. Then, there was another agent who did nothing but state that the site and buildings could be purchased for £37,000. He also got a commission, partly out of the £500 and part paid by the Association. Then we come to the Auckland purchase. The property in that case was offered for £22,000, and its purchase for that sum was recommended by the Chairman; but two members of the Association went to Auckland, and it was purchased for £19,000. There was no intention to occupy the building: it was to be pulled down, and a large building put upon the site. In the meantime, however, nothing has been done. The building has been allowed to remain vacant since October, so that nearly a year has expired without any revenue having been derived from it. The property in Christchurch has not been occupied by the Association since it was purchased, nor has the property in Dunedin been occupied by the Association. Now, we have it in evidence that these purchases had a most prejudicial effect on the interests of the Association. The Inspector, who travels over the country and derives his information from the agents employed in the interests of the Association, tells us that those purchases, coupled with the appointment of Mr. Driver at a salary of £800 a year and a guarantee of £200 more in the way of commissions—while agents who did the same work in Christchurch and Auckland, even after their salaries were raised, received only £450 a year—had a most prejudicial effect on the interests of the Association. These two things did most of the mischief; and then, in addition to that, there were divisions on the Board. So it came about that there was general dissatisfaction throughout the country, and the agents of other companies did not fail to make the most of it. I refer to these matters to show why a change had, in my opinion, become necessary. Speaking as a member of the Committee, I say that the Committee did not go by the vote of the shareholders at all. The Committee had to decide on evidence brought before them, and upon that evidence they decided that it was for the interests of the institution that it should be taken out of the hands of the present Board and put under the control of a different Board. It is, to my mind, a great pity that, after putting the Government Insurance Department on a more popular basis, our efforts in that direction should have resulted in loss of business and in loss of prestige. However, that has been the result, and we have now to change the constitution. And here I come to another point. The Bill now before us is drawn on lines laid down by the report of the Committee. The Committee were perfectly well able to express an opinion as to what the constitution of the new Board should be; but I must say that I do not agree with the report, and I am going to say why I do not agree with it. I think, if we are going to have this institution thoroughly useful and successful, we must have it absolutely free from political influence. The Bill which is now proposed does not bring it out of political influence. I have given reasons for that opinion, though those reasons may not be accepted by every honourable member. The Premier is not present to-night, but he holds exceedingly decided views on this point, and, before this Bill passes into Committee, and we consider what should be the constitution of this Board, I think it is only just to him, he not being here, and only fair to honourable members and right to the country, that I should read a portion of the evidence of the Premier with regard to these Boards:—

"482. If this Insurance came back to the Government, the present Board abolished, and a new Board appointed, do you think the Manager should be an officer appointed by Parliament, and be in the same position as the Controller, or should he not?—In my opinion he should.

"483. That his position should depend upon Parliament?—Yes.

"484. The same as a Judge?—Yes.

"485. He should be a statutory officer?—Yes. You must have it free from Ministerial responsibility, unless you assign a new Minister for the purpose. I do not think any one of the present Ministers could manage it along with his other functions. We find, from the nature of New Zealand, having different centres, that we have little time to attend to even the functions cast upon us now. If such a big business as this was cast upon any Minister I

do not think he could perform his duties unless he did nothing else, and you would require a new Minister specially to deal with the subject.

"486. Do you think it is an advisable thing to remove this Insurance Association entirely from the control of the Government of the day?—Well, my own opinion is that it is. I look upon it in this way: Although I am in favour of having Ministerial responsibility in everything possible, yet this is a business of a peculiar nature, and so mixed up with finance that it would be better to have a high statutory officer than even Ministerial responsibility.

"487. Then, do you think that the only way to remove it from political influence is to have a high statutory officer?—I think so."

I may add, further, that the Minister thought, if we were going to invest in real property, he required a Board of Advice to assist him; and in that I entirely agree. We have had a high officer here, a man upon whose honour there has never been a stain—though I have been opposed to him politically, yet I say his character is perfectly pure—accused in this House of using his influence as the political head of that department to invest money, or to give money to a monetary institution, at a low rate of interest, for the benefit of that institution.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Name him.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—It is a matter of history. Of course the Parliament of the day said there was nothing in it: but there was the question raised, and I am satisfied that all those who are acquainted with parliamentary history must know of it.

An Hon. MEMBER.—We do not know of it.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Well, it was dealt with by a Committee of inquiry three or four years ago, and the Treasurer of the day was accused of a wrong thing because he was the head of that particular institution. I think it is a very grievous thing that our public men should be put in a position in which they should be so suspected. We have now a Public Trust Office, at the head of which is a statutory officer, who depends upon the will of Parliament, not upon that of a Minister of the day; and he is assisted in the investment of funds by a Board of Advice; but in the general conduct of the business he is wholly free and untrammelled. My opinion is that for this Insurance Department we should have a statutory officer in exactly the same position as the Controller-General—absolutely free from Government influence—absolutely free from the suspicion which has been attached from time to time to the investment and disposal of public money. It is not that our officers do what is wrong, or that members of the Government would do what is wrong. We take it for granted, and have reason to take it for granted, that they will be pure in the administration of the funds placed at their disposal—that there will be no malversation of funds; but I say the great thing is to remove them out of the possibility of suspicion, and that is exactly what I wish to do. That is exactly what the Chairman of the Committee wishes to see done, and that is the reason why I object to a portion of this Bill. If money is to be lent out there should be an independent Board of Advice respecting the investment of that money. But I say, absolutely, that all who sit on that Board should agree on every investment, that no investment should be made by a mere majority, and that the officer in charge—who should be a statutory officer—should sit as one of the Board, and should agree before any investment be made. If a Government officer is in charge of this department, will there not be the possibility of its being said that he is influenced by the wishes of the Government upon this question?—for it is in evidence that such things have been said. It was denied; but, still, some witnesses affirmed that such a statement had been made. Therefore, when this Bill goes into Committee I shall make a motion—though it is likely I shall lose it—that a statutory officer be appointed, with the hope that the House or the Committee will give attention to it, and consider whether we should not place that institution as free from political influence as the Trust Office is. I have given the opinion of the Premier of New Zealand. I have read it out. It is for honourable members to consider what value to place upon that. I should think great value should be placed upon it. It will be for honourable members to read the evidence and to say what they think should be done under the circumstances. I rose to say the words I have uttered, first, to show my opinion that it is necessary Parliament should interfere at the present time; to show that the large purchases made, the appointments made, and the discussion these things have led to throughout the country have had a prejudicial effect upon the Association; and then to say—when those facts stare me in the face, and it is evident that, as an act of policy, it is necessary to take the management from the present Board, and to give it to some Board that this Parliament should constitute—that I think there should be a Board of Advice to assist a statutory officer in the investment of money. If you get a man of high character and ability it matters little whether you pay him £1,000, £1,200, or £1,500 a year for his services to this great institution, with upwards of a million of money of accumulated funds. What we want is the best intelligence you can get for money, a man firm of character, and with a thorough knowledge and capacity to carry this institution to a successful issue—because it can be made a most valuable institution to the people. But you must not allow a taint of suspicion in the future that the management is swayed by political motives. It would be better for us to sell the business to other companies and to have done with it than to have suspicion as to the management of the funds raised in the minds of the people. For that reason I shall move that there be a statutory officer in charge of this department.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—Sir, I may state, at the outset, that I should have preferred had this Bill set forth the provisions of the various Acts which it professes to re-enact, so that

we could make any amendments when it went through Committee which might suggest themselves to us. At the present time we are limited, practically, to the re-enactment of the Act of 1884 and the amending Acts, without any opportunity of rectifying what experience shows to be mistakes in those Acts. I agree with a great deal of what the honourable member who has spoken last stated, and, being a member of the Committee, I must say that I was greatly surprised at the manner in which this Board carried on its business. In the first place, I think a mistake was made in contemplating those purchases which were made throughout the colony. I look upon this institution as not at all requiring palatial buildings for the purpose of attracting business. I think that the guarantee which this colony gives to insurers is the best advertisement which can be held out to persons wishing to effect insurance, and I think that it was a very serious mistake indeed to enter upon the purchase of extensive sites with the view of erecting expensive buildings in different centres of the colony. However, the Board, or rather the Government, previous to the Board coming into existence, having decided to make those purchases, I must say that the manner in which those purchases were made produced a most unfavourable impression on my mind; and I venture to say that any ordinary business man could have effected those purchases at certainly a saving of £10,000 to the department. I have no hesitation in saying that a great deal too much money was paid for the Auckland purchase; the Dunedin purchase, I think, could have been got for somewhat less; and the Christchurch purchase, I am satisfied, could have been got for less. I am speaking now from the evidence brought before us. Take, for instance, the Christchurch property. That property was returned for property-tax purposes up to 1883-84 at £6,750, and yet this Board gave something like £10,500 for it; and immediately after that it is returned as of that value. Then, the most extraordinary part of this purchase is that, immediately it was bought, it was re-let for twenty-five years, with a certain right, to be put in force within six months, as to taking back part of the building for departmental purposes. That right, apparently, has not been exercised, and, as far as my recollection serves me, cannot be exercised now. The lease was not produced; but I do not think that right can now be put in force. I do not hesitate in saying that some of these purchases have been gone about with almost prodigal indifference. If I had been acting for any person, or investing my own money, I certainly could have made a much more satisfactory bargain than was made in two instances, and I think in the third also. I find also that the business of the department has been carried on in a most unsatisfactory manner—I mean as far as the Board is concerned. For instance, we find that two members of the Board were deputed to go to Auckland to make inquiries with reference to the Auckland purchase, and whilst they were away the Acting Chairman of the Board—the Minister of Justice—was carrying on a correspondence with Mr. Shera, unknown to the department. They had no knowledge of the telegrams passing between the Minister and Mr. Shera, and it was not until the next meeting of the Board that the honourable gentleman produced the telegrams. I think the evidence bears out that fact.

Mr. TOLE.—There was a Committee appointed to act.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—The honourable gentleman was at the same time corresponding with Mr. Shera.

Mr. TOLE.—I was one of the Committee.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—Messrs. Shannon and Graham were appointed.

Mr. TOLE.—I was one of the Committee. I was Acting Chairman.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—The honourable gentleman may, *ex officio*, have been a member of the Committee; but he was telegraphing to Mr. Shera, and those telegrams did not pass through the department.

Mr. TOLE.—No; because the Committee had power to act.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—The honourable gentleman was acting on his own responsibility, because two other members of the Committee were either in Auckland or on their way there, and did not know anything of these telegrams. It was obvious that those telegrams were not all the telegrams which passed between the parties, because one of the telegrams indicates that there was some other telegram which was not produced. Honourable members who refer to the evidence will see that what I am stating is correct. What surprises me most of all is this insatiable thirst to buy property in Auckland from Mr. Shera. The honourable member for Parnell stated that his services had been called in, and he stated that he could have bought the property at something like £1,500 less than was given. Altogether, a more complete muddle in connection with this business it would be difficult to conceive. The Chairman of the Board was in Auckland about the time that the Acting Chairman was corresponding with Mr. Shera. Two members of the Board went up in connection with this property, and they appeared to be helpless in reference to the matter. I merely mention these circumstances to show that I, after carefully considering the evidence, came to the conclusion that, if this sort of management went on, only one result could follow—namely, that all confidence in the management of the institution would be lost—that this management would not inspire confidence in persons wishing to effect insurance. I feel strongly that what is wanted in an institution of this kind is economical management, with no pretentious buildings more than are necessary to carry on the work of the department; and that the real attraction to this office will be large bonuses and a feeling that the institution is being managed on the best lines in the interests of those immediately concerned. The honourable member who spoke last referred to

s question of a statutory officer. Having in w the fact that a special Board is being ap-inted for the investment of money, I do not nk so much importance can be attached to at office as might otherwise be the case. e of the recommendations of the Committee s that a special Board should be appointed the purpose of effecting investments, and, at being so, it seems to me there is no neces-y whatever for having what might be called statutory officer on the lines indicated by honourable member. I feel, with the nourable member, that there is a good deal be said against this political influence. Take, instance, this investment Board, composed Government officials, and where the head of department is a Government official; a ong-minded Colonial Treasurer may con-l the operations of the Board to such an tent as to bring them practically within the sp of his own mind. I am not at all sure at this might not be improved, and that the ard should be as nearly as possible non-litical—in fact, that the management should t be, so to speak, directly under the con-l of Parliament. There is a great deal be said on the question that these various er officers of the Board are Government icers; and I believe that one feature of the t Board was that the Colonial Treasurer—dare say it is to his credit—really had very eat control over the operations of the Board, d that the nominated members felt them-ves, having been appointed by the Govern-ent, somewhat subject to the Government ntrol. I believe that was one of the reasons y Mr. Shannon resigned his appointment as ominated member of the Board, and became candidate for an elective seat. I think that e evidence taken, if carefully read, will enable nourable members to see that the recom-endations of the Committee have been im-rtially arrived at, and are fair deductions to drawn from that evidence; and my only pe is that, under this new management, the partment may be a greater success in the ture than it has been in the past.

Mr. ORMOND.—I did not think, when the reasurer moved the second reading of this ill, that I would say anything upon the sub-ct, because he rightly said that the Bill, brought in, was giving effect to the recom-endations of the Committee and the policy-lders. However, some of the gentlemen who t with me on the Committee have spoken, d I shall follow by saying a few words. I el this: that to address oneself to the very ngthy evidence and to put before the House e general purport of that evidence in a House hich is desiring now to come to an end of its ork as speedily as possible would be doing at which the House would not be prepared to sten to; and that is the main reason why I did t speak on the second reading. In the few marks which I shall make, I will refer to only e or two points which I desire to bring before e House. I think the evidence taken by e Committee must convince any honourable ember how much justification there was for the appointment of the Committee. When the Committee was appointed it was asked for by me on the ground that there was great dissatisfaction throughout the colony on one or two questions connected with the administration of the affairs of the Association. There was dissatisfaction as to what had taken place in the way of dissensions in the Board, which, the policy-holders rightly concluded, were acting to their detriment; and there was also great dissatisfaction throughout the country at the large investments that were being made in buildings and sites for buildings for offices throughout the colony; and the policy-holders, I think rightly, deemed that their interests did not require such investment of their funds. These were the reasons for which the Committee was asked for and appointed by this House, and these were the matters it had to apply itself to. The Committee was chosen, as all Committees have to be chosen by this House, not because its members were those who were most interested in or who had devoted themselves specially to the subject, but it was composed of men from different sides of the House. Therefore the report, as is generally the case, was not such as would be made by a body of men who would give a report absolutely founded on the evidence which they took; and, although I was Chairman of that Committee, I venture to think that those who read the evidence will agree that we might have been much stronger in our report, the recommendations we made, and the resolutions we came to on several points. With regard to the constitution of the Association, the Committee was unanimous in its opinion that the Board then administering its affairs should be dispensed with, and there was a large majority in favour of handing the business back to the Government. I was in the chair, and therefore did not vote; but I was one of those who did not desire to hand the business back to the Government. I desired to see the business placed in the hands of an officer responsible to Parliament; and the honourable member who spoke last, quite unwittingly perhaps, justified that conclusion, because he seems to be seeking some way of getting rid of the political influence; and in my opinion that can only be obtained if the Board is presided over by a statutory officer responsible to Parliament. The recommendation of the Committee was that the Act of 1874 should be re-enacted; but that was an amendment to a motion moved by myself, and which I only quote now for the purpose of putting it on record. It was to this effect:—

"That the general management of the Association's business should be extended to an officer of high character and attainments, possessing experience in the business of insurance; that such officer should be appointed by the Governor in Council, but his appointment should be subject to confirmation by Parliament; that he should be a statutory officer, responsible to Parliament, but subject to suspension of office by the Governor in Council. That the General Manager should have full control and direction of the staff of officers of

the Association, and have power to suspend any officer, subject to inquiry by the Governor in Council. That the officers of the Association should be appointed by the Governor, but that all appointments be first submitted to the Manager for his report and recommendation."

That was the view taken by the minority of the Committee. I came to that conclusion on grounds that I can very briefly state. In the first place, I have heard, in former sessions in this House, the honourable member for Egmont, who at one time administered the affairs of this institution, as the Treasurer has done since, admit that the business had grown to such proportions that it would take up almost the time of a Minister to give proper attention to it. I believe it was that consideration that induced him to take the steps which led to the constitution of the Board. Evidence in the same direction was given by the Premier before the Committee, and he went strongly in the direction of making a recommendation such as the honourable member for Akaroa and myself desired to make; but the great reason was that, unless the affairs of the Association are taken out of the hands of the Government, you could not, in my opinion, get rid of the political influences that were complained of in the past, and owing to which there is a liability to have extravagance of administration in the way of the purchase of buildings. That danger will always exist while the Association remains in the hands of the Government, and I see nothing in this Bill that, in future, will stop a recurrence of the circumstances which the Committee has reported so strongly against. The Committee was very strongly of opinion that it was desirable to put a stop, in the future, to such an investment of the funds as was made in the purchase of sites and the extravagant expenditure in that respect. Now I want to say a few words, in a general way, as to the purchase of these buildings. The Committee reported on that subject as follows:—

"The Committee has to report, in respect to these purchases, that an outlay of £84,779 has been incurred; that, with the exception of the Wellington building, the premises are not used for offices by the Association; that costly buildings were intended to be constructed on the sites; that all the purchases must be regarded as having been made partly for speculative purposes, and that it was undesirable the funds of the Association should have been so invested."

These were the resolutions unanimously agreed to by the Committee. I thought that the evidence justified a stronger expression of opinion; and, to show the direction in which I thought the Committee should have gone, I will quote the resolution which I moved:—

"The Committee, further, considers it extremely undesirable that any member of the Government should be placed in the position of initiating and dealing with purchases of this nature, and recommends that this be provided against in future."

That resolution was not agreed to. Another member of the Committee moved the following, as an amendment:—

"The Committee considers it extremely undesirable that any purchases of this nature should have been effected without the express sanction of Parliament, and recommends that, in future, all expenditure in respect of salaries, office sites, and buildings should be submitted to the House of Representatives for appropriation."

Now, these are important recommendations, and they were agreed to. But the Bill which has been brought down by the Government contains no provision at all that will fence in this question in future. Therefore the Bill does not give effect to a point into which the Committee took great trouble to inquire, and which, in our opinion, there was justification for making provision against in future. I hope that in Committee we shall be able to put in some provision which will require, at any rate, that no such investment shall be made in future without the sanction of Parliament. I have said that I moved for the appointment of this Committee largely at the instance of policy-holders, my constituents, who urged me to do so because of their great dissatisfaction with the extravagant expenditure that had taken place for offices and building sites. Our inquiry has shown that, with the exception of the building in Wellington, not one of those buildings, on which £84,000 has been spent, has been used for the Association, although most of them were purchased in December, 1885, or immediately afterwards. The Auckland building is lying useless and untenanted, and the money of the Association is lying absolutely idle. What occurred to the mind of every member of the Committee was this: that some of the purchases had been made in great haste, and, directly they were made, the whole object of the purchases seemed to be finished and done with. There was this objectionable feature in connection with all these purchases: They were all initiated by the Minister having charge of the department. In every case the initiation and direction, the whole bargaining, I may say, came from the Minister in charge of the department; and the opinion of every member of the Committee, I think, was that it was most objectionable that the Minister should be put in the position of initiating purchases like these, involving large sums of money; and we reported strongly against this state of things being possible in future. The Committee reported that the purchases were all made more or less for speculative purposes; but in the case of one of them it is now certain that it was a speculative purchase. That is the case of the Christchurch purchase. There, as one honourable member has shown the House, two pieces of land were bought. One of them had, when it was purchased, a right reserved to the use of two rooms for offices; but that right, I understand, has now lapsed, and the premises have been let for a term of twenty-five years; and the intention is to build on the other piece of land which has been purchased, and is available for building. So that, whatever was the intention,

the administration has come to this: that the other piece of land bought from Mr. Maling is only an investment of the funds of the Association, and cannot be, at any rate for twenty-five years, used for any other purpose connected with the Association's business. Now, there is on the records of the Association an opinion of their solicitor, showing that this was against the provisions of the law; and therefore this expenditure was not only undesirable, but it was really not in accordance with the law under which this Association carried on its business. If the House were better disposed to consider this question at present, I would go much more fully into the question of those buildings. I do hope that the result of the investigations of the Committee in this matter will be to induce the House to take care that nothing of the kind can take place in the future. I express my opinion that there was ample ground for the dissatisfaction and distrust that existed in the minds of the policy-holders throughout the colony as to the way in which their money was being treated and invested. The investigations of the Committee show that such was the case, and, in connection with these purchases, that they were extravagant and unnecessary for the business of the Association and the interest of the policy-holders. With regard to the Bill itself, I agree entirely with the view of the honourable member for Akaroa, and, if he makes the proposal which he says he will, to test the opinion of the House that this business should be put under the management of a statutory officer, instead of returning it to the Government, I will vote with him on the question. It appears to me that if we do not follow that course we shall have to contemplate, in the early future, the establishment of a Minister having his time almost entirely taken up with the management of this business; and the funds of the Association will still be liable to be used for political purposes—I do not say improper purposes, but purposes which may not be in the interests of the policy-holders. I have now touched on the chief points to which I wished to refer, and I will only add that I hope we shall make some provision which will prevent the investment of the funds of the Association in such things as these purchases without the previous assent of Parliament being obtained.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I do not intend to prolong the discussion unnecessarily; but, as a member of the Committee, I feel bound to say a word or two on the subject, more especially as I disagree with the opinions of some honourable members who have gone before me. With regard to the purchase of those sites I have little or nothing to say, except that, while it is open to controversy whether it was wise or even legal to purchase those sites at all, seeing that they were purchased partly for investment and partly for building purposes, nevertheless the price paid for them generally was not, I think, too high. I believe they were, on the whole, fair purchases, and that a private individual wishing to make purchases of the kind would probably have thought that he had not paid too much for them if he had given what the Association gave. Some statements that have fallen from the honourable member for Akaroa were, I think, not quite fairly put. I allude to the remark the honourable gentleman made somewhat to this effect: that the purchase of these business sites and the appointment of Mr. Driver had acted prejudicially to the interests of the Association, and that the evidence went to prove that such was the case. Without feeling called upon to defend the appointment of Mr. Driver, it is only fair to say that there is evidence on the other side also, and that that evidence is, in my opinion, worthy of a great deal of attention. I refer to the evidence of Mr. H. D. Bell, whose evidence is worthy of consideration, because he was an elected member of the Board, and one of those who desired that the institution should go back again to the Government, and, consequently, losing his own appointment, he is in a particularly disinterested position. When he was examined with regard to the appointment of Mr. Driver, these were the question and answer:—

"What is your opinion as to the effect of some recent appointments on the business of the Board?—I presume you refer to Mr. Driver's appointment. I think his appointment has been attended with great advantage to the business—not the special appointment of Mr. Driver, but the appointment of some really competent man, with a knowledge of the people and the property of Otago, to manage the Otago and Southland Districts."

Then, Sir, it has been said that a loss of business has accrued to the Association: but that also has been found to be open to question. Indeed, I think the whole burden of facts and figures goes the other way. Some evidence was taken on that subject also from Mr. Bell, and he—as I think, very properly—denied that there had been any such falling-off in business. I will refer to the figures presently, but I will now call honourable members' attention to the evidence:—

"Do you attribute the non-proportionate increase of business to the causes you have just named?—I think there has been no such non-proportionate increase. The business of 1883 was an utterly unwholesome and improper business. It was business conducted under a system by which an overriding commission was given to one gentleman who had the charge of all the agents. Then, again, so far as I can judge, the doctors were appointed to take lives and not reject them. I think, compared with any other year than 1883, the business of 1885 does not show any falling-off at all, but rather an increase. I do not think there has been any large number of surrenders in consequence of the publication of the fact of difficulties existing on the Board or of the Board's management. I attribute surrenders to the competition of the Equitable Association of New York, which has offered inducements which were not open to policy-proponents upon any system before in vogue in the colony."

If we turn to the figures upon the subject it is perfectly clear to any one that the record of

this institution is really one of steady progress ever since its establishment in 1871. Taking the figures for the last five years, we find that the number of policies issued in 1882 was 2,523; in 1883, 5,113; in 1884, 3,309; in 1885, 4,379. Thus, with the exception of 1883, the progress has been steady throughout, and the accumulated fund has gone on in the same ratio. At the end of 1885 that fund showed an increase for the year of £129,000, as against £126,616 the year before. I can readily understand that in 1883 the number of policies issued was owing to the overriding commission paid to the Chief Agent, and that, consequently, many lives were taken which ought not to have been taken. But immediately that was found out the overriding commission was stopped, and a fixed salary given to the Chief Agent. The honourable member for Akaroa asked the question, Why take the management out of the hands of one Board and put it into the hands of another Board? The answer is quite obvious. We are going to put it into the hands of a different Board. The last Board was composed of elements that could not possibly agree—the nominated element and the elected element; and I do not believe that as long as those two elements exist on any Board of this sort the Board can work satisfactorily. Now, as to the question of political influence, I desire to say something in answer to the honourable member for Akaroa and the honourable member for Napier. I confess I do not understand the dread of political influence displayed by those honourable gentlemen; for political influence means political responsibility, and that is the very foundation of a substantial and stable institution such as this ought to be. Then, again, it appears to be forgotten that this institution was under political influence till 1884, when we transferred it to a Board. For thirteen years it was under political influence, and yet it is overlooked that during the whole of that period the institution flourished to an extraordinary degree. There can be no question that when this institution was handed over in 1884 to the Association it was a most successful institution, quite as successful as, and, indeed, more successful than, any private institution of like career. During five years of that time it was under the political influence of the honourable member for Egmont and members of his Ministry. Then we have to remember that each member here has constituents who are policy-holders, and these constituents place in the hands of their members the care of their interests in this matter. Such being the case, I want to know who is to be responsible to the members. It is entirely desirable that there should be some one in this House to answer for the doings of the Association, and to be responsible for acts done of which any honourable member, in the interests of his constituents, being policy-holders, might complain. But there is one reason of great weight which we should bear in mind when asking whether this institution should be free from political control. We must ask ourselves the object of the institution, and the answer is that it was originally started for the purpose of encouraging thrift in the whole of the community. We are therefore here to see that it fulfils that function, and we cannot see that that function is carried out unless we have some responsible person to answer to us for the conduct of the institution. It is quite possible that the interests of the whole of the community may suffer while the institution is in the hands of a private Board. It is admitted on all hands that the lower you go down in the scale of policies and the closer you get to the poorer classes for the purposes of insurance the more you encourage thrift; while, on the other hand, the larger the policies the greater the profit you make. Therefore it is our duty, on behalf of the whole community, who are responsible for the payment of some six or seven millions of money, to see that the encouragement of thrift is not entirely sacrificed to the profits of the institution as a trading concern. Then, with regard to surrenders and lapses, I understand from what has fallen from honourable members that these have increased somewhat of late. Well, the evidence on that head is exceedingly doubtful as to whether they have or not—that is to say, whether they have increased out of proportion as compared with previous years. I presume no honourable member can doubt for an instant that, if there is any increase of lapses or surrenders, it must be due to the depression that has existed for some years, and which has been getting worse and worse for some time. That the people are less able to afford the regular and continuous payments of premiums required for keeping alive their policies no one can attempt to deny. I may say that I accept the entire responsibility for the report, whether I agree with some of the details of it or whether I do not. But, on the whole, I think that the report which has been furnished, and the Bill which has been put before us, framed on that report, will answer the purposes of this Association very well. The Bill mainly provides for two things. First, it provides for what I have advocated—political responsibility, and, secondly, all necessary safeguards against improper or injudicious investments. Any one who may chance to remember the debate that took place when it was decided to hand this institution over to the management of a Board, or who has read the speech of the honourable member for Egmont, and also that which the Colonial Treasurer delivered on that occasion, will recognize at once that they were desirous of passing over this institution to a Board, not because the institution had been mismanaged in any sense, because all admit such was not the case, but because the Minister felt that the responsibility attached to the investment of the money was altogether too great for one individual. That is exactly what this Bill remedies. The Bill provides for taking the responsibility off the Minister. Holding the opinions I have expressed, I entirely agree with the Bill, subject to some slight modifications, which can be made in Committee.

Mr. BARRON.—I fear that the honourable

gentleman's opinion of what constitutes a good investment, judging from the report of this Committee, will not influence us very much. He says that the prices paid for the properties in question were not too high. Now, we must gauge the price by the result. These properties — although it is admitted that the Wellington property has been a good purchase—are, taken on the whole, certainly not good purchases for the department. With regard to the Auckland property, I would like to direct the attention of honourable members to the evidence taken about it. One witness says, in question 1258, that Sir Julius Vogel said he had only seen the property from the outside in passing, "but he thought we might safely give £22,000 for it." This, I may point out, is somewhat at variance with the evidence that the Colonial Treasurer gave when examined before the same Committee; but I would point out that that property, which, in the estimation of the Colonial Treasurer, was worth £22,000, and for which that price would have been paid had his recommendation been carried out, was purchased afterwards for £19,000, and might have been bought for much less; and since then it has remained unoccupied. Yet it is one of the properties that the honourable member for Mount Ida defended as being a good investment. The honourable member quotes Mr. Bell's evidence to show that these purchases, and the appointment of Mr. Driver, did not do any injury to the business. Well, I prefer to take the evidence of an expert when I can get it—that is to say, one whose knowledge of the subject on which he speaks must be admitted to be very considerable, simply because he is professionally engaged in the business itself. Now, we have Mr. Irvine, who is the Inspector for the Association, and who may be expected not to give any evidence before the Committee he is not warranted in giving, and who may be presumed to have the interests of the Association at heart, and not be disturbed by any considerations except those which would conduce to its success. That gentleman, in reply to question 755, on page 46, says,—

"I think it my duty to say this: that there is no doubt the recent purchases of building-property have not given satisfaction to a good many policy-holders, and they have lapsed the policies in consequence. Although the agents of other offices have largely exaggerated these matters, the fact remains that, in my opinion, those purchases have done us harm. Mr. Driver's appointment has also done us injury."

Then, the same gentleman, in answer to question 790 — and this is in reply to the honourable member for Mount Ida—says,—

"I can only say that in the reports I have received from the various agents throughout the colony they attribute the falling-off in business more to the purchases and Mr. Driver's appointment than to the depression."

He says, further, in reply to the same gentleman, in question 794,—

"The falling-off of business was due both to the appointment and the agitation. His appointment was considered to be a political appointment."

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—There was no falling-off in business at all.

Mr. BARRON.—I prefer to take the statement of an officer of the department whose business it is to inquire into the success of the department—and I have no doubt that he has the success of that department at heart as much as the honourable gentleman—even to that of the honourable gentleman himself. No doubt the honourable gentleman has gone into the working of this department during the time he has been a member of this Committee; but the gentleman whose evidence I am quoting has probably given his whole life to the business, and has a thorough knowledge of every agency in the colony, as well as of every agent. The honourable gentleman says that the encouragement of thrift is the object of the existence of this institution, and should not be sacrificed to mere trade success. Undoubtedly, that is so; but I think mere trade success was the object held in view by the Colonial Treasurer when he advocated the purchase of these buildings, when he, no doubt, had he had his own way, would also have sanctioned the building of large and imposing structures. That, I submit, was an effort—and a very mistaken one—to bring about mere trade success, which is altogether contrary to the intention of the institution when it was originally established. I submit that striking, imposing, and expensive buildings are not at all wanted for business of this kind. If the purchases were for purposes of profitable investment for the funds of the institution, then the investment has been a failure, according to the evidence. If they were for mere trade success they were altogether unnecessary for a Government institution of this kind. Then, these purchases were conducted in a very extraordinary way. The disclosures before the Committee are such as to bring the colony and those who are in charge of the administration of affairs into discredit. The business of this Association might safely be conducted in a more simple manner. Probably it would not be too simply conducted if we left it to be simply attended to in the branches of the Post Office throughout the country. There is no reason why a person who wants to insure his life should not go to the Post Office and get a form which would send him to a medical officer; and, after he has undergone the usual examination and furnished the necessary certificates, there is no reason why his application-form should not be entertained. I cannot see why his premiums should not be received by the Post Office Department, and all the business transacted there. This may be a very simple way, in the estimation of honourable members, to conduct a large business of this kind; but this would lead to a very great economy in the administration of the department, and that economy would enable the department to insure lives at a very much

lower premium than any ordinary offices, and the people would feel that they had a Government security, and were insuring their lives in what were really their own offices, and that they were making a more profitable transaction than they could in other offices. This consideration would no doubt be a sufficient encouragement for the people to go to the Government Insurance Department rather than to outside offices, and no doubt that would not be found very injurious to the success of the institution. At all events, the system of canvassing, which has been carried on throughout the colony by irresponsible agents whose only desire is to "take a life," as they call it, has been a public scandal. There are one or two other points in the evidence to which I would like to make reference, one of them being in connection with the Board, and the difference between the nominated and elected members. It is in evidence that one witness said that the nominated members were expected to vote with the Government on certain questions which were questions of policy; and, probably, this was right; but, if these nominated members of the Board are looked upon as mere mouthpieces of the Colonial Treasurer or of the Government, then what is the use of a Board at all, if they are not expected to exercise some discretion and some will of their own? It seems to me that we do not want any Board of Consultation at all beyond the Commissioner and officers of the department, who are there to carry on the business as an ordinary branch of the public service. However, there can be no doubt that the past management of the institution, so far as the Board system is concerned, has been a failure, and, if it is brought back to the Government and is more directly under the charge of Responsible Ministers, it seems to me that we are going to have a change in the right direction. And, if it is brought back to the charge of the Government, we shall have Ministerial control and Ministerial responsibility; and I hope that the Government will see its way to greatly simplify the management of the institution, and conduct it on the lines I have indicated, rather than on the lines which are, apparently, in the mind of the Colonial Treasurer, and which find expression in the purchase of building-sites and imposing structures, and in appointments which have been condemned by this inquiry.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Sir, I should just like to make a few remarks on this subject. What has struck me mostly in this discussion is that the various members who have addressed themselves to the House, it appears to me, have been trying to find some excuse for the report which has been brought in. They tell us why they come to this conclusion or why they come to that conclusion—which really has nothing to do with the question before the House. The honourable member for Napier, when he spoke on the subject, said this Committee had been chosen from both sides of the House, and the result might, judging by the evidence, have been different from what it is; and, to make good his contention, he quotes the resolution which was moved by himself, namely,—

"That such officer should be appointed by the Governor in Council, but his appointment should be subject to confirmation by Parliament; that he should be a statutory officer, responsible to Parliament, but subject to suspension of office by the Governor in Council."

Now, when the honourable member read that, I think, if he wanted to place the matter fairly before the House, he should have said that only one solitary member voted for it: of course, as Chairman he was precluded himself from voting. Then, as to the purchase of buildings and sites, the resolution which was moved by the honourable gentleman was negatived on the voices, and no one called for a division; so it is only fair to conclude that there was an overwhelming majority against him. The honourable gentleman found fault with the Bill, and said there is nothing in it to prevent the recurrence of such purchases as have taken place. But he overlooks the fact that the Bill again sets up the Act of 1874, and that in that Act certain objects on which money can be spent are specified, and the purchase of land and buildings is not one of them. The honourable member for Caversham contended that the prices paid for the recent purchases were too high. As far as I am aware, no one has disputed that in some cases, at any rate, the prices were too high. That is not in the Bill, and the report of the Committee has not been attacked by any one; so there has been no need to defend it, because every one agrees with it. The honourable gentleman said there is no reason why people should not go to the post-offices and insure their lives. It is true there is no reason why they should not, but they will not do it. The honourable gentleman attaches great weight to the evidence of experts, and he quoted some of the evidence of Mr. D'Arcy Irvine as peculiarly valuable, as that of an expert. But why did not the honourable gentleman quote the evidence of that expert on this point? The witness gave his evidence as well as any one, and he says most distinctly that canvassing is absolutely required. Why did not the honourable gentleman quote the evidence of that witness when that evidence was against the opinion he himself expressed?

Mr. BARRON.—That witness said canvassing was necessary for commercial success, but I contend that we do not want to achieve mere commercial success.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—That may be so, but, as a matter of fact, if the business is to be of any good to the people, they must insure, and we know perfectly well that they do not insure unless canvassed. When a person is asked to make payments from which he himself can receive no benefit, and from which no one can benefit till after his decease, he is very reluctant to enter into the transaction, and urging is necessary. That is not only the experience of this department, but of all other life insurance companies. But I take most exception to the honourable member for Caversham saying that the nominated members were looked upon as

mouthpieces of the Government. I say that evidence does not justify any such statement. It is true Mr. Shannon says so in his dence; but, as against that, there is the far tweighing evidence of Messrs. Duthie, Reid, d Bethune. Mr. Duthie says that he was rfectly free to do as he chose, and that no ggestion was ever made to him as to how he ould act. On the contrary, he says, "Mr. llance, the only member of the Ministry with iom I have been intimate, well knows that I s not a political friend." He says most distictly that the Government did not expect him vote in any particular way, but that he was e to vote as he chose. And this is how essrs. Reid and Bethune conclude:—

"We desire to state that, in fact, there has en no interference of the kind on any question at came before the Board. In no instance ve our actions or convictions been controlled the Colonial Treasurer or by the official embers."

Mr. BARRON.—Read just before that.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—It is,—

"We have to say that, as to the statement at the nominated members of the Board were nder the control of the Colonial Treasurer or the official members of the Board, no condition whatever was imposed or even suggested, nd from the first we have acted without any nterference, direct or indirect, on the part of e Colonial Treasurer. One part of Mr. Shanon's evidence is quite correct. Sir Julius 'ogel, as Mr. Shannon states, did, in the ourse of some general observations at the oard, say that, on large questions of policy itally affecting the Association, and bearing n the responsibility of the Government and its uarantee, he should expect the support of the ominated members. He also said, on a later ccasion, that he had never interfered with the ree action of either the nominated or official nembers."

But we have not been speaking as to large questions of policy, because, as far as I am aware, no large questions of policy came before the Board. The only large question of that kind was as to the investment of money on freehold security. All other questions brought before them were matters of detail. The inquiries of the Committee were directed to the purchases of sites and buildings, and an appointment which had been made; and those things certainly could not be called large questions of policy.

Mr. BARRON.—Take the last paragraph of Mr. Hamerton's evidence.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Well, he says,—

"With respect to 1,205, the Government officials were perfectly free to vote as they chose, and it cannot be said that they constituted a 'controlling power' on the Board. I have never known the Colonial Treasurer to use any influence with any of the Government officials upon any question connected with the business of the Association. The questions unnumbered (1,206, 1,207, 1,208) do not appear to call for any comment from me, except, perhaps, the last. So far as I can recollect, Sir Julius stated, on the occasion referred to, that he could conceive that important questions might arise between the Government and the Association where he might be justified in asking for the support of the Government officials and the nominated members."

He does not say such questions have arisen, but that he can conceive they may arise. Surely that is very different from saying influence has been exercised in an improper manner as the Government wished. I think this Bill is exactly what the Committee wanted, and I confess that I have never known a Government to bring in a Bill so nearly in accord with what had been recommended by a Select Committee. When the Act of 1884 was brought forward I think I was the only member who strongly opposed it, because I thought then, as I think now, that a mixed Board could not work—that it must be a mere sham; and therefore I feel rather pleased that it is now proposed to revert to the old system. I feel that this Bill is what is desired by the House. That is shown by the fact that no one has spoken against it, all who have spoken, except the Treasurer, having used the opportunity to speak on other matters, and not to criticise the Bill. I have much pleasure in supporting the Bill.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I am sorry, for their own sakes, that certain members of the Committee have thought it necessary to rake up questions which were decided in the Committee. I shall not go very fully into those questions, because the evidence speaks for itself. But it does not appear to me that the honourable members I have referred to have given fair weight to the evidence on each side. They have rather accepted the evidence on the side towards which their opinions lean, without giving proper weight to the evidence on the other side. Now I will briefly go through such points as have been raised by honourable members as it seems to me desirable to comment on. The honourable member for Akaroa referred to some charge made against a former Treasurer of making advances for political purposes. No doubt the House satisfactorily disposed of the question at the time: I was not aware that such charges had been made. Then, as to the questions raised by the honourable member for Akaroa and other honourable members, I have only to say that I do not think they gave sufficient weight to the balance of evidence. The balance of evidence, for instance, with regard to the property shows that the investments were very good ones. As to there being legal power to make those investments, that question was decided, after ample consideration, by the Board. The opinion which the honourable member quoted was given on a specific question, on which there was no necessity to consult the solicitors—that is to say, whether it was competent for the Association to invest in land or buildings without any intention to itself use the property. Apparently it was not competent. But, where there was an intention to use part of the site or building, the solicitors were of opinion, as were members of the Board who had high legal reputation, that it was quite

competent for the Association to purchase, even when it was the intention to use only part as offices for the Association, and to let the rest to tenants. With regard to these purchases, it is to me a singular thing that the honourable member for Akaroa, while having such great faith in the opinion of the Premier where that opinion agrees with his own, should altogether pass over the opinion of the Premier as to the value of the Dunedin property. The evidence of the Premier was that that property was worth more than was given for it, and that if he had had the money to invest he should have been glad to purchase it.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I did not say a word about the value of the property.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I think the honourable member has forgotten the evidence. I will quote from that of the Premier:—

"Did you not take into consideration, when recommending the purchase of the site, the question as to how it could be made a paying concern?—I have no doubt whatever that, if it could return 6 per cent with the present buildings, which are in part dilapidated, then, with the cost of the new buildings added, it ought to give a higher percentage. I may say that the way to test the value of the purchase would be to take what the Australian Mutual Provident Society paid for the corner at Dowling Street and Princes Street, and compare it with what the Government Insurance paid for Wise's corner. Every one who has been in Dunedin knows that there is no comparison between the two corners for business purposes. The latter is worth double for business purposes; and yet the Australian Mutual Provident Society paid from £23,000 to £26,000, although the buildings on the site were not half so good as the buildings on the site purchased for the Government."

Surely that is expressing an opinion on the value. The honourable member must have forgotten that.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I never said the buildings in Dunedin were not of that value. I never said a word about it. I only said that the buildings cost a great deal of money, and were not used by the Association.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I understood the honourable member to impugn the value of the purchase. Other honourable members did, and I understood that he did so. Then the Premier, in answer to question 511—"I understand you looked at the property simply in its then state?"—went on to say,—

"Yes. I will say this: that, supposing I had the money to invest, I would have given that money for it. I considered it a good investment, and I still think so. Of course, during the last two years, through the fall in the price of wool and other staples, Dunedin has been in a very depressed state. If the property is kept for a year or two, and utilized, the Government Insurance will make money out of it."

The evidence of Mr. Bradshaw also was to the effect that two years ago the property could not have been purchased for less than £50,000. In his opinion it was a cheap property. I also gave evidence to the same effect, as to what had been told me at second hand in Dunedin. With regard to the Christchurch property, there appears to be some doubt as to whether it was a cheap purchase, but no doubt whatever as to its being a good investment for the Board, it being in one of the most improving streets in Christchurch. As to the Wellington property, there was no objection taken to that. Regarding the Auckland purchase, there has been a difference of opinion as to whether it was a good one; but a purchase in Auckland was necessary. The present offices which the Association has are not suitable, and some building is urgently required, and the Association Board took very carefully into consideration what property it was requisite to buy. I have been spoken of as having initiated this purchase; but I have to say that all I did was to direct the attention of the Board to the matter, as I have stated in my evidence. I told the representatives of the Board who went up to Auckland that they should consider this property with others, and make a recommendation. A recommendation was made, and the Board arrived at a decision; and, although there may be a question as to whether the property was a cheap purchase or not, it is so well situated that it cannot fail to prove a good investment of the funds of the Association. Taking the four investments together, I am sure that the Association will, if it is considered desirable, within five years, be able to sell them and make a large profit. As regards the insinuations which have been thrown out about the influence I exercise at the Board, I think it is very unfair of honourable members not to look at the evidence which has been given by the directors singly. Here it is on record, and it, I think, completely exonerates me from the charges which have from time to time been made. All those various directors think that I did not use the influence which it has been stated that I did use; but I must say that if I had exercised such an influence it would have been perfectly reasonable to do so. I shall read the opinions of various members of the Board, so that their opinions may be put on record. To commence with, here is the opinion of a new member of the Board, Mr. Duthie. He says,—

"I never supposed nominated members were expected to 'vote with the Chairman on all large questions of policy,' and the circumstances of my appointment confirm my belief that nothing is expected but that I will act in all matters to the best of my judgment."

Mr. Bell says,—

"The occasion referred to by Mr. Shannon, when Sir Julius stated that there might be large questions of policy on which the Government might expect the nominated and official members to vote with it, I well remember. It happens that I took exception to the theory, while Mr. Shannon offered no objection to it—at the time, at all events. In answer to my objection, Sir Julius

explained that, in his view, the object of having a majority of nominated and official members was to give the Government a control in large questions of policy, where the interest of the Government—that is, of the taxpayers, who guarantee—might seem opposed to the interests of the insured, or, rather, opposed to the views of the representatives of the insured on the Board. I was dissatisfied then, and said so; but further reflection has convinced me that the position adopted by Sir Julius was correct, and that the object of Parliament in creating a Board in which Government officials and nominees formed a large majority must have been to give the Government a practical veto on anything it thought unwise. But I consider that the suggestion that views advocated by Sir Julius were carried into effect by Government pressure upon nominee and official members is answered by the honourable reputation of the public officers and the nominated members with whom it has been my pleasure to serve as a colleague."

The Solicitor-General treats the matter with something approaching to contempt. He simply says, "My recollection differs from that of Mr. Shannon in several particulars;" and here I may say that the Solicitor-General, like other members of the Board, thought that he should have been called upon to give evidence, seeing that so much had been said in reference to their action. He and others considered it was unfair that they should not have been called upon to give evidence; and I think that honourable members, while so free in expressing opinions upon the action of the directors, should at least have seen that these gentlemen were called upon to give evidence, so that they might defend themselves from the charges which were made against them. As to Mr. Fisher's and Mr. Shannon's opinions on this point, they are so well known that it is not necessary for me to quote them. Then we come to Messrs. Bethune and Reid, and they say,—

"In reply to the letters addressed to us, enclosing extracts from the evidence given by Mr. Shannon, we have to say that, as to the statement that the nominated members of the Board were under the control of the Colonial Treasurer or of the official members of the Board, no condition whatever was imposed or even suggested, and from the first we have acted without any interference, direct or indirect, on the part of the Colonial Treasurer.

"One part of Mr. Shannon's evidence is quite correct. Sir Julius Vogel, as Mr. Shannon states, did, in the course of some general observations at the Board, say that on large questions of policy vitally affecting the Association, and bearing on the responsibility of the Government and its guarantee, he should expect the support of the nominated members. He also said, on a later occasion, that he had never interfered with the free action of either the nominated or official members. We desire to state that, in fact, there has been no interference of the kind on any question that came before the Board. In no instance have our actions or convictions been controlled by the Colonial Treasurer or by the official members.

"It is considered only proper for us to say that on various occasions the Chairman has made suggestions regarding the business of the Board which we found of valuable practical usefulness."

Mr. Gavin says,—

"The Colonial Treasurer has never, within my knowledge, on any occasion, interfered with the voting freedom of either the nominated or official members of the Board."

Mr. Hamerton says,—

"I have never known the Colonial Treasurer to use any influence with any of the Government officials upon any question connected with the business of the Association. . . . So far as I can recollect, Sir Julius stated, on the occasion referred to, that he could conceive that important questions might arise between the Government and the Association where he might be justified in asking for the support of the Government officials and the nominated members."

The position I took up was simply that which Parliament made it imperative on me to take up—namely, that, in case of urgency, the Government should have a controlling power. With that evidence before the Committee, I ask, is it right that insinuations should be repeated now that I have exercised too large a controlling power? The evidence of these gentlemen is directly contradictory of such an insinuation or assumption. There is only one other matter that I need refer to: that is one of the matters alluded to by the honourable member for Akaroa—the payment of £500 commission to the agent of the Government. I explained in my evidence that I had no knowledge of that until the matter was mentioned to me in the Committee.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I never said that the Treasurer had any knowledge of it.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I know the honourable gentleman did not say so; and I am not accusing him of doing so; but it was put forward as part of the indictment against the Board that they had paid this sum.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—No; it was paid by the agents in Dunedin employed by the Board.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Does the honourable member mean to say that the agent employed——

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—No; I said the fact was that the agents in Dunedin agreed to pay £35,500 for the property, and that £500 of that was put on—being an addition to what the owners wanted for the property—by the broker that the agents of the Association employed. The broker put on that sum in order to get his commission.

Sir J. VOGEL.—As I say, I had no knowledge of the matter until it was brought under my notice in the Committee; and subsequent evidence given by the Premier, who was practically accused, when I was examined, of being a party to the matter, showed that the facts were these: that the property belonged to a large number of persons, and it was trust property—that those persons had agreed to a mini-

mum price which they would take, and that price did not include payment of commission. It was then agreed between the agents for the vendors and the agents who were acting for the solicitors for the Insurance Association that there should be an extra amount put on to cover a commission of £500, making the price of the property to be £35,500, although the *cestui que* trust would get but £35,000. It was a matter of which the Board knew nothing, nor do I see any other plan which could have been adopted for paying brokerage and commission. As I have said, I know little of the matter; and, at any rate, I do not think it is one that calls for the consideration of this House. The most important question raised in the discussion is the last one with which I shall deal—that is, the question of the constitution of the Board. In the manner which has become so familiar in this House we have heard that there is a difference between the Premier and other members of the Cabinet, and that this Bill does not embody the views of the Premier. It is quite true that when the Premier was giving evidence he spoke in favour of an officer being appointed who should hold office during good behaviour. He was asked to give evidence, and he gave it on the spur of the moment. How far he still adheres to what he said I do not know; but I do know this: that the Bill was approved in Cabinet by every member of the Government, and that the Premier is just as much responsible for the Bill as myself, although I have charge of it. As regards the point that an officer should be appointed to hold office during good behaviour, the honourable member for Akaroa referred to the case of the Public Trustee, to give us an instance of what he meant; and it is for the House to consider whether it is desirable to make such an appointment. Certainly such an appointment would relieve the Government from responsibility. The Public Trust Department is a very peculiar one. There you have a Public Trustee appointed during good behaviour, but he is still under the direction of the Colonial Treasurer. If this office became vacant, and another Public Trustee had to be appointed, I should not recommend an appointment to be made of the same kind, but should bring the matter before the House. I have never come into collision with the Public Trustee, and to all practical intents and purposes the thing works well; yet it is quite conceivable that, if a difference of opinion arose between the Public Trustee and the Treasurer, the Public Trustee could assert that he was quite independent of the control of the Treasurer, and the Treasurer could do neither more nor less than tell the House that he was not responsible for the management of the Public Trustee's Department. Now, the House, on the other hand, considers that the Government is responsible for the management of the Public Trustee's Department. Questions are put in the House regarding it, and questions are constantly raised in the country, and the Government is evidently considered to be responsible. Sir, I cannot recommend that we should adopt an analogous course by saying that the Commissioner of Life Insurance should be put in a position from which he should not be removable except by a joint vote of the two Houses, for that would practically remove him from the control of the Government. It might work well for a time; it might work well always; but it is clear that the House would not have a right to look to the Government to be responsible in cases of differences of opinion, since they would have placed the officer in a position which would render him not only able to assert, but would justify him in asserting, his opinion over that of the Government. I think that the Controller and Auditor-General necessarily must have that position—the position of holding office during good behaviour—because that makes him, and it is the only way to make him, independent of the Government; but that any other appointment should be made in a similar manner is open to the greatest possible objection. Practically, an officer, appointed under such terms, unless guilty of great misconduct, or unless he goes out of his mind, is safe from any interference with his functions, and therefore an appointment of the kind is wholly inconsistent with our idea of responsibility to the representatives of the people and those who elect them. Were such a course to be adopted with the Insurance Association the statutory officer appointed might be a great success; but such an immense amount of responsibility would rest in his hands in the management of so large an affair as this — or, rather, I should say, he would have such an amount of irresponsibility, and such an amount of personal individual control would be given to him, as I do not believe any individual on earth possesses in connection with large insurance companies. The managers of all insurance companies that are in existence are responsible to boards of management or boards of control, whatever shape their constitution may be. To appoint an irremovable officer would, I think, be unwise; but of course it would relieve the Government from responsibilty. Sir, I shall not detain the House further, beyond adding that I ask honourable members to read the evidence through, and then to say whether they consider that the conclusion of the Committee is not more just and more in consonance with the evidence than are some of the opinions which have been expressed this evening.

Motion agreed to.

Bill considered in Committee, and progress reported.

The House adjourned at fifteen minutes past one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 5th August, 1886.

Library — New Zealand Loan Bill — Government Life Insurance Bill — North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Application Bill — Beer

uty Bill—Deceased Persons' Estates Duties ill—Harbours Bill—Deeds and Instruments egistration Bill.

ıe Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at past two o'clock.

LAYERS.

LIBRARY.

ıe Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON, in moving the ion standing in his name, wished to explain motive he had in moving it. A few days e, the Council, by resolution, adopted the rt of the Joint Library Committee relating he rules for the use of the library during coming recess. Those rules were very lar to rules which had been adopted in ıer years for the same purpose; but they not in any way provide for the taking of ts away from Wellington by members after session was over. In fact, such a system not been in vogue up to the present time. ɔn the adoption of the report a message was t to the House of Representatives request- the concurrence of that branch of the ɡislature in the report. In reply, the House Representatives had expressed a strong ire that the use of the library during the ess should be extended to members of both nches of the Legislature by enabling them take books to their homes or to have ıks sent to their homes. For this purpose ɪy suggested that the report be sent back the Joint Library Committee for the pur- e of framing rules which would admit such a change in the present custom; but fore that could be referred back to the Com- ttee it seemed necessary that the resolution ich had been passed the other day should be ɪcinded.

Motion made, and question put, "That the olution of the 2nd August, adopting the port of the Joint Library Committee, be read d rescinded, in order that the report may be ferred back to the Joint Committee for the nsideration of the resolution of the House Representatives, as communicated to the ɔncil in Message No. 83; and that the report so referred accordingly."—(*Hon. Mr. G. R. ɔhnson.*)

Motion agreed to.

NEW ZEALAND LOAN BILL.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Sir, the New ealand Loan Bill, the second reading of hich I have to move, is to authorize a loan of 1,325,000 for the construction of certain rail- ays, as laid down in the schedule. Sections to 14 and 17 to 19 are similar to the sections ı the New Zealand Loan Act of 1882, and, ı fact, are similar to all Loan Acts that have een passed by this Legislature. They merely rovide the machinery for raising the loan, he appointment of agents, the issue of short- ated debentures pending the negotiation of he loan, and that the moneys borrowed during he time of the negotiation shall not exceed in he whole the sum of £1,325,000. Sections 15 ınd 16 are a substitute for section 15 of the Act of 1882, and make provision for tying down the loan to the objects stated in the schedule. There is a new provision which has not been in any Loan Act before, and it is this: In section 16 it is provided,—

"And it is hereby expressly declared that it shall not be within the power of the Governor to recommend to Parliament the appropriation of any part of the moneys hereby authorized to be borrowed to any purposes other than those set forth in the said schedule, or, in respect of each of such purposes, to a greater amount in the whole than the sum respectively set opposite to each."

That is, the amounts in the schedule cannot be diverted from one railway to another. It is to be regretted that such a course has not been adopted with previous loans. Take, for example, the Loan Act of 1882: we there find in the schedule sums devoted to particular lines and for particular purposes, but I regret to say that that was never adhered to. It was treated as one loan, and spent broadcast over the colony for other objects than that which it was intended for by Parliament. I consider that this is a great improvement. The Government cannot recommend to Parliament the appropriation of any moneys out of this loan beyond those specified in the schedule, and for each particular purpose as there laid down. There is nothing in this Bill that I can give any further explanation about. Most of the clauses are merely machinery clauses in order to raise the loan. It is simply a question for the Council to consider whether they are disposed to pass the Bill. They have all the information before them in the Bill itself, and I therefore move the second reading. I may add that I trust there will be no opposition to it. Indeed, I do not expect there can be any opposition to such a Bill as this. It is only a question whether we are to go on with these railways, or whether we are to allow them to stand as they are. It would be ruination to the colony if we were to take the latter course.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—Sir, probably this will be a convenient time for me to inform the Council as to the course I propose to pursue in reference to this Bill. I do not at all propose to refuse to assent to the second reading of the Bill: on the contrary, I am not one of those who think that we can at once stop all loans, though it is open to consideration whether or not, at all events, it might not be advantageous to stop some works at the present time. In my opinion it is necessary that we should carry on some of these works, at all events. I think my honourable friend should have given us some information as to the state that these railways are in, so that we might know what is likely to be required to complete them, and whether any more money should be expended on them. However, I will not go into that part of the question at the present time. The convenient time to do so will be after the Committee, which I am about to move for, has given us the information which I desire should be obtained. My object in moving for this Committee is this: that we should see the way we are

going; that we should not only perform our functions, but also see what is our duty in the matter, and we should, as far as possible, perform that duty. With regard to the construction of railways, the law is very plain and very clear. In an Act passed in 1882 on the subject of public works there are clauses from which it appears to me that some of the works now proposed have not been authorized. I am not prepared to say at present that that is the case, as I am not in possession of sufficient information to speak with any accuracy as to the position of these railways. But clause 129 of the Public Works Act of 1882 says that "Every railway shall be made only under the authority of a special Act, which shall state as nearly as may be the line of the railway and the two termini thereof." Now, I apprehend that that is a very clear instruction that we must be provided with this information before we authorize a railway to be made; and when we are furnished with that, and the railway is proposed, then we are in a position of being able to say "Yes" or "No" to that railway. I should like to point out to the Council that this is exceedingly important. If an Authorization Act were not required, then the Government might at any time obtain money to make any railways it thought fit, or put us in the position of throwing out a Bill of importance, probably involving appropriations for other purposes as well as railways; and therefore it is important that there should be a special Authorization Act authorizing the railways to be made. That is a question for the Council to decide when the Bill is brought in. We should then be in a position to say "Yes" or "No" to that railway. But, assuming that these are new railways—I do not assume that they are: I rather assume the opposite—we should be placed in the unfortunate position of being compelled to throw out the whole of the Bill, with all the other appropriations. Therefore it is of the very first importance that the authorization should be in a Bill that we can deal with and amend, as well as say "Yes" or "No" to. Not only is that my opinion, but that is also the opinion of the Legislature; and the Legislature, in dealing with this subject, deals with it by enacting that the construction of railways shall only be under special Bills. The Bill goes on to provide, when a railway is authorized under this Act, what the Minister for Public Works may do. He is the person who has charge of the railways, and he is the person who has the construction of them. The only powers given for the construction of railways are the powers given under this Act, and all railways in New Zealand must be made under this Act—at any rate, as I read it. Clause 131 gives this power. It says, "Subject to the restrictions herein specified, the Minister may do the following things in respect of any railway authorized by a special Act"—that is, he may make any railway as defined. The whole Act is formed upon the principle that the foundation of the making of any railway is to be by special Act. The Legislature has dealt with it in that way, too, from 1878, when an Authorization Act was passed during the Government of Sir George Grey. The Act—at page 269 of the New Zealand Statutes of 1878—is a special Act passed authorizing twenty-five different railways in various parts of the country under different names. That is the foundation of the railways authorized before. Then, subsequently to that, other Bills have from time to time been passed. In 1882 three Bills were passed authorizing railways. In 1882, 1883, and 1884 none were passed. In 1884 special authorization was given for [illegible] railways, and in 1885 authorization was given for four railways; so that we have here twenty-five railways in the first instance, and thirteen others, which make thirty-eight railways authorized altogether. After this Bill was put into my hands, on its being circulated, I looked at these railways, and, having had something to do with the Government during the time at which several of these lines were authorized, some of the names struck me as being peculiar. I did not know them by the names by which they were put down, and it struck me that it was a question whether or not all the railways had been authorized. I do not say they have not been authorized—they may have been or they may not have been—but among the railways authorized from 1881 to 1885, and the twenty-five railways to which I have alluded, I cannot trace some of them by their names. They may not be new—they may be under other names; but I think the Council will agree with me that, when we are asked to pass a Bill of this description, we should see that these railways have been properly authorized. It would probably be convenient to do that when the Bill for the appropriation of the money for these railways is before us; but when we are asked to pass a Bill of this kind, merely authorizing the raising of the money for particular purposes, there is no authority to spend the money at all. Where we have to look for it is in the Public Works Appropriation Act. Now, these railways may or may not have been duly authorized. Several of them are those which have been mentioned in these different Acts. But with regard to some of them, I do not know that they have been authorized at all. I want to impress on the Council this: that it is not only the function of the Council, but it is its absolute duty, to see that these things are carried out in accordance with the law. The law specially provides what I have said, and it is to be by a special Bill to be considered by the Legislature, and the Legislature is to declare its will in the most formal mode it can do it—that is, by an Act, and that a special Act for that particular purpose. I say it is our absolute duty to see that the provisions of Acts of Parliament of that description are properly carried out. They may, in this instance, have been properly carried out; but, at all events, I say to the Council it will be a neglect of its duty to pass the present Bill and allow these railways to go in the form in which they are going without ascertaining whether we are acting in accordance with the terms of the law. I hope it will be

found that it is so, although as to some of the railways I do not expect that it is at all necessary they should be continued. But I shall not be prepared to throw out the Bill or deal with it in any rude way. But we should take care to see that we are legislating in accordance with the law. We have deliberately made the law for a special purpose, and it ought to be complied with. I ask honourable members to look at the authorizations which have taken place from 1878 to 1885, and to tell me where it is under any of those Acts that all these railways have been authorized. I say, if that is the case—that any of these railways are not authorized—we are taking a irregular course in passing this Bill. What subsequent course it will be necessary to take in that event will be matter for after-consideration; I will not go into that matter now. At all events, I say that the Council ought not, under any circumstances whatever, to go blindly on permitting the dealing with large sums of money in this way, and afterwards to find that these large sums of money are likely to be spent in a way not authorized by the Legislature. Assuming that this Bill is passed as it is, and that an Appropriation Bill is afterwards sent down for so much money this year for these particular railways, the railways could not be made if they are not authorized by a special Act. The money would be appropriated, but this Public Works Act would stand in the way of it, as it declares that the Minister, who is the proper person to make these railways, should not make them unless he has the authority of the Legislature to do so. There is no mode that I know of by which we can legally make a railway except under this Act, which declares they "shall be made only"—a very strong word—"under the authority of a special Act." I desire to throw no obstacle or difficulty in the way of the passage of this Bill, and I do not propose to take any steps at all on the second reading—I propose, if it be necessary, to vote for the second reading; but, as soon as the second reading is passed, I shall propose the special resolution of which I have given notice. The object of that resolution is "to ascertain—(1) Whether the several railways specified in the schedule have been authorized by special Act, as required by law; (2) also, as to any of the said railways that are not new, the state of the works thereon; and to report fully thereon to the Council." When we are asked to pass this Bill I think it would be unfair to ask us to pass it unless we find we are acting in conformity with the law in doing so. I hope we are acting in conformity with the law; but when the Committee which I intend to move for sits for the purpose I have indicated it may be able to trace these railways if they have been authorized under any other name. I am not sufficiently acquainted with the names to be able to say whether that is so or is not so; but I say it will be a neglect of duty on the part of the Council if it is not and they do not come to a determination to say that they will act in conformity with the law. And, having looked into this matter, and finding the uncertainty in which the matter stands at the present time, we may be led into acting not in conformity with the law. What brought this matter specially under my notice was this: It so happens that in the Harbours Act now before the Council there is a special clause in reference to the harbours of Westport and Greymouth. I have not gone into the question of how the matter stands in reference to special Acts being necessary for the purposes indicated in that clause, but I presume that special Acts are necessary. I will read the clause. It is as follows:—

"The construction of breakwaters at Westport and Greymouth by the respective Harbour Boards at those ports, and all acts and things in relation to such construction, shall be deemed to have been authorized under a special Act as from the sixth day of November, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-four."

Well, Sir, what appears is this: If a special Act is necessary, then the expenditure on those harbours has not been according to law; and the mode of curing this has been to antedate the clause, so as to give a lawfulness to the expenditure ever since the 6th November, 1884. However, the clause does not seem to me to do what is intended; though I do not intend to go into that. I do not want to lead the Council into the consideration of a question of harbours. All I say in reference to this matter is this: that, if a special Act is required, then illegal expenditure has been going on. Now, we shall be in exactly the same position in regard to the present Bill. Although the money may be voted, yet the expenditure will be illegal without a special Act. In regard to these railways, we may be going on spending money not authorized and then after a year we should have to pass something like what I have remarked on in the Harbours Act. That opens our eyes to the course we should pursue, so as not to fall into the same mistake in reference to the railways. But about the railways there can be no question. Authorization, as I understand it, if there is any meaning in language and Acts of Parliament, it is perfectly clear must be by Act. I repeat, with regard to some of these railways for which this money is to be raised, there may be a special Act, but I cannot trace it. I think the Council will agree with me that it is a question which ought to be cleared up before we proceed further in the matter. If we appoint a Committee to see how many of these railways are authorized, when the report comes up from the Committee it will be a matter for consideration by the Government or the Council as to what course should be pursued. If it turns out that all is right, then we shall be in the position of having done our duty. If, on the other hand, it is found that the railways have not been authorized, I am not prepared to say what the course should be to get over the difficulty. As to the raising of this loan of £1,325,000, I shall probably say something upon that by-and-by, when we get further into this question. In the meantime I think it is hardly worth

while discussing the question, pending the decision of the point which I have raised. I think on the whole it is not very desirable that we should go into a debate now, as that would come in better at a future time, when we have got all the information before us. If it be a question of passing the second reading of the Bill, I shall vote for it, reserving to myself the right of taking any action which I may think proper and desirable at a future time.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—I think the explanation of the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker must be quite clear to every honourable member of the Council, and it seems to me a great loss of time to proceed any further with this measure. What is the object of passing the second reading of this Bill, with the information we have before us with respect to the position of these railways that are named in the schedule to the Loan Bill? If we pass the second reading of this Bill and afterwards the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker's motion is carried, and the matter is referred to a Committee, and the report of that Committee sets forth that several of these railways have not the sanction of Parliament—which it is absolutely necessary they should have—it seems to me, then, that we should have passed the second reading of a Loan Bill necessary to the borrowing of £1,325,000 for purposes to which the money cannot be applied. I understand the Hon. Mr. Reynolds to say that this money is, in parliamentary language, "ear-marked"—that is, that every portion of this money is for special purposes, as set forth in the schedule of this Bill. As I have said, if we pass the second reading we shall be authorizing the borrowing of money for purposes to which it cannot be applied. Then, I may ask, what is to be done with the money? We do not want to borrow any more money than we require. We do not want to borrow a sum of money and leave it locked up in the Treasury.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That will not be so.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—If the money gets there I think some object would be discovered to which it might be applied. The honourable gentleman has told us that this money is to be borrowed for certain purposes, and will not be applied except to the purposes set forth in the schedule. The honourable gentleman says that the money can only be applied to those purposes, and that the Government will find a use for it.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—What I mean to say is this: that it can only be applied for the purposes specified in the schedule; but these railways are authorized, and the money will be expended upon them.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—Exactly; but, then, I am not going to take these things for granted. The Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker has pointed out clearly that we have no right, in borrowing a large sum of money, to be walking in the dark: we must know what we are doing. We must have an Act of Parliament, I understand—and so thinks every honourable gentleman, I presume—for every railway that is to be made. We are not to take the honourable gentleman's *ipse dixit* for it that these railways are all authorized by Acts of Parliament. The Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker has plainly told us that he cannot discover the names of some of them. It is possible the names may have been changed; but we do not know that. That is the question which has to be ascertained—whether those railways in the schedule are authorized or not. If they are not authorized we shall be sanctioning the borrowing of a sum of money the expenditure of which, by-and-by, I suppose, an Authorization Act will come down for the purpose of sanctioning. If the honourable gentleman is right it will be all right; but that question has to be considered: and until we have made ourselves perfectly sure by referring the matter to a Committee, and after ascertaining whether those railways are sanctioned by Act, I do not see what is the good of our proceeding further with the Bill. If we proceed with this Bill, and discover that these railways are not sanctioned by Act, what is the next step? I think we shall be proceeding in a direction we shall have to retrace, and go through very much more trouble than if we stop at the present time and see that everything we are doing is right. I think, under the circumstances, it would be very much better if the honourable gentleman, after what has fallen from the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker, were to postpone the second reading of the Bill until we get a report from the Committee. Then we shall perfectly know what we are doing, and we shall know whether these railways are sanctioned by Act or not.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I may say that I distinctly stated that several of these railways, I know, are authorized.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—I hope I have not made myself misunderstood. I do not mean to say that these railways are not authorized. They may be all sanctioned by Act; but still, I think, if there is a doubt about it it would be better to ascertain that before we proceed further.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I am not one of those who think that we can do without a Loan Bill, and, for myself, I am ready to support the second reading of this Bill, and I do not agree with the last speaker that it should be stopped at this stage. There are plenty of stages which the Bill has to pass through, and it can be stopped on any one of them.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—I do not wish the honourable gentleman to think that I have the slightest intention of opposing the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I did not attribute that to the honourable gentleman. I did not think he was going to oppose the passage of the Bill; but I was pointing out that there are many other stages at which he can stop the Bill. And I may be one of those who will insist on certain things being done before the Bill is passed. I believe, myself, that we must soon taper down this borrowing to a considerable extent: and that has been done latterly, but not, perhaps, as fast as many people would wish. It may be felt by most people that we have got to a position now when those railways

ich are being sanctioned are such railways will press heavily on the taxpayers; and one s only got to look down this schedule to e what will be the result of the making of me of these railways. The entire interest of em will have to come out of the pockets of e taxpayers. When we get to that class of ilways it is absolutely necessary that this uncil should carefully see what railways are thorized; so that, when a Bill comes up auorizing these railways, then is the time for is Council to step in and consider them. I not expect that the Government will agree this motion of the Hon. Sir Frederick hitaker. Probably in their hearts they may e it; and I believe they do; but it would ver do for them not to make the attempt to feat it, for this reason: that the Governent are depending on votes in the other amber to keep them in power, and a certain mber of those railways are fixed for the tes in order to keep them in power. The overnment ought to be glad for this Coun- l to take up the matter and relieve them that pressure. I am sure some members the Government, at all events, are anxious at they should be placed in such a position. his applies no more to this Government than former Governments. Former Governments ave been placed in the same position in conquence of this "log-rolling." This Council free from all that, and it can consider railays apart from this pressure of votes, which re necessary to keep a Government in power. f my honourable friend believes that by a mple clause in this Bill the Legislature will ake it certain that the money shall only be pplied to the items in the schedule, he will nd that he is grievously mistaken—he will nd that there are plenty of ways of taking the ote for one railway and applying it to another. o take the railways themselves: The first is he Helensville northwards: I do not rememer of one being authorized under that name. Vhere is that line to go to? It is going northard; but one would like to see the terminus nentioned. A good deal of the money to be xpended on that line will have to come out of he pockets of the taxpayers in order to pay he interest. Then, the item for doubling the ine out of Auckland: I believe that is a necesity. Then, Hamilton to Grahamstown: I do ot suppose that any of its supporters believe hat it will pay working expenses for some ime to come. That is a political railway. Any one living in the Waikato, and seeing these hree branch lines running out of the main ine, will not wonder at the expense necessary o work these branch lines, because separate ngines and separate staffs have to be employed. The cost of the working of these branches is simply enormous. Then, Morinsville to Rotorua: That line, of course, is necessary to get to the lakes, and I believe it is a line which is for the benefit of New Zealand as a whole; but I am afraid that some of the attractions of that district have gone, and that the number of passengers on the line will now be decreased unless we can get a real live volcano to continue burning to be another attraction. It is a great misfortune for New Zealand that we have lost those terraces. Then, Napier to Palmerston: Of course no one objects to that line. Wellington to Woodville: No one objects to that line. Blenheim to Awatere: This line is said to form a portion of a line which goes through good agricultural country, and I am told that it may be well worth making. Still, I do not believe it will repay all the interest on the outlay. Greymouth to Hokitika: This line will certainly require assistance out of the pockets of the taxpayers. Then, the Otago Central: This is a line which never was made as it is with my sanction; it should have gone a different route; but a great deal of money has been spent on it, and it would be impossible to stop it; but even its best friends will not assert that this railway will pay more than working expenses for a long time to come. There is a necessity there for the taxpayers of the colony to find the whole of the interest. Then there is the Catlin's River branch: That line will certainly require a considerable time before it will pay its way. Riversdale to Switzers: I am not able to form an opinion on this line, but I think it might have waited for some time to come. Then, the Seaward Bush Railway: One cannot understand why this line should be made. It is not the fault of this Government—a former Minister for Public Works let the first contract in a way which no one could understand. From the main line to where this line goes there are tramways running to the very terminus. It is strange that local pressure could have been brought to bear to construct such a line. There are a number of these lines which have got into such a position that you cannot stop them: the fault was that they were commenced, and they now have to be carried out. In my remarks I am not sparing that portion of the colony from which I come, any more than any other part of it. It is absolutely necessary that there should be a certain amount of expenditure in order to complete railways; and a stoppage of borrowing is impossible. Therefore, whatever we do with the Bill afterwards, we ought not to stop its second reading. I intend to support the second reading, and I think the information we are likely to get by referring the Bill to a Select Committee will be very useful to the Council, and to every one else. I shall therefore also support the motion for the appointment of a Select Committee. It may be said that we should not delay matters at this late period of the session: but this is a particular Bill, which, if it was thought necessary that we should discuss it, should have been introduced earlier into this Council. What is now asked cannot take a long time, and it will show to the public that this House is doing its duty in carefully looking after legislation.

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN.—I have no intention of criticising the various lines, but I should like the Minister in charge of the Bill to explain this item: "Additions to open lines, £150,000."

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I confess, when I saw the motion of the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker I was somewhat alarmed that the Government had been foolish enough to ask for the construction of railways without authority. It is quite clear that, under the section of the Public Works Act to which my honourable friend has referred, every railway which is to be made must be specially authorized by Act, stating as nearly as possible the direction of the line and the intended termini. Since the honourable gentleman put that motion on the Order Paper I have taken the trouble—and no small amount of trouble—to ascertain whether we were acting illegally in a matter of this kind. My honourable friend has made a speech full of everything but information; and I am surprised at the argument he has used: that is, because he could not find the information which warranted the construction of these railways, therefore the question must go to a Committee. That is not the sort of argument which we generally have from the honourable gentleman. He is concise, keen, and as sharp as a razor, and when we get information from him it is information which can be depended upon; but I am afraid the Council treats him rather badly, because it places too much responsibility upon him, and I am afraid in his kind nature he is apt to do work for others when he would be better employed in attending to his own business. If the honourable member would look in "The Public Works Act, 1879," clause 7, he will see,—

"This Act shall be deemed to be a special Act authorizing the construction of each of the railways specified in the First Schedule, and such of them as have been finished shall be deemed to have been made, and such as are unfinished may be completed, under the provisions of the said Act, 'The Public Works Act 1876 Amendment Act, 1878,' and this Act."

A great number of the railways referred to in the schedule of this Bill are authorized under that Act. In the Act of 1881 certain other portions of railways which are referred to in the schedule of this Bill are also authorized—in the 5th section of that Act. The Act is deemed to be a special Act authorizing the construction of the railways therein referred to. In the 5th section of the Act of 1885 the honourable gentleman will also see that that is deemed to be a special Act authorizing the construction of the railways therein referred to. I may tell my honourable friend that, under the authority of the law, every railway referred to in the schedule of this Bill is authorized, with the exception of the first one, to which I shall presently refer; so that the whole of these railways are authorized by special Acts of Parliament, with the exception of one. It is not necessary, for the purpose of passing a Loan Bill, that we should pass an Authorization Bill. I may say that such a Bill is now in another place, and it will become law in a very short time. That Authorization Bill refers to the Helensville northward line. The greater portion of that line was authorized before, and by the Bill which has been introduced in another place it is intended to authorize the whole of that line; so that I am sure my honourable friend will, upon consideration, find that the whole of the difficulty he imagined to exist will vanish into thin air. I am not aware that there are any other points in the arguments which have been raised. No one denies the necessity for borrowing the money, and I am sure the completion of these lines is essentially necessary. We are doing nothing beyond asking for this loan, for the purpose of completing the railways already warranted by law.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—I think it is the duty of members of this Council to express their views upon a measure such as we have before us, and not to give a silent vote. I feel that the responsibility which is imposed on the Council in the consideration of these questions is growing year by year more important, because undoubtedly the real question that we have to consider is, whether we are, in agreeing to pass Loan Bills such as this, sanctioning the expenditure of public money upon railways which may reasonably be expected to pay interest. Now, I believe, if the real truth were spoken about the railways in this schedule, it would have to be admitted that at least half a million of money will be misspent under this schedule. That I believe to be the plain truth. I am afraid that the course which has been adopted in this Council year by year resembles very much what we hear about economy in the country. We have heard a great deal about the necessity for economy in the country during the last twelve months; and I am bound to say that I think that, for once, we must give credit to a portion, at any rate, of the public Press for having advocated prudence and economy. There is no doubt that there was a time during which the public mind needed a great deal of instruction and education, and, fortunately for the country, there was a portion of the Press which came forward, and, in a series of well-written articles, pointed out the necessity of refraining from an extravagance which it was feared at one time we should be plunged into again. But this measure does not look as if this prudence and these economical views were in the ascendant. It is true it might have been a great deal worse; but it is equally true that it might have been a great deal better. The Council is constantly regretting that the expenditure on public works is so large; but, for all that, we agree to the passage of those Bills. In doing this, I do not think I shall be wrong in saying that we do not quite act up to our professions. I cannot think for a moment that this Government is to be charged any more than any previous Government with extravagance. When I hear the Government charged with extravagance, it always appears to me to be simply nonsense. You can never expect to have any real economy in any Government in this country until you alter the incidence of taxation. It is the want of a proper system of taxation which really causes all this extravagance. As has

been pointed out over and over again in this Council, and as has been admitted year after year without, I believe, a dissentient voice, the small number of persons by whom the property-tax is paid in this colony prevents their voices being heard. Out of the whole six hundred thousand persons only twenty-five thousand persons pay the property-tax in this colony. How, then, can it be expected that they can make their voices heard when those great public works which are so attractive are put forward? Practically, it is as one man who really feels the taxation against twenty-four men who are irresponsible and do not feel the taxation. If you go to a public meeting there is only one man in twenty-four who knows that he will be directly affected by increased taxation should any of those public works not pay; and it is nonsense to expect any Government in New Zealand to exercise any real and true economy until you alter this system, and abolish the exemption under the property-tax. At any rate, the exemption should be for a very small amount indeed; and then you would not only have a much greater sum from this source of taxation, but you would have the political assistance of fifty thousand persons, who would be interested and would make it their business to make their voices heard. That is the real secret of the extravagance; and, in my opinion, we shall go on and on, unless some change is made in this direction, until we are pulled up by the stern logic of facts. You may have public men and the most influential portion of the Press preaching economy, and pointing out the evil of perpetually carrying on those public works and building those railways which we know will not pay; but there is nobody who really cares about the matter. What does it signify to a man who is not subject to any taxation how much public money is spent? The whole burden falls on a few individuals — twenty-five thousand persons. To charge the Government of the colony with extravagance is nonsense. It reminds me of what one has sometimes heard in sporting phraseology, in connection with steeplechases, where a jockey rides a horse over a difficult fence, and at a critical moment carries the horse over safely. I have heard people say, "How beautifully he rides! Did you see how he lifted his horse over the fence?" No one supposes that the Premier is really an extravagant man, and does not honestly wish to exercise economy. He does not wish to plunge the colony into debt any more than I do, or any other member of this Council; but he cannot help himself. He is forced, if he remains in the Government —well, it is not, perhaps, a parliamentary expression to use, but it is, nevertheless, true—to purchase votes by railways in different parts of the colony. I think this system will go on unless the Council interposes, and I believe this Council is the only power in the country that can oppose the progress of this extravagance. I think we shall be brought face to face with the difficulty in a manner that few of us anticipate. I do not know, even now, what the effect of a European war would be on this colony, but I should say it would land us in a very serious difficulty. It is a most remarkable fact that, although this Council has debated this question of the abolition of the exemption in the property-tax, and has shown by its unanimity the importance of its opinion upon it, this question has only once been alluded to by the Press of the colony during the recent recess. It is a most remarkable thing to me that a matter of such great importance has been altogether ignored by the public Press of the colony. I have no doubt in my own mind that that silence is mainly owing, not to the fact that the subject is unimportant, but to the fact that the people do not want the exemption to be abolished or reduced. The people like to have this public expenditure. It brings high wages and a temporary state of prosperity, and makes the people think the country is in a prosperous state. But we cannot afford it. There are a number of these railways which will not pay interest; and the sooner we recognize the truth, not only about the expenditure that we are carrying on now, but about the real position of New Zealand, the better. We are also accustomed to hear about its wonderful resources and its wealth, and all that. The country is good enough as far as it goes; but it is a small place, and is at present simply an agricultural and pastoral community; but it is being ruled as if it were an empire, and there is an inflated system about it from beginning to end. It is perfectly monstrous that we should plunge a beautiful country such as this really is into such immense debt and extravagance. One would have thought that there would be a smaller amount named than this, granting that this may be a small earnest of economy. I mean to say that it might have been a great deal worse; but, owing to the praiseworthy efforts of some individuals, the amount has been reduced, and so far we may take it as an earnest of, I hope, better things to come. But, looking to the state of the country, it seems to me that we are not at all justified in passing a measure in which £500,000 will be spent on railways that will not pay interest. The revenue from the Customs duties is falling. The whole of the Customs duties will not pay interest on the public debt by something like £100,000 or £150,000. The railway revenue is falling. The land revenue—where is the land revenue? Is that likely to rise? Who is coming here to settle in this colony and to buy land when, so far as any of us can see, the inevitable result of all this imprudence is going to be 2d. in the pound property-tax?

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—The Midland Railway.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—I should like to find out all the letters which honourable members have received during the last twelve months from their friends and relatives in various parts of the world, asking them if New Zealand was a good country to come to or not. I should like to know what answers they gave; for these are friends, to whom they would give conscientious and truthful answers, and they

would not be likely to untruthfully indulge in statements about "the great resources of the country." If we could know these things we should find that the persons who make these replies, when they are applied to by their friends at Home, tell them not to come, not to put a penny in the country, and all the time they are wishing in the bottom of their hearts that they could advise them to come. That is not a right position for a young country to be in; it is a very wrong position for a young country to be in. If I am mistaken let me be corrected; but I believe it to be the fact that we all of us know individually of men who have been here during the last six or eight months with money in their pockets, and have gone back again. What is there in New Zealand to tempt a man to make a home here except the climate, and that it is a nice country? There is unlimited taxation in the future; and I think it is nearly time now for the Legislative Council to take a stand as to the position of the colony. I regret very much that the Hon. Mr. Hart was not able, through ill-health, to complete the inquiry which he wished to make into the position of the colony. There were some members who laughed at that Committee; but I believe it would have produced very good results; and I hope that next session it will be continued, and the inquiry prosecuted, so that it may be shown what the true position of the colony is. For I, at any rate, am one of those who believe in the whole truth about things being told, and who do not agree with those who, whenever any piece of extravagance is proposed, say, "Oh! the undeveloped wealth and resources of the country will carry us through." I think it will be necessary for this Council to take up the question which I have referred to as to the abolition of the property-tax exemption in earnest; because, unless something of that nature is done, there will be no power to stop this country from being plunged into expenditure which will absolutely overwhelm it. I think the motion of the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker is a good one, and I am sure we are justified in using every means in our power to, if possible, impede the rapid progress of Bills like this, and I shall vote for it.

The Hon. Captain FRASER.—I presume that every honourable gentleman in this Council is a moral and honest man. That being so, I ask honourable members how they can reconcile it to their conscience to borrow money which they each and all know we can never repay. Even the interest may cease to be paid at a not very remote period. The political railways on this schedule do not rest with the present Government. They have been commenced owing to the pressure on the part of honourable members to retain their seats and to improve the properties of their friends. I think it is much better to leave these railways as they are now; because honourable members know very well that most of them will never pay working expenses, and it is only throwing good money after bad money to attempt to finish them. Some of these railways really are absurd. I can instance several where there is but a sparse population. I think that any discussion of this Bill will be a waste of time until light is thrown upon the subject by the Committee which it is proposed to appoint. I shall say no more at present except that I shall vote for the amendment of the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I shall refer in a few words to the speech made by the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker. In doing so I do not intend to say anything as to its inconsistency; but I say that it does not bear out the arguments he has advanced in this Council. I have before me the Loan Act of 1882, which was introduced when the honourable gentleman was in power, and proposed a loan of three millions of money, and in the schedule of this I find a number of those railways which are now mentioned. The present Government, in bringing forward this Loan Bill, are committed to those railways by the acts of a former Government. It cannot be said that I am one of those who advocate borrowing, because ever since I have had the honour of a seat either in this branch or in the other branch of the Legislature it has been my desire to curtail as much as possible the borrowing policy; and when, in 1882, it was proposed to borrow three millions I, for one, protested against any such course, so as to prevent the people from being burdened with more taxation, and I took upon myself the responsibility of moving an amendment consisting of a clause which I desired to be inserted in the Loan Bill for the purpose of stopping what the Hon. Mr. McLean calls "log-rolling." It was as follows:—

"When any railway or portion of any railway made under the provisions of this Act shall be opened for traffic, if the net returns from such railway or portion of a railway, after deducting working expenses and all costs of repairs of permanent-way, rolling-stock, and plant, be not sufficient to pay the interest upon the money expended in making such railway or portion of a railway, then the Governor in Council shall raise an amount sufficient to pay such interest by imposing and levying a tax upon all lands within ten miles on each side of such railway or portion of such railway in proportion to the value of such land, irrespective of improvements, in such manner as the Governor in Council shall deem fit."

What was the result? The honourable gentleman's colleague took every precaution and care to stop me from getting the clause inserted in the Loan Bill. If that clause had been inserted in the Bill in the first instance it would have given greater security in the construction of the lines; but the Government refused to accept my amendment, and it was referred to a Select Committee, and, in the meantime, the Loan Bill was passed. And when the Select Committee brought down their report it was found that the report was identical with what I had proposed should be done. If that amendment had been carried at that time those political railways would not have been attempted to be made, as

districts would have been liable, and the ple, if they had to be specially taxed for m, would not clamour so much for the ways to be constructed. I have said before t I will oppose every Loan Bill that comes ore the Legislature; but it must be borne mind that this Loan Bill has been left as legacy by a former Government, and the sent Government is obliged to carry on the rks named in it. These works are not of ir own seeking, but they are works which former Government commenced and which have now to finish. It was in 1882, I think, en the time was for log-rolling. I find that public buildings there was voted £300,000, l for roads and bridges £200,000, and several ier large items; and yet they are trying to ow the blame on the present Government extravagance. With reference to the mo- n to refer this Bill to a Select Committee, ich as I desire that every investigation of matter should take place, I do not consider it much good will be gained by that course, d therefore I shall support the second ding.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—I have a great al of sympathy with my honourable friend o introduces this Bill. He has for years been e great apostle of economy. In the public ess, and in all places where his voice could heard, he has always raised his voice in vour of economy, and I believe he is sincere that action. But to-day we have heard m him that it is his duty to bring in a easure here to raise a loan of £1,325,000. I ve not the least doubt that at least one- ird of that money will be absolutely squan- ered away. The honourable gentleman will ve a difficulty in reconciling his present sition with his past statements; but we are t responsible for that. With reference to e allegation that this is the fault of a pre- ous Ministry, I contend that in the whole urse of legislation from the time that the blic works policy was introduced, now six- en years ago, this has been the tendency all long. In considering measures of this de- ription Parliament ought to have insisted, in e first instance, that none but remunerative orks should be constructed. If that had een followed out we should not have had such measure as this. Since then it has been oked upon that every district should secure ome public work or other; but, though that so, I by no means agree with what fell from e Hon. Mr. Miller—that the burden of the ast wrong should now be thrown on the poorer eople. Who were the principal movers in is expenditure? Is it not known that the rge landed proprietors strained every nerve get these railways made? By means of these nes the value of their estates has been trebled nd quadrupled. Having got all they want, is it asonable that they should throw the burden n other people? I am not at all sure that ome of these works would have been made if hey had been put before the people. I can oint to lines which have been made contrary o the wishes of the ratepayers, but were made simply because certain influence was brought to bear on the Government. I am not going into the question of the property-tax now, but I may say that, instead of taking off the limitation to recoup the losses which have been made, I think it would be far better to go back to the old system and rate districts. I have been thirty years in the colony, and I never before knew it in so depressed a state as it is in now. Even in that dreadful time in 1869 things were not so bad as they are now. The people had not lost heart as they have now. No one can look forward now to make any return from anything he goes into. The only thing to be done now is to invest money on such security as you can get, and lend it to persons, who have the greatest difficulty in making any return out of it at all. That is a most melancholy state of things. The fact is, I believe, the Government have no alternative: to stop borrowing at once would be what the Government has no courage to face. But I think the proposals might have been better than those which are submitted. The employment of that money should have been confined to completing works from which a reasonable return would be got. We have got into a certain groove, and we cannot get out of it; we have begun useless works, and it is impossible to stop. Take the Otago Central Railway: as to whether that should or should not have been made I cannot say; but what has been done? I understand that that line has been commenced at both ends and at the middle.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—The honourable gentleman says "No;" but there has been a break. I saw a statement the other day to the effect that some £50,000 or £60,000 had been spent on that line from which there is absolutely no return. I am very much afraid that that is what will be the case under this schedule. I did not hear the Hon. Mr. Reynolds say that he considered this a remunerative investment. I do not think he would have the hardihood to say so. He might say that his Government had made certain pledges, in order to get support, that they would do everything they could to get these works carried out. I shall support the amendment. I still think that, for the satisfaction of ourselves and the public, we ought to get information on all these questions before we pass this Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I have not got a very great deal to say, because, really, the objection is not to the Bill, but certain information is desired with regard to the railways in the schedule. These lines have all been authorized except the Helensville line—and part of that is authorized and part is not—and about a mile of the Hurunui-Bluff line, from the present Oamaru Railway-station to the breakwater. There is a Bill proposed for introduction to the other branch of the Legislature to authorize these two works. These are mere trifles. All the other lines are authorized. There is no doubt that the law is such that the railways cannot be constructed unless

they are authorized; but there is nothing in the law to prevent the raising of a loan for the purpose of constructing railways to be afterwards defined. Neither is there anything in the law to prevent the appropriation of money for the construction of railways; but no doubt the construction must be authorized before any money can be expended on them. There is one remark which I should like to make in connection with a question asked by the Hon. Mr. Wilson—namely, "What about the Treasurer?" I do not know that I am letting out any Cabinet secrets, but I will run the risk of doing so, and I can say here that it is a mistake to suppose that the Treasurer is an extravagant Minister.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh!

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Sir, I have had an opportunity since I joined the Government of ascertaining whether that is the case. I can say that of all my colleagues he is the most economical. It stands to reason. He has to find the money, and it is the duty of other Ministers only to expend it; and he has to be exceedingly careful in keeping, for example, I will say, myself from requiring too large a sum to be voted by Parliament, seeing the difficulty he will have to find the means for the works which may be required.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—Would the honourable gentleman pardon me for referring him to the speech intended to be made by the Treasurer at Lawrence during the recess?

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I have nothing to do with speeches made at Lawrence. I do not keep those speeches in my head. But I can say this much, conscientiously: that the Treasurer, Sir Julius Vogel, is one of the most economical of my colleagues. The honourable gentleman referred to my being an economist and yet being in charge of this Bill. Well, I do, in my own private affairs, endeavour to study economy; and I consider that it is my duty, as a member of the Government, to treat public affairs in the same way as I do my own, and I do, on every occasion, study all the economy that it is possible to exercise. There may, however, be mistaken economy. We have a certain number of railways which were commenced by previous Governments, and we cannot allow those railways to go to ruin, or to remain unproductive. The Hon. Mr. Wilson has referred to one case, and I believe the honourable gentleman was pretty nearly correct in saying that somewhere between £30,000 and £50,000 has been expended on one line, and that it has been valued at £200 or £300. That was no fault of the present Government. If works are progressing piecemeal, and the weather destroys them as fast as they are made, I hold that that is extravagant, and is not studying economy at all. If I had been Minister for Public Works and a member of the late Government I would have commenced the Otago Central Railway by making the main line, and would have proceeded with it, even if we had only advanced half a mile a year; but, instead of that, it has been made by fits and starts, little bits here and little bits there; and the consequence is that it has cost the colony a considerable amount more than was necessary. With regard to the schedule, as I have stated, the whole of these lines have been authorized excepting certain portions of the Helensville line and about a mile to connect the railway-station at Oamaru with the breakwater. The Hon. Mr. Wilson thinks that the loan to be raised ought only to be for the completion of works already commenced. The money is for the completion of works already commenced, and to carry them to a paying point. I think the Hon. Mr. Chamberlin wanted to know what is the meaning of "Additions to open lines, £150,000." The honourable gentleman has the public works estimates, and if he will refer to them he will find what this £150,000 is for. However, if it is not taking up too much of the time of the Council I will give him some of the items. There are workshops to be put up at Palmerston or Manawatu, goods-sheds, engine-sheds, platforms, fencing, sidings, locomotives, carriages, wagons, cranes, and other appliances.

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN.—But the £326,000 is for those purposes.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—If the honourable gentleman will refer to the next line he will see at once that that is for permanent-way, sleepers, and rolling-stock for the railways named in the schedule; but the £150,000 is for additions to open lines, and open lines are working railways. I trust the honourable gentleman is satisfied with the explanation I have given him, and that he will vote for the second reading of the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS moved, That the Bill be committed next sitting-day.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I beg to move, as an amendment, That the Bill be referred to a Select Committee, to ascertain—(1) Whether the several railways specified in the schedule have been authorized by special Act, as required by law; (2) also, as to any of the said railways that are not new, the state of the works thereon; and to report fully thereon to the Council: the Committee to consist of nine members—namely, the Hon. Mr. Holmes, the Hon. Mr. G. R. Johnson, the Hon. Mr. Miller, the Hon. Dr. Pollen, the Hon. Mr. Menzies, the Hon. Mr. Reynolds, the Hon. Mr. Shephard, the Hon. Mr. Wilson, and the mover; the Committee to have power to send for persons, papers, and records, and to report on or before Monday next, the 9th instant. There are two branches of inquiry, both of which are of importance. I have no doubt, as I have said, that some of these lines will be found to be authorized. I have looked through the Acts of authorization from time to time, and I have not been able to trace all of them. I have no doubt now, from what my honourable friend the Colonial Secretary says, that there are two lines which have not been authorized, and that there is a Bill in Parliament now to authorize them. There is one thing which, it appears to me, requires explanation—namely, the point referred to by the Hon. Mr. Chamberlin, as to the item

"Additions to open lines." I understand that under that item it would be quite competent to make additions to lines. That is a very wide expression, and I think such an expression as that ought not to be put in a Bill of this character; because, as it is, it could be applied to the extension of sidings, branch railways, or carrying the railways further on. It would appear as though railways were to be carried further on by the words "Additions to open lines." I am not quite satisfied with my honourable friend's explanation of that matter. With regard to the first item, I presume that no work has been done. With regard to the second, I presume that the work has been done, but irregularly.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I said that all the lines are authorized with the exception of the first one in the schedule, and that the unauthorized portion of that line will be authorized by a Bill which is in another branch of the Legislature.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I was referring to the second one, and said that the second one has already been constructed without any authority.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—No.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—At any rate, I think all these matters should be investigated, and my object in asking for the Committee was to see if what has been done is right or wrong. At any rate, the whole thing was so loosely done that I am quite satisfied that a Committee will be of advantage, and we shall get on very much better in future. There are questions which may arise as to how far the lines have been duly authorized, because the Act requires that the two termini shall be stated in the Act of authorization. I do not find that in several of them. This Committee will be of advantage, to say whether the Act has been complied with or not, and if it has not been complied with I hope the matter will be set right in some way or other. We shall get information, and upon that we shall be able to take action, if action is required. I hope therefore that the Council will agree with me that, under all the circumstances, this Committee should be appointed. I move its appointment.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I should have imagined, after the explanation which has been given in the late discussion, the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker would not press his motion at all. I think it is quite unnecessary, as the fullest explanation has been given, and honourable members can verify what has been stated by seeing that every one of these railways has been authorized — excepting, as I said, a portion of the Helensville line—and that a Bill is now in the other branch of the Legislature to authorize the construction of that portion. There is also a small portion unauthorized between the station at Oamaru and the breakwater. I do not suppose there is a single member of this Council who will object to authorize either one or the other of those slight additions. I think it is very objectionable that, at this late period of the session, Select Committees should be appointed to delay the progress of these Bills. It is proposed by this resolution that the Committee should report on Monday next. I do not know how things will go in another branch of the Legislature, but I hear that, in all probability, by Tuesday or Wednesday next they expect to close. I only hope it may be so; but, if that is the case, we shall have little enough time for either Select Committees or anything else. If honourable members will go down to the Public Works Office they can see the whole authorization; so that there is no necessity for the motion. I hope the motion will be rejected, and that the Bill will be committed to-morrow, and pass through all its stages.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—I am very much surprised at the honourable member desiring to "burke" information being obtained. This is information which the Council has a right to obtain.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—The Council has got it.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—The Council has not got it, or my honourable friend would not have put this motion on the Order Paper. It is admitted that some of these lines have not been authorized. Besides, I do not agree with my honourable friend as to the duration of the session. Whatever time is required to deliberate over Bills should be granted. It is not in the power of the honourable gentleman to close the session. We must just 'bide the time of the other House, and we have plenty of time to do all the work without any hurry. This excuse is always brought forward to burke discussion. We should not swallow everything because it is near the end of the session. I shall support the amendment, and I think the Council will be doing what is right in passing it.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—When I was speaking in favour of the second reading of the Bill I was unaware of anything being in this Bill in connection with Oamaru, or I should not have spoken. I was surprised when the Hon. Mr. Reynolds referred to it.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—The honourable gentleman in charge of this Bill shows that he himself wants very much more information on the subject than he has, when he ventures to speak of the extension of the railway from Helensville northward as a slight addition to the lines already authorized. He calls a railway of one hundred miles a slight addition to the already-authorized railways.

The Hon. Mr. ACLAND.—I should like to make one remark with regard to what has fallen from the Hon. Mr. Reynolds. He says that, from what he hears, they are likely to finish by Tuesday next in another place. This is by no means the first time that we have had very good reason to complain of Bills not being sent up here earlier, and then their being hurried through at last. All I can say is, if the conference of this Committee keeps both Houses waiting a week, it does not the least matter—it would be a very good lesson. This Loan Bill ought to have been sent up before,

and the Government would have no right to complain of the lesson: in fact, it is what is very much wanted, and I should be very glad if it were given now. It would show, at all events, that the members of the Council are determined to act as reasonable beings, and that they will not swallow everything sent up to them without giving due consideration to it.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I quite expected that the Hon. Mr. Reynolds, after the speech he made, would himself agree to the Committee, because he says there is a Bill now before the other House to authorize what he calls "a slight addition," treating it very lightly, but which, as the Hon. Dr. Pollen has reminded us, is a line that has always been spoken of as one that would cost hundreds of thousands of pounds. I thought the honourable gentleman was at one time in that district; but he evidently does not understand the business. If a Bill to authorize that railway is to be sent to us, then we have plenty of time to send this Loan Bill to the Committee for the matters affected by it to be investigated. We should see if the authorizing Bill is passed before the Loan Bill is passed. While the Loan Bill is before the Committee proposed there will be plenty of time to see if the other Bill commends itself to the Council or not, and then we can act accordingly when the Loan Bill comes back. Besides the "slight addition" spoken of by the Hon. Mr. Reynolds, the schedule is so wrapped up that no one can understand it. Even the Hon. Mr. Shrimski did not know that his own little line was included in it. I should really like to know what is involved in the schedule; but it would take a clever man to find it out, unless it is investigated in the way proposed. I think there can hardly be any objection to let the Bill go to a Committee. It is, I think, as difficult for me as for any member to stay here, but I am quite ready to stop any necessary time to thoroughly consider these important Bills.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—I have only one word to say, as the Hon. Mr. Acland has anticipated me. The argument has been used that, because it is near the end of the session and time presses, we must pass this Bill without delay. But, if the Council admitted that sort of argument and allowed it to influence its conduct, it would be taken as a precedent on future occasions, and whenever there was an important Bill to be sent up it would be said, "Do not send it to the Council till the last day of the session, and then tell them they must pass it." I think there is ample ground for inquiry by a Committee, because, for instance, the Hon. Mr. Shrimski has said that he had never heard that a line in his district was included in this Bill; and we have also been told that another line mentioned in the schedule has not yet been authorized.

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN.—I am quite at a loss to understand why this Committee should be appointed. It has been said the Committee can get information; but what information is there that the Committee can get more than we have already? The Government have told us that all the railways in the schedule are authorized except one; and to authorize that there is a Bill now in progress. Is it likely that the Ministers in this Council have told us what is not exactly true? If there is any doubt about that, it is perfectly right to ask for a Committee of inquiry to find out whether what the Government has told us is true or not. What is it that is going to be ascertained by the Committee? Is it the relative positions of these railways, and whether they are likely to pay or not?

An Hon. MEMBER.—No; the state of the works on them, and so on.

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN.—Well, looking at the members of the proposed Committee, is it likely that they can have so much knowledge as the Committee of the whole Council would have, consisting of members from all the districts in the colony? The members of the proposed Committee can have only partial knowledge. To know the state of the different lines you want all the information that honourable members coming from the different districts can give, and the members of the proposed Committee cannot possess information as to all the lines.

The Hon. Mr. WIGLEY.—I shall vote against the appointment of a Committee. The Government have given us an assurance that all the lines in the schedule are authorized but one, and that that one will be authorized before this Bill is passed. I do not think the Government would state to the Council as a fact what they could not substantiate. In Committee of the Whole we shall have a perfect right to ascertain if what has been stated is true, and, if we find it is not, then we can throw out the Bill on the third reading. But I do not think the Government would place themselves in that position, and therefore I shall vote against the Committee.

The Council divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 17.

Baillie	Dignan	Shephard
Barnicoat	Lahmann	Shrimski
Bathgate	Martin	Swanson
Bonar	Reeves	Walker
Buckley	Reynolds	Wigley.
Campbell	Scotland	

NOES, 20.

Acland	Kenny	Pollen
Brandon	Mantell	Robinson
Brett	McLean	Whitaker
Fraser	Menzies	Williams
Grace	Miller	Williamson
Holmes	Peacock	Wilson.
Johnson, G. R.	Peter	

Majority against, 3.

Motion negatived, and the Hon. Sir F. Whitaker's amendment agreed to.

GOVERNMENT LOANS TO LOCAL BODIES BILL.

The Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill was read a first time.

On the question, That the second reading be made an order of the day for to-morrow,

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES said,—I desire to ask, Sir, whether—a Bill similar in name and, I believe, in substance having been recently laid aside by the Council by your direction—it is competent to proceed with this Bill. Perhaps, Sir, you would, if you think it desirable, consider the matter before the Bill comes on to-morrow, and then give your ruling.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I will do that if the Council so desire; but I may state now that the position is different from what it would have been if the Council had definitely rejected the former Bill. I understand that in this Bill the amendments which the Council wished to make in the Bill laid aside have been made, and therefore I think no delay in proceeding with it should take place. I do not think it is necessary that I should further deliberate on the matter; but, at the same time, if the Council thinks there are doubts I will do so.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I understand this Bill to be virtually the same as the one laid aside by the Council. The Bill carries out the views of the Council, and I cannot see how any objection can now be raised to it.

Motion agreed to.

NORTH ISLAND MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY LOAN APPLICATION BILL.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I do not think I need occupy much of the time of the Council in explaining this Bill—the North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Application Bill—of which I now move the second reading. An Act was passed in 1882 authorizing a special loan of a million for the construction of the North Island Main Trunk Railway. It is now proposed to raise this loan; but, before doing so, this Bill has been introduced to declare the route of the railway, and, in addition, it "ear-marks" the loan, so that no portion of it can be used for any purposes whatever other than what are stated in this Bill. The 3rd clause says, "It is hereby expressly declared that it shall not be lawful for the Governor to recommend to Parliament the appropriation of any part of the moneys so authorized to be borrowed to any other purpose." Clause 4 specifies the objects on which the money to be raised can be lawfully expended; while section 5 declares that 2½ per cent. of the land acquired—

". . . shall be set apart and reserved in such blocks and at such times as the Governor shall direct; and it shall be lawful for the Governor, subject to the ratification thereof by resolution passed by both Houses of the General Assembly, to grant the same, in such blocks as he shall think fit, as reserves for the endowment of such Education Boards and Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards and institutions within the North Island as he shall think fit; and the remainder of such lands shall constitute a railway reserve, the proceeds of which shall be applied, as Parliament shall from time to time direct, in the construction of the said main trunk railway, and of branch railways, tramways, or roads in connection therewith."

I do not think there is anything particular in the Bill that I need explain further, and therefore I move, That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I presume the fact that none of our North Island friends are rising to speak on this Bill shows that they are satisfied with it. We have been told that all loan funds are to be "ear-marked," so that they shall not be taken for any other purposes than those for which they were raised; but it is very strange that the first "ear-marking" Bill we have after the general Loan Bill should propose to take away for one purpose a large portion of a loan authorized for another purpose. No doubt it may be said that the provision at the end of the Bill—that the land bought with the money taken from this loan should be sold, and the proceeds devoted to the completion of the line—is founded on a good intention; but I think that, instead of meddling with this loan, which is so positively stated to be "ear-marked," and taking a part of it to buy land with, it would be better that the £100,000 proposed to be taken should be put in the schedule of the general Loan Bill. Not that I advocate for one moment the Government engaging in the purchase of Native land. For years I have strenuously opposed the Government touching or buying Native land, because they cannot touch pitch without being defiled. I really do earnestly entreat them, whatever they may do, to stop the purchase of this Native land, except through the usual channel that is provided by the passing of the Native Lands Administration Act—that is, that Native lands must be sold in the same way as Crown lands are sold to other people. I really cannot see why the Natives should not be asked to give a large amount of land in consideration of the making of this railway, which must so very largely increase the value of what land would remain to them; and I think the railway should not be made unless they made grants of land to the colony. It is all very well to say that a European would not do it; but a European would never for one moment be allowed to tie up so huge an area of land as the Natives are doing, and allowing no settlers to go on it. How long would it be tolerated in any European if he tied up a large part of the country in that way? I do not like the Bill; but, if the people most directly interested in it do not object to it, it is no business of mine to do so, further than to raise my protest against two things I abhor—the taking of money allocated to one purpose to be used for another purpose, and the spending of that money in the purchase of Native land by the Government.

Bill read a second time.

BEER DUTY BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—The object of the present amendment is to protect the brewer against the imposition of revenue, and to protect the revenue to a certain extent against the

brewer. It seems a very curious thing that it should be so; but it is so. I believe that in 1880, when the Act was passed licensing brewers, the question was raised whether, notwithstanding the imposition of duty on beer in casks, they could sell bottled beer in quantities not less than two gallons without taking out a wholesale or other license. It appears it has been held in the Courts in some parts of the colony that to do that it would be necessary for the brewers to take out another license of £20 a year. That has been considered very unfair, and this Bill proposes to remedy it; but, at the same time, provision is made in the Bill by which brewers will not be able to bottle beer except from casks bearing stamps, as required by the Act of 1880. It has come to the knowledge of the officers who have charge of the revenue that a great deal of illicit action has been taken by some brewers, and for the purpose of protecting the revenue it is considered undesirable that, after the expiration of one year from the passing of this Bill, they should carry on the business of cordial and aerated-water manufacture or the bottling of liquors of any kind in a brewery. With the view of preventing such illicit action, it is proposed that a brewer shall not be allowed to carry on the business of bottling in the brewery itself. The Bill is one that is considered essentially necessary by the Revenue Department, and I hope it will be read a second time.

The Hon. Mr. DIGNAN.—I shall be most happy to vote for the second reading of the Bill; but I will ask the honourable gentleman in charge of it to make some slight amendment in clause 7 when it is in Committee, for really the power which is sought to be obtained here by the Commissioner is too arbitrary altogether. A brewer is a man who is, unfortunately, at the mercy of his servants, and the commission of some slight wrong might cause him to forfeit his license. That penalty, I think, is too severe. I think that a fine or the suspension of his license for a short period would fully compensate for the injury done. I shall ask the honourable gentleman to embody that suggestion in the 7th clause.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—In reference to this Bill, I should like to ask your opinion, Sir, as to whether it is one that we can deal with at all in Committee. So far as I can see, it seems to be entirely for the purpose of levying certain duties. A decision was given the other day on a Bill, and it appears that this comes within the same category.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—The Hon. Mr. Dignan pointed out to me this morning the matter he has now mentioned. It seems to me to be a thing that we could scarcely alter, but I shall be happy to consider the suggestion of the honourable gentleman. It seems to be a very hard clause, and probably we may settle it by a message from the Governor. It seems very hard that a brewer should have his license taken away altogether.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I have not been able to look at this Bill, but I have very little doubt that it is a Bill which cannot be amended by the Council. I think the original Beer Bill was brought down as a revenue Bill. However, that question does not now arise, and I will look into it.

Bill read a second time.

DECEASED PERSONS' ESTATES DUTIES BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—Provisions enabling persons to be examined as to disposal of an estate liable to duty.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER moved. That subsection (5)—Witness not to be excused on ground that answer may criminate him—be erased.

The Committee divided on the question "That the subsection stand part of the clause.."

AYES, 7.

Barnicoat	Dignan	Pollen
Bathgate	Lahmann	Reynolds.
Buckley		

NOES, 19.

Bonar	Johnson, G. R.	Shephard
Brandon	Kenny	Swanson
Brett	McLean	Whitaker
Chamberlin	Menzies	Wigley
Fraser	Miller	Williamson
Grace	Peacock	Wilson.
Holmes		

Majority against, 12.

Subsection struck out.

Bill reported, with amendment.

HARBOURS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN moved the appointment of a Committee—to consist of the Hon. Mr. Wilson, the Hon. Mr. Menzies, and the mover—to draw up reasons for disagreeing with the amendments made by the House of Representatives in the Harbours Bill.

Motion agreed to.

DEEDS AND INSTRUMENTS REGISTRATION BILL.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Sir, this Bill—the Deeds and Instruments Registration Bill—has been introduced for the purpose of removing certain difficulties which now exist in the establishment of Government agencies under "The Deeds Registration Act, 1868," in the small towns. The duties of these agencies would be to receive deeds and other instruments or papers, and submit them to the Registrar, according to the Deeds Registration Act; and the word "instrument" includes "any Crown grant, deed, contract, will, codicil, exemplification or certified copy of will, probate, testamentary order, certificate, power of attorney"——

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—Where is all that? I do not find it in the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—It is not there. I say that the word "instrument" means what I am pointing out. It applies to all those documents I have mentioned, and, to continue the recital, also to the following: "copy of

Order in Council, affidavit, memorandum, notice, memorial, or other document, either written or printed, or partly written and partly printed, affecting any land within the colony authorized to be registered by this Act or by any law which is now or may be hereafter in force, relating to the registration of documents affecting real property." This is the interpretation of the word "instrument" in the Deeds Registration Act. Sections 3, 4, and 5 of the Bill enable deeds to be sent from one place to another for registration without personal attendance at the registration office. At present, persons registering any deed are required to attend personally at the registration office; and this is to do away with the necessity for a personal attendance. It also provides for the appointment of district agents, and for the order in which deeds are to be registered. Section 7 is to remove an anomaly that arose in consequence of the passing of the Westland and Grey Education Act of 1885, it happening that dealings in reserves required to be registered in Westland, although some of the reserves are situated in the Provincial District of Nelson. Section 8 is to enable land held under perpetual lease or for village-settlement purposes to be brought under the Land Transfer Act. Section 9 is to meet an obvious mistake in the Land Act, from a certain clause of which the word "not" was accidentally omitted. I may say that this Bill is mostly of a technical character, and I do not think it requires much explanation. I have therefore to move, That the Bill be now read a second time.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—If my honourable friend has got the information, I should like to be told under what law persons are to attend personally to register a deed. It is something perfectly novel to me. It seems to me that the very foundation of this Bill is to prevent the necessity of persons attending personally to register deeds. The Bill, I suppose, falls through if that is not required. The best way is to take an instance. Take Wellington. There is a registration office at Wellington, and there is not one at Manawatu. Supposing the agent at Manawatu receives a deed, and at the same time one is presented here, which is to have precedence? That may happen constantly. A man may leave a deed at Manawatu or Wairarapa, and in the meantime another deed for the same land is put in the registration office here. Which is to have priority? The Registrar could not refuse to receive one here, I presume; I do not see how you can say he should not receive it. He might have to wait to hear from all the registration offices throughout the district whether deeds had not been left at any of them. I think this Bill should more properly have been brought in by the Hon. the Colonial Secretary: perhaps he will explain how it is that everybody has to attend personally. I was not aware that that was the law. Perhaps the Hon. the Colonial Secretary may help his colleague out of the difficulty by explaining where the requirement is to be found.

The Hon. Mr. BRANDON.—It is exceedingly inconsistent for the Government to talk about the necessity for retrenchment and for lessening the number of officers when here is a Bill enabling them to appoint any number of Deputy-Registrars in any part of the country. This Bill takes away from the solicitor the responsibility of forwarding through his own agent at the town where the registration office is, and the responsibility for the correctness and the receipt of the deed. By the Deeds Registration Act a party is bound to send the deed to the Registrar by some agent or person whom he trusts, and that party is bound to examine the deed, and so relieve the Government of the responsibility for any mistake in the deed. Here the deed, when recorded, is not to be signed by the party interested, but by the Registrar or Deputy-Registrar. The Bill appears to be altogether useless and out of place, and will simply mean the appointment of officers throughout the country to relieve private persons of a responsibility, and throw that responsibility on the Government. I move, That the Bill be read the second time this day six months.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—There is no doubt the Government have a right to conduct their business as they think most conducive to the progress of business; but it does seem a most extraordinary thing that legal Bills should always be taken charge of by my honourable friend Mr. Reynolds, and particularly when they are, as this one is, of a purely technical character. I listened with all the attention I could, as I always do, but for once, at all events, the honourable gentleman's explanation was by no means clear. I may be supposed to be speaking with some professional feeling; but I can assure honourable members that is not the case. If I considered that this Bill would be of any possible benefit to the public I should consider it my duty to support it; but I think the very reverse is the case. This is one of those small Bills to the nature of which I entirely object: that is, it is establishing an army of small officers with small salaries and with practically no duties at all. No expense will be saved. The real history of the thing is this: There are some towns—considerable towns, even—where there is a certain amount of business, but not enough to justify the establishment of a branch registration office. Deeds have to be forwarded from these towns to the nearest registration office. What is done now is, that parties with deeds requiring registration forward the deeds to their agents at an expense agreed upon among themselves. This Bill proposes that there shall be a proper person to act as registration agent. He is to receive these deeds, and forward them by post, and then charge a fee for doing so. I venture to say that that fee will be as much as the agent charges. Then, you have more officers appointed, more accounts opened with the Treasury, and more risk of the money being made away with; and all that is got for it is some little patronage. The duties of the officer would be small indeed, and consequently it would only mean a little

more patronage to the Postmaster-General, for I presume it would be the Postmaster-General who would do this. I do not see what more protection against loss would be given than there is now. The district agent would have to send the deed by post; consequently the risk of the deed being lost would be as great as it is now.

Debate adjourned.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes to ten o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 5th August, 1886.

Gold Duty Bills—Waimate and Sandhurst Railway-stations—Riversdale-Balfour Telephone—Schools of Mines, West Coast—Foxton New Plymouth Railway—Napier-Woodville Railway—Half-moon Bay—Lyttelton-Christchurch Railway—Government Labourers—Duntroon-Hakateramea Railway Rating—Public Works Estimates—Fisheries Conservation Bill—Special Powers and Contracts Bill—District Railways Purchasing Bill—Shag Point Coal Company—Sitting of Parliament at Christchurch—Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

GOLD DUTY BILLS.

Mr. LARNACH brought up the report of the Committee appointed to search the Journals of the Legislative Council in relation to the Gold Duty Bills. The Committee reported that the Gold Export Duty Abolition Bill had been negatived on the motion for the second reading, and that the Gold Duty Reduction Bill had been laid aside, as being in contravention of Standing Order No. 131.

Mr. LARNACH moved, That a Select Committee be appointed to search for precedents, in order to ascertain and report upon the rights and privileges of this House with regard to the imposition and remission of taxation and duties payable to the Crown: the Committee to consist of Major Atkinson, Mr. Conolly, Mr. Fergus, Colonel Fraser, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Seddon, Mr. Guinness, Mr. Pyke, and the mover.

Mr. PYKE.—No doubt the Government are taking the right course in the motion they have proposed, because they are simply following the precedents laid down by the oldest Legislature in the world—the Imperial House of Commons; but I think it would be well for me to point out what I conceive to be a popular misapprehension as to the respective powers and privileges of this House and the other branch of the Legislature. Of course it is an accepted theory that this House occupies relatively the same position in the colony as the House of Commons does at Home, and that the Legislative Council occupies the same position relatively as the House of Lords at Home, the Governor representing the other estate of the realm—namely, the Crown; and it is supposed, popularly, that the other branch of the Legislature has a right to reject the whole of a money Bill. It is quite true that the House of Lords has frequently claimed and exercised that right; but it is also true that the Commons of England never permitted them to do so on any one occasion without denying the right as claimed, and recording strongly their protest against its exercise. Formerly the Lords even claimed the right to amend money Bills. That they have abandoned, and now it is a question whether they can reject the whole of a money Bill or not. The records of Hatsell show thirty-six cases in which the House of Commons refused to pass over in silence the rejection of any of their money measures by the House of Lords, and solemnly entered their protest. So far back as 1678, a money Bill having been rejected by the upper branch of the Legislature, the House of Commons resolved,—

"That all aids and supplies and aids to His Majesty in Parliament are the sole gift of the Commons; and that it is the undoubted and sole right of the Commons to direct, limit, and appoint in such Bills the ends, purposes, considerations, conditions, limitations, and qualification of such grants, which ought not to be changed or altered by the Lords."

Again, in 1692—I pass over a large number of cases, because any honourable member who chooses to refer to Hatsell will find the whole of the precedents set out—they resolved,—

"That the right of granting supplies to the Crown is in the Commons alone, as an essential part of their institution; and the limitation of all such grants as to the matter, manner, measure, and time is only in them, which is so well known to be fundamentally settled in them that to give reasons for it has been esteemed by our ancestors to be a weakening of that right."

And so far did they carry their insistance upon the privileges of the House in that respect that, in 1708, the Commons actually disagreed with the amendments made by the Lords in a Bill for covering the dome of St. Paul's with copper, the Lords proposing to cover it with lead, on the ground that "the money for building the said cathedral was granted by the Commons, and therefore the application thereof doth belong to them." Now, this quarrel between the two Houses—or, rather, this stubborn insistance upon the rights of the Commons—continued in the form which I have mentioned up to 1860. In 1860 the Paper Duties Repeal Bill was sent up to the House of Lords, and by them rejected, whereupon search was made, as it has been made in this instance, and a resolution was passed upon the subject. At that time Lord Palmerston was First Lord of the Treasury, and Mr. Gladstone Chancellor of the Exchequer, and I have a copy here of the resolutions then adopted by the English House of Commons, in which the right of the Commons was so clearly set forth that we have in them a clear precedent laid down, which alone is sufficient to guide any colonial Legislature to their proper duty in such a matter. These were the resolutions assented to, unanimously, after two days' debate, in the Commons:—

"1. That the right of granting aids and sup-

port to the Crown is in the Commons alone, as an essential part of their constitution; and that the limitation of all such grants as to matter, manner, measure, and time is only in them.

"2. That, although the Lords have exercised the power of rejecting Bills of several descriptions relating to taxation by negativing the whole, yet the exercising by them of that power has not been frequent, and is justly regarded by this House with peculiar jealousy, as affecting the rights of the Commons to grant the supplies, and to provide the ways and means for the service of the year.

"3. That, to guard for the future against an undue exercise of that power by the Lords, and to secure to the Commons their rightful control over taxation and supply, this House has in its own hands so to impose and remit taxes and to frame Bills of Supply that the right of the Commons as to the matter, manner, measure, and time may be maintained inviolate."

The Commons did not stop there. They gave practical effect to their resolution. Lord Palmerston and Mr. Gladstone were not the men to go down to the House and ask the House to consider the subject without going further. They put this resolution into effect in the following year; for what did they do? In 1861 they brought down a Bill "continuing certain Duties of Customs and Inland Revenue for the Service of Her Majesty:" that is 24 Vict., chapter 20, providing for the payment of rates and duties of Customs, imposing Excise duties and income-tax, and repealing the duties on paper. In that shape it was sent up to the House of Lords; and, in the words of Mr. Spencer Walpole, this is what followed:—

"The whole financial arrangements of the year, including the repeal of the paper duty, were included in one Bill, and sent up to the Lords. The Lords, obviously, could not upset the whole financial arrangements of the year, and they were accordingly compelled to pass the Bill, and to submit to the repeal of the paper duties. Since that time the same precedent has been adopted, and the whole of the financial arrangements of the year have been included in one Bill, and the Lords have virtually been rendered powerless in financial matters."

To show that that has been done continuously, I may mention that in 1882 there was passed an Act—46 Vict., chapter 72—which bears this title: "An Act for amending the Law relating to Customs and Inland Revenue and Postage and other Stamps, and for making Provision with respect to the National Debt and the Charges payable from the Public Revenue to the Commissioner for the Reduction of the National Debt, and for other Purposes." Amongst the "other purposes" the Act absolutely repeals payments to be made under the Fortifications Act, and "so much of the Act to facilitate the sale and transfer of land in Ireland as limits certain fees therein mentioned." From that time up to the present the whole of the financial arrangements have been put in one Bill. If that course were followed here we should not have the beer duty in one Bill, the property-tax in another, and the gold duty in another—the Government would embrace the whole of the financial arrangements in one measure, and throw on the other Chamber the onus and the danger of throwing out the whole. I would call attention to this: It is quite true that the Lords have on several occasions exercised their supposed right, but never, as I have said before, without protest on the part of the Commons; but even Lord Lyndhurst, with all his legal knowlege, could only find four money Bills in two centuries thrown out by the House of Lords which did not embrace some matter of policy altogether independent of the remission of taxation. Lord Palmerston mentions thirty-six Bills in 240 years, but he also pointed out that in few instances had money Bills not embracing questions of policy been thrown out. The Crown has a right to veto Bills passed in both Houses, but it does not do it. Since the present Royal family have been on the Throne not one Bill of the Imperial Parliament has been vetoed. Charles I. was very fond of that sort of thing, and paid the penalty. William III. attempted it once, but never again: the Commons taught him a lesson, and he dared not attempt it again; and from that day to this the Crown has never vetoed a Bill passed by both Houses of the Imperial Legislature. In the colonies, it is true, the Governor may reserve Bills for the assent of Her Majesty, and Her Majesty can withhold that assent. There are at least two instances in which that was done, and we know the result. One was the Convicts Prevention Act, of Victoria—an Act providing that any one coming to Victoria from Tasmania should produce a certificate of good character. That Bill was rejected twice, but the third time it was allowed. In this colony, I am sure, Sir, you will remember, we passed a Colonial Reciprocity Act, to which Her Majesty's assent was withheld on two occasions, but, on being repeated the third time, it was granted, the theory being that, although once a Bill may be rejected, yet, if it is persistently demanded by the representatives of the people, then it should be passed by the other branches of the Legislature as a whole. Now, in connection with this particular case which is now before the House, I would ask honourable members not to regard it as a question of gold duty at all: if it were the beer duty or any other duty that were in question the principle would be the same—we should be dealing with the same thing. Do not, therefore, run away with the idea that it is merely a question of taking off the gold duty. I shall not say a word on the question of the gold duty, either good or bad, but shall treat this as a question of principle only. Now, what happened? I find, in looking over the records of this House, that in 1881, 1883, 1884, and 1886—that is, four times, to my knowledge, and I believe it has been more often than that—Bills have been sent up to the other Chamber for the repeal, reduction, or abolition of the gold duty, and they have all

been ignominiously rejected. Then, we find the Miners' Rights Fees Bill—first introduced by myself in 1879, and again in 1881—passed this House. It was proposed by the Minister of Mines in 1885; and these Bills and proposals have all been rejected by the Legislative Council. Why, the House of Lords, in its wildest mood, never dreamt of resisting the will of the Commons to that extent—our "Lords" have taken upon themselves more than the Lords would venture to do at Home. It must be remembered that on former occasions when Gold Duty Bills passed this House they were brought in by private members. I admit that there is something anomalous in that; but on the present occasion the Government have come down with the Bill and proposed the reduction, and we have a right to assume that they have counted the consequences—that it has been taken into account in their financial arrangements, and that they are prepared to meet the consequences of the reduction of the duty. Therefore there is a stronger case than there has ever been before, inasmuch as the will of the Government is as the will of the House, and that never was the case before. I trust that members of this House will not fail to maintain the rights and privileges of the Commons of New Zealand, as their ancestors maintained them before for the Commons of England. I cannot help quoting from the speech of Lord Palmerston. In introducing the Bill he uttered words which we should carry home to our hearts. He said,—

"It would not have been becoming or even decent, upon an occasion in which there was an appearance, at all events, of an intention to invade our functions—it would not have been right or decent for this House to have remained absolutely silent. Such a silence might have been construed into a yielding of rights and functions which we mean steadily to maintain in our hands."

But let us take the evidence of the Lords themselves. When this question of the repeal of the paper duty was before the House of Lords, Earl Granville, in moving the second reading of the Bill, said,—and he put the whole question in a nutshell,—

"If the Lords rejected it they would, to all intents and purposes, impose a burden on the people. The legal technical right of rejecting"—he continued—"I do not deny. Legally and technically, the Crown may reject a Bill passed by the other two branches of the Legislature. That, to a certain degree, is guarded by the responsibility of the Ministers. The Crown, undoubtedly, has the technical right and prerogative to create a hundred peers to coerce this House; but for the Crown to exercise that right would be a gross and flagrant violation of the Constitution. The House of Commons has, I should also say, by the power of stopping the supplies, a right to coerce both this House and the Crown; but in all these instances the power is tempered by constitutional usage, it is tempered by prudence."

And I ask the House to bear in mind that if the other branch of the Legislature reject a Bill remitting taxation, it is a far more serious matter than the rejection of a Bill imposing taxation. Lord Dufferin also said this:—

"The very fact of your assent being required is a sufficient proof of your power of rejection, and I can quite conceive that the occasion may arise when it would be your duty to exercise that power. I cannot, however, but think that we should be acting contrary to usage and to the spirit of the Constitution in resorting to the extreme exercise of our power, except upon the most urgent and solemn occasions. . . . I doubt very much whether there has been a single instance in which a financial scheme initiated in the House of Commons has been interfered with in this House except on political or economic considerations."

As for Mr. Gladstone, he denounced the thing in unmeasured terms, and designated the action of the Lords as "a gigantic innovation—the most gigantic and most dangerous attempted in our time." I will not take up the time of the House any longer; but, before sitting down, I have a few words to read from the truest Englishman among them all. Mr. John Bright said this:—

"Our taxes are drawn from the capital of the country, from the skill of its population, from the toil of all those who work; and I say that we shall have reason for ever to be ashamed of ourselves,—that our children will have to be ashamed that they come from us,—if we do not now resist every attempt to take from the House of Commons that which the Constitution has given to them; and which we find to be essential to our security and our freedom—namely, the absolute, the irreversible, and uncontrolled management of the taxation and finances of this kingdom."

These noble words, addressed by John Bright to the people of England, I repeat to the Commons of New Zealand.

Motion agreed to.

WAIMATE AND SANDHURST RAILWAY-STATIONS.

Major STEWARD asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will provide the requisite facilities for loading sheep and cattle at the Waimate and Sandhurst (Hakateramea) Railway-stations?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON replied that he was informed there was a necessity for some accommodation at Sandhurst, but it was not required at Waimate. He would make further inquiries with regard to Waimate.

RIVERSDALE-BALFOUR TELEPHONE.

Mr. COWAN asked the Postmaster-General, If he will grant telephonic communication between Riversdale and Balfour? Balfour was situated half-way between Lumsden and Riversdale. The Postmaster-General had already informed him that he could not see his way to extend the telephone from Riversdale to Lumsden; but he now asked that it should be extended half-way.

Sir J. VOGEL said it was undesirable to ıdertake any more works this year, unless ry necessary. This extension would be conlered in April next.

SCHOOLS OF MINES, WEST COAST.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister of Mines, hether he will, at an early date, make such rangements as may be necessary for Mr. cLymont, the mineralogist, to resume charge lecturer to the various Schools of Mines on e west coast of the Middle Island? It would in the recollection of the Minister of Mines at, in answer to a letter he (Mr. Seddon) nt in March or April last, he promised that r. McLymont, who was called away suddenly some other part of the colony, should on an rly date return to the West Coast, so as to mplete the series of lectures he was giving ere. The people there were very much inrested in the lectures, and were desirous he ould return, in accordance with the pledge ven by the Minister of Mines.

Mr. LARNACH would communicate with rofessor Black, who had the making of all rangements in connection with the lectures, ıd see what his arrangements were. He obrved from Dr. Black's reports that it was oposed that Mr. McLymont should give a rtain number of lectures on the West Coast. e would see if circumstances would render it ssible to have him stationed there.

FOXTON-NEW PLYMOUTH RAILWAY.

Mr. MACARTHUR asked the Minister for ublic Works, Whether he will authorize the onstruction of level crossings on the Foxon-New Plymouth Railway-line, through the ownship of Feilding, on Gladstone, Russell, nd Fitzroy Streets?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said several applicaions had been made for three level crossings, nd the department, so far, had advised him hat they were not necessary or desirable. nquiries had been made afresh to see whether ne of those named in the question could be ranted. He had not as yet received any eply.

NAPIER-WOODVILLE RAILWAY.

Mr. ORMOND asked the Minister for Public Works, When will the short piece of line reuired to complete the Napier Railway to Woodville be let, and will the contract provide or the completion of the line to Woodville in February next, when the contract for the secion now in course of construction is to be ompleted? The Minister would give great atisfaction to the people in his district if he ave a favourable answer. The line now under ontract would be completed in February next, nd that would leave only a mile or a mile and half to Woodville, where the line was to stop or some time.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON replied that the specifications were just about ready, and the contract would be so let that it would be completed at the same time as the present contract.

HALF-MOON BAY.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Minister of Marine, If he will consider the advisability of appointing a harbourmaster at Half-moon Bay, Stewart Island? Half-moon Bay was the principal site of settlement in Stewart Island, and there was a little Government township established there already. Vessels which went there occasionally to load timber threw their ballast overboard, and were gradually destroying this beautiful harbour. It was also visited by whalers in stress of weather. A small nominal sum would suffice for this purpose. There were residents there who would undertake the duties for a nominal sum. The port was at present frequented by the Bluff Harbour Board's steamer. If something were not done to prevent this gradual filling-up, which had destroyed several good small harbours already in New Zealand, it would tend to the disadvantage of this little township.

Mr. LARNACH said the trade of this place up to the present time was so trifling that it was not considered desirable to make such an appointment; but further inquiries would be made during the recess, to see if there had been any increase of trade, or any prospect of a necessity arising for the appointment of a harbourmaster.

LYTTELTON-CHRISTCHURCH RAILWAY.

Mr. ALLWRIGHT asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will take into consideration the advisableness of reducing the amount paid for railway season-tickets between Lyttelton and Christchurch? He had been requested to ask this question by several season-ticket-holders. Now that the Minister had reduced the ordinary passenger fare between Lyttelton and Christchurch they thought there should be some reduction made to them.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said the present rate for season-tickets enabled the holders to travel to and from Lyttelton and Christchurch at the rate of 7d. first class and 6d. second class. The same rate applied for the same distance in other parts of the colony. At present he did not see his way to reduce them. The matter would be carefully considered, and if there was any likelihood of increasing the traffic thereby it would be done.

GOVERNMENT LABOURERS.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister for Public Works, If the reports in the Press are correct, that the Government intend, in the future, to pay all labourers in the employment of the Government 6s. per day, instead of 6s. 6d.? This question concerned a very large number of people in this colony. If the reports in the Press were correct, it would have the effect of not only affecting labourers employed by the Government, but also those employed by local bodies and private individuals; and a reduction of wages of this character tended to pauperize the community. This reduction of wages by the Government would not benefit the country in any shape or form.

[illegible]

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said he had been asked this question two or three times; but, as there seemed to be still some doubt about it, it was well it should be asked again. As to the first part of the question, he had had a slip from one of the papers in the south sent to him; but, whether owing to the fact that he was not able to make himself very well heard in the House or to some other cause, the report did not contain the whole of the answer he had given on this subject on a previous occasion. The Government had not interfered in any way with the wages of the men permanently employed, who had been for some considerable time receiving 6s. 6d. a day. But there were, in many parts of the colony, a very considerable number of temporary hands employed for a few days at a time, or day by day, and these were now being paid at the rate of 6s. a day about the towns, and much higher rates in other places, according to cost of living and other circumstances prevailing in the different districts. The circular which was sent out without his knowledge, and which had been recalled, in no way affected the permanent men, most of whom were what were called "surface-men" on the railways, and were paid for the full six days a week whether they worked the whole of the time or not. He was quite sure that nothing would please the Government more, as it would also please himself, than to be able to see the way to give not 6s. or 6s. 6d. only, but considerably higher wages; but the rate generally paid in the colony now for skilled labour was about the rate being paid by the Government, and of course the Government would not be justified in paying higher rates.

[illegible] of the House. I think there is no subject more important than the price of labour; but it matters little what it get a [illegible] I think a reasonable number will agree that I am only doing my duty. The Minister for Public Works says that men who are employed casually are paid [illegible] a day, while those permanently employed are paid [illegible] That is the exact opposite of the general rule, for private employers find that when they have to employ a man for a [illegible] they have to pay him a higher rate of pay than is given to those who have permanent employment. I look upon this as clearly a result of a reduction of the wages of the permanent men, for, [illegible] by the permanent men will be [illegible] We can get men as we want them for 6s. a day, and only pay them for the time they actually work. Therefore, why should we give men 6s. 6d. and pay men for full time? It is clearly the thin end of the wedge to reduce the general rate of wages, and thus bring down the price of labour. But if the wages of the workingmen are to come down, the salaries of Ministers and heads of departments must come down, and taxation must be much better adjusted than it is now—the whole system of taxation would have to be so altered that more of the burden would have to fall on those best able to bear it. I am very sorry indeed that the present Government should bring down the rate of wages to 6s. a day, and more especially at the present time, when foreign contractors are about to employ a large amount of labour in New Zealand. Indeed, I have heard from the West Coast already that one of the contractors under the Midland Railway Company has arrived there, and has stated that he does not intend to give more than 5s. a day, and that, if he cannot get men here for that, he will bring them from Home. Of course, if, just as that railway is about to be begun, the Government give their casual men 6s. a day this contractor has something to go by. I would strongly urge the Minister for Public Works to endeavour to look upon it more reasonably. If men employed casually can be got for 6s. a day, it would follow that men permanently employed should get 5s. 6d. That is a natural sequence. After the Half Government reduced the wages of all the Government employés by 10 per cent. at the time the colony was in financial straits, the 10 per cent. was restored to every one but the working-men; but with them the reduction was made permanent. This, of course, is a further reduction, and I am satisfied its effect will be what I have stated. On the West Coast the rate paid by contractors is 9s. a day, but the local bodies pay their day-labour men 10s. a day. They are showing a very good example, which I should like to see the Government follow. The Government of the

country, and especially a Liberal Government, should be the last to want to bring down the rates of wages. I hold that we should look to the comfort and well-being of the many in the colony—and the many are the poor labouring-classes; and, in my opinion, the colony can well afford to pay its labourers a little more than 6s. a day, in order to enable labourers to get a little more pay from employers coming to the colony. I hope the Minister will in future follow the usual rule, and give a little more—at all events not less—to the temporary than to the permanent hands.

Mr. SMITH.—The honourable gentleman has evidently forgotten what took place in 1882 on this question, when there was a debate lasting till nearly six in the morning on a motion of my own to restore the 10-per-cent. reduction to the labourers employed by the Government. The Government then gave way to this extent: The wages in some parts of the country had been reduced from 7s. a day to 6s., and in other parts from 6s. 6d. to 6s.; and it was agreed to give a uniform rate of 6s. 6d., and this, it was stated, would mean the giving-back of the 10 per cent. over the greater part of the country, though, in some parts, the rate paid before the reduction was not quite restored. Speeches were then made by almost every member of the House, showing that there was great feeling on the matter, and it was generally considered that the question was not likely to be reopened for some time to come, it being an almost unanimous expression of opinion that the rate of 6s. 6d. a day should be kept up. I hope the Minister will reconsider the question, which is a very important one; and I warn him that this proposed reduction will not be allowed. It may be said that the reduction does not affect the permanent men, and that their wages will be kept up; but it will be looked upon as the thin end of the wedge, and this reduction to those casually employed will cause great dissatisfaction, not only to those permanently employed by the Government, but also to the labouring-classes generally throughout the country; and no doubt it will be taken advantage of by private employers, who will be able to use the reduction of wages by the Government as an argument for them to reduce also the wages they are paying, and which they will not fail to do. I hope and expect, therefore, that the Minister for Public Works will state definitely, when replying, that he will at once give instructions that the proposed reduction shall not be made at all in any class of wages, be they permanent or casual.

Mr. MOSS.—I hope a number of members will take the opportunity of expressing their opinions on this question. To many honourable members the subject of the unemployed, or of workmen's wages, is like a black-beetle thrown among a lot of old ladies; but there are many in this House who feel that this is one of the most important subjects we can deal with. There are many honourable members who know that any serious fall in the rate of wages means misery to thousands of persons, and absolute degradation, as it will depress them into a lower condition of life; and I am sure that a large number of members would rather make any sacrifice than allow such a calamity to occur. If we reflect on what a workman's wages are, and what he has to do with them, we shall see how little he can afford to have any reduction made. I can speak only of town populations, and not of the country; but I can say that in the towns a large proportion of the population have to pay from £20 to £35 a year for rent, and out of the residue have to come large sums in the way of taxation. If a workman is a smoker he has to pay something like two guineas a year to the revenue for leave to take a pipe of tobacco, which is one of his greatest luxuries; and he has to pay for other things in proportion. I am afraid the time is coming when there will be a great strain on the wages class. We know that the price of produce has fallen, and that there is great depression throughout the country, and we also know that at some future time the rate of wages may have to come down; but the Government ought to be the last people to lower it. I say, further, that, if the Government feel that the time has come to lower wages, they should consider whether the whole cost of governing the country must not also be lowered—whether the Governor himself and Ministers themselves, and the whole country, should not share in the reduction. I never could draw a distinction between the working-man and the rest of the community, as some honourable members appear to think that those who speak of working-men must do. I am the representative of many others besides what are called working-men. I do not think that working-men have a right to special representation any more than any other class of the community; but I hold it is my duty to look after their interests as vigilantly as I would after those of any other class. I heard with very great regret the other day the Premier say, when a motion was made for the adjournment of the House, that it would be necessary to make some alteration in the Standing Orders to prevent such motions. I was astonished that such a remark should come from the leader of a Liberal Government; for it is the only safeguard we have against flippant and evasive answers from Ministers. I am sure there are many honourable members in the House who sympathize deeply with the remarks of the honourable member for Sydenham, and I can assure him, as an older member, that, although occasionally, if he stands up and speaks on questions of this kind, he will hear some small dissent, the majority sympathize with him.

Mr. REID.—I agree with the honourable member for Kumara that this is a very important question, and that it ought to be discussed. I consider that a reduction in the rate of wages at the present time would press very heavily on a large section of the community, and a section which, I have no hesitation in saying, can least afford such a reduction. We know

that depression exists everywhere, and that it has fallen on the working-classes more than on any other. Would it be right, under those circumstances, to reduce the wages they now get by 6d. a day? The honourable member for Parnell says that he knows only about workmen in the towns. Well, I know something about workmen in the country, and I may say that a harder-worked class it would be difficult to find. These men have to be up by five o'clock in order to be at their work by eight, and do not get home again till long after other men knock off. I have here a telegram from one of my constituents, in which he deeply deplores that the Government should have thought it necessary to issue a proclamation that from the 27th July the wages would be reduced by 6d. a day. I heard the Minister for Public Works say that that was only to affect men taken on casually; but that is no reason why reduced wages should be given. It is simply getting in the thin end of the wedge. If these men have to take 6s. a day now, it will follow that in a short time the permanent hands will have to take 6s. a day also. Some of these permanent hands have been on for years, are married men with large families, and good settlers. They have to pay 5s., 6s., and 7s. a week for rent; and I should like to know how they are to bring up their families decently on £1 19s. a week. What is the object of this reduction? It must be to make the railway returns better than they are at present; but I submit that that is no reason why this class-taxation should be imposed. It is throwing the burden on the shoulders of people who are least able to bear it. I believe that the railways do pay; but, if they do not, why not make up the deficiency out of the consolidated revenue, so that the wealthy may have to bear it as well as the working-men? I hope the House will give a decided expression of opinion on this point, and, if it does so, no doubt the Government will look upon it as a direction to withdraw this order. I do not know whether I can move a motion to that effect now.

Mr. SPEAKER.—No amendment can be moved to the motion for the adjournment of the House. The honourable member can move his motion on going into Committee of Supply.

Mr. REID.—I will take an opportunity when the House is going into Committee of Supply to move that this order be withdrawn.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I would like to point out that Government labourers are a different class from ordinary labourers: in fact, you may look upon them, in a sense, as skilled labourers, for you have to depend upon them in very important matters, and they must be good and steady men, or the Government cannot rely upon them to carry out the work they have to do, as the safety of the travelling public depends on them. The Government ought therefore to be the last to refuse these men good wages, and if they wish to have the best class of men they must be prepared to give those they employ 6d. a day more, instead of taking it off them. Even supposing that labour at the present time is easily to be got at 6s. a day, I question very much whether you can get men to do this class of work at that rate. I hope, therefore, that, if this order has been sent, it will be countermanded; in fact, I understand it has been countermanded; and, if so, I am glad to hear it. Of course, if this is intended to apply to the unemployed, and is only to be in force for a short time, people in that condition may expect to have to make some sacrifice, because it is only intended to give them something to eat until they can get better employment; but for regular work under the Government 6s. 6d. a day is not too much.

Mr. IVESS.—I cannot refrain from saying a few words on this important matter. It is a singular fact that the action of the Government has not been supported by one champion in this House, but that, on the contrary, there has been a very general expression of opinion condemnatory of the action of the Government. Of course this discussion is to a large extent an idle one; but I cannot help saying that I regret very much that such a blow should have been aimed at the wage-earning class in this country as that involved in the circular sent out by the Government. I had hoped that a more noble example would be given by the present Government, whom the honourable member for Kumara describes as a Liberal Government, and who are certainly supported by the wage-earning classes of New Zealand; and that class of people will, I am sure, be very much disappointed at this action on the part of the Government. I trust, therefore, that, after the expression of opinion which has been given this afternoon, the Government, whose term of office may expire with the present Parliament, will reconsider their action. If it is necessary to make reductions and to economize, then let the Government commence in the higher branches. Let them work downwards in their reductions. The report of the Legislative Expenditure Committee indicates where there is ample scope for reductions, if the Government will only take the matter in hand. There is sufficient material to work upon in this House in order to save thousands of pounds, and spare the wage-earning class, who cannot afford to lose anything.

Sir G. GREY.—I am not aware whether this is the work of a single Minister, or whether it is the act of the Government as a whole. I can only say, if it is the act of the Government, that they appear to have altogether misunderstood their position in this country. In this instance there is no analogy between the Government of Great Britain and the Government which exists in this country. Such a position as this could never arise in Great Britain, because the Government there are not employers of labour in the way we are here. Here we own railways, we construct railways, we execute great public works, we assume the position of great employers of labour; and, holding that position, the Government have to perform a duty consonant with their position. What is their duty, then? They represent the whole of the people of New Zealand. They do not represent the

No. 25.

NEW ZEALAND.

ARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SESSION 1886.

5th August to 10th August.

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WELLINGTON:
BY AUTHORITY: GEORGE DIDSBURY, GOVERNMENT PRINTER.

1886.

Price 2d

farmers alone, they do not represent the employers of labour alone. The farmers and the employers of labour generally do not form the major portion of the population. The greater proportion of the population are those who have to depend upon their daily labour for their support, and the Government should consider their duty to the majority, who pay the largest share of the revenue. I ask them to give no favour, but I say that it is their paramount duty to consider what the rights of the majority are. I say, therefore, that the Government ought not to act as they are doing. The Minister for Public Works partially defended the action of the Government by speaking of the rates of wages which are paid to persons outside the public service; and the Premier, when speaking at Christchurch to a deputation, distinctly said that he must consider the claims of the farmers, and what they were prepared to give for labour. Now, I say that it is the duty of the Government to give their servants a fair and just rate of wages for a fair and just day's work, and that they should do that independently of what any other persons are giving — that they should not reduce wages because other persons are doing so. That is no excuse for reducing wages. I think that, on the contrary, it is their duty to maintain wages at a fair and proper and just rate. It is their duty to give an example of what sum should be paid; and that sum should be sufficient to give the labourer fair means of subsistence for himself and his family, and to enable him to lay by for sickness and old age. We hear contrasts drawn between the rate of wages paid here and the rate paid in Great Britain; but there is no analogy between them. I have lately looked into this subject, and I find that in Great Britain the rent which has to be paid by labourers for their dwellings—either in the country or in cities—is about 1s. 6d. and 2s. a week; while in this colony the labourer cannot get a decent house, especially in the cities, for less than 8s. a week, and in some cases he may have to pay 10s. That has to be deducted from the wages in the first instance, and it is upon what he has left that he has to support his family, and provide for sickness and old age. Therefore I say that the Minister has no right to justify his action in reducing wages by referring to what other people are doing. He is not fulfilling his duty to the country in doing that. He is spending public money taken from the bulk of the people, and it is the duty of the Minister to see that the persons employed on the public works get such a rate of wages as the necessities of themselves and their families require. The Minister for Public Works should have stood up in this House and have said, "I have made a careful calculation, and I am prepared to show, looking at the prices ruling in the colony, looking at the cost of living, that the wages I propose to give are just and fair, and are sufficient to enable these men to support their families in decency, and to give them an opportunity of laying something by to make a provision for old age." But he told us nothing of the kind. He has not given us information of that kind. I hope that, after what has been said in this House, he will recede from the position that he has taken up in this matter, and that he will not venture to return along the same path again. The employers of labour get labour as cheap as they can, and, if the Government keep labour below this, they will plunge all in misery. If circumstances have arisen which, in the opinion of the Government, have given an enhanced value to money, and justify a decrease in the payment made by the Government for services rendered, let the Government begin at the head. The persons at whom the Government should strike first are those who draw large salaries; and then other reductions can be made. Let the Minister act fairly and justly to every class in the community, as a just judge in such a case. Because that is the position that he occupies. He does not occupy the position of some contractor who may grind people down to the lowest sum he can. He sits there as a judge to determine what his fellow-men are fairly and justly entitled to. It is for him to maintain wages and civilization and decency at a proper standard. I trust that he will retrace the steps he has taken, and that he will not attempt to justify what he has done.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON. — After what has fallen from the honourable gentleman I should like to repeat again what I said in answer to a question when the matter was before the House on the last occasion. I then said that the circular was sent out under a misapprehension, and that it was recalled immediately the matter came under my notice. I cannot understand what more can be done. I am not at all sorry that this discussion has taken place, because it will strengthen the hands of the Government in the matter of the rate of wages generally. After the expression of opinion which has taken place, the Government, when they are taking on new hands, will certainly not make any attempt to reduce the present rates of wages for ordinary labour, and will pay the full current rates prevailing in each district for skilled labour. These remarks do not apply to those employed on relief works.

Mr. JOYCE.—I simply wish to express, on behalf of those who take an interest in this matter, the obligations which they feel they are under to the Minister for Public Works for having brought the matter up while the House was in session, thereby giving the House an opportunity of expressing its opinion as it has expressed it to-day, and which it would not have been able to do had this taken place during the recess.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

DUNTROON-HAKATERAMEA RAILWAY RATING.

Mr. DUNCAN asked the Government, What steps they intend to take in regard to the petition of deferred-payment settlers in Duntroon-Hakateramea District to be relieved of railway rates? He asked this question because the Government was taking action this

year to relieve other persons in a similar position from rates due to district railway companies. The statements in the petition showed that some of the settlers had taken up this land under a misapprehension as to their liability for these rates, and some of them had been misled in a manner which was not creditable to a former Government. He believed that all of the statements in the petition were true, and he hoped that he should get a favourable answer to the question.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said it was the argument contained in this petition that had led the House to purchase the Duntroon and Hakateramea line, and that purchase had relieved the settlers of a liability which they had had to bear for years. The Government did not see their way to do anything further.

PUBLIC WORKS ESTIMATES.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—I have to ask leave to make a motion without notice. It is, That the order made on the 25th day of June, for referring the public works estimates to Committee of Supply, be discharged, and those estimates withdrawn, with the view of substituting other estimates instead. I would explain to the House that there is a necessity for this resolution, because the estimates I brought down when I delivered my Public Works Statement on the 25th June were not classified under the various loans under which ways and means are provided. The estimates have not been altered at all, but simply put under their proper heads. The total amount of the estimates His Excellency will send down will be identically the same as those in honourable members' hands, except that they will be under the heads of—the new loan, the North Island Trunk Loan, and the balance of the old loans now in the Public Works Fund.

Motion agreed to, and new estimates introduced.

FISHERIES CONSERVATION BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Major ATKINSON.—Are the Government going to make any statement about this Bill?

Mr. LARNACH.—Only this: I cannot agree with the remarks that fell from my honourable friends opposite—that the Government had better withdraw the Bill. The fact is that the Bill is a very necessary one. Its provisions are short, and it goes exactly in the direction in which my honourable friends who are voting against it assure us that some regulations should go. Unless the Bill is passed there will be no means of leasing in the manner best calculated to conserve these seal reserves. I think the House ought to allow it to go into Committee. If amendments are necessary I shall be very glad to accept any that are in the right direction.

Sir G. GREY.—I really do not think it is desirable that the Bill should go into Committee. I think that it will do little good, and that it will have to be made a new Bill entirely. I feel certain that the Government had better by far refer to the United States and get a copy of the actual regulations under which their seal fisheries are made so successful. I move the adjournment of the debate for one week from this date.

The House divided on the question, "That the debate be adjourned."

AYES, 32.

Allwright	Fisher	Richardson, G.
Atkinson	Garrick	Rolleston
Barron	Grey	Russell
Beetham	Hamlin	Samuel
B.-Bradshaw	Joyce	Sutter
Bruce	Lake	Te Ao
Bryce	Montgomery	Thompson, T.
Buchanan	Ormond	Trimble.
Buckland, W.F.	Parata	*Tellers.*
Conolly	Peacock	Ivess
Duncan	Reese	Seddon.

NOES, 36.

Ballance	Hobbs	Pyke
Bevan	Hursthouse	Richardson, E.
Cadman	Lance	Ross
Cowan	Larnach	Steward, W. J.
Dargaville	Locke	Taylor
Dodson	Macandrew	Thomson, J. W.
Fraser	Mackenzie, M.	Tole
Fulton	McMillan	Turnbull
Gore	Menteath	Vogel.
Grace	Moat	*Tellers.*
Guinness	Moss	McKenzie, J.
Harper	O'Conor	Walker.
Hatch		

PAIR.

For.	*Against.*
Wilson.	Fitzherbert.

Majority against, 4.

Amendment negatived.

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be now considered in Committee."

AYES, 35.

Ballance	Hursthouse	Seddon
Bevan	Larnach	Smith
Cowan	Mackenzie, M.	Steward, W. J.
Dargaville	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Dodson	McMillan	Thomson, J. W.
Fraser	Menteath	Tole
Fulton	Moat	Turnbull
Gore	Moss	Vogel
Grace	O'Conor	Walker.
Guinness	Pyke	*Tellers.*
Harper	Richardson, E.	Hobbs
Hatch	Ross	Macandrew.

NOES, 32.

Allwright	Grey	Reese
Atkinson	Hamlin	Richardson, G.
Beetham	Ivess	Rolleston
B.-Bradshaw	Lake	Russell
Bryce	Levestam	Stewart, W. D.
Buchanan	Macarthur	Sutter
Buckland, W.F.	Montgomery	Thompson, T.
Conolly	Newman	Trimble.
Duncan	Ormond	*Tellers.*
Fisher	Parata	Barron
Garrick	Peacock	Joyce.

PAIR.

For.	*Against.*
Lance.	Wilson.

Majority for, 3.

Motion agreed to.

IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. JOYCE moved, That the Chairman report progress.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 36.

Allwright	Hislop	Pere
Atkinson	Hursthouse	Peacock
Beetham	Ivess	Reese
B.-Bradshaw	Lake	Reid
Buchanan	Levestam	Richardson, G.
Buckland, J. C.	Macarthur	Rolleston
Buckland, W.F.	Mitchelson	Russell
Conolly	Montgomery	Trimble
Duncan	Newman	Whyte.
Fergus	O'Conor	*Tellers.*
Fisher	Ormond	Hirst, H.
Grey	Parata	Joyce.
Hakuene		

NOES, 32.

Ballance	Harper	Richardson, E.
Bevan	Larnach	Ross
Brown	Macandrew	Seddon
Bruce	Mackenzie, M.	Smith
Cadman	McKenzie, J.	Steward, W. J.
Cowan	McMillan	Thomson, J. W.
Dargaville	Menteath	Tole
Fraser	Moat	Turnbull.
Garrick	O'Callaghan	*Tellers.*
Gore	Pearson	Hatch
Grace	Pyke	Walker.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Bryce	Vogel
Wilson.	Lance.

Majority for, 4.

Progress reported.

Mr. LARNACH moved, That the Bill be recommitted forthwith.

Major ATKINSON moved, as an amendment, That the Bill be committed again that day fortnight.

The House divided on the question, "That the word 'forthwith' stand part of the question."

AYES, 27.

Ballance	Harper	Richardson, E.
Bevan	Hatch	Ross
Bruce	Larnach	Smith
Cadman	Macandrew	Steward, W. J.
Cowan	McKenzie, J.	Tole
Dargaville	McMillan	Turnbull.
Fraser	Moat	*Tellers.*
Garrick	O'Callaghan	Brown
Gore	O'Conor	Walker.
Grace		

NOES, 38.

Allwright	Buckland, J. C.	Fisher
Atkinson	Buckland, W.F.	Grey
Beetham	Conolly	Hakuene
B.-Bradshaw	Duncan	Hamlin
Buchanan	Fergus	Hirst, H.
Hislop	Parata	Russell
Ivess	Peacock	Te Ao
Lake	Pearson	Thomson, J. W.
Levestam	Pere	Trimble
Macarthur	Reese	Whyte.
Mitchelson	Reid	*Tellers.*
Montgomery	Richardson, G.	Joyce
Ormond	Rolleston	Newman.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Lance	Wilson
Vogel.	Bryce.

Majority against, 11.

Motion negatived, and amendment agreed to.

SPECIAL POWERS AND CONTRACTS BILL.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I beg to move the second reading of the Special Powers and Contracts Bill. I would remind honourable members that it has to go to the Waste Lands Committee; and I would suggest that the debate, if there be any, be taken on the motion for going into Committee on the Bill, and after it has come from the Select Committee.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I am not going to discuss the Bill, but I would remind the honourable gentleman that he promised to have a clause inserted in this Bill to deal with the claims of old soldiers, so that the matter might be considered by this House.

Mr. BALLANCE.—It was preferred not to legislate upon the question during this session; but immediately after the session the Government propose to appoint a Royal Commission to make inquiries, and upon the information so obtained there will be legislation proposed next session. There is power taken in this Bill to deal with the claims of Volunteers; but that is not so large a question.

Mr. PEACOCK.—I understood that when this Bill was brought in provision was to be made for validating the exchange of land made between the Auckland Domain Board and the hospital authorities for a portion of the hospital site. The transfer was arranged, and the building has been erected on the site for years, but the transaction needs validating; and I understood that was to be done in this Bill.

Mr. BALLANCE.—That can be brought before the Waste Lands Committee.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—I understand that, if a member wishes, he can appear before the Committee to oppose certain clauses in the Bill. There is a clause relating to a matter in my district that I want to have something to say about.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Yes. Evidence will be taken upon all the matters in the schedule to the Bill.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—As the Minister of Lands does not wish the Bill to be debated at this stage, I shall not say more than a few words, but I should like to point out with regard to this Bill that it will break down of its own weight if we continue in the same direction in which we seem to be going this year. The

view I take of a Special Powers and Contracts Bill is that it should deal with questions involving no principle, and that it should have no effect except that which is stated in the Bill itself. For instance, it is a very convenient method of altering the purpose, say, of a cemetery reserve to some other purpose, or of finally curing defects in well-understood transactions. But if there are to be introduced into this Bill amendments of the general Acts of the Assembly, such as the Land Act or the Education Act, then the whole character of the Bill will be changed, it will break down of its own weight very soon, and honourable members will find that they have lost what is really a great convenience. Such a measure will not be tolerated if its objects and purposes are to be so entirely changed. The introduction of such matters will simply lead to its rejection. I see that there is in this Bill a clause which destroys entirely a particular trust at Motueka. That seems to me to be a most extraordinary proceeding. I think that the principle to be observed in connection with these matters should be the same as that which governs our local-Bill legislation, and that these proposals should be advertised just as local Bills are advertised. The Bill is a very convenient and useful method of dealing with small matters, and it is because I desire to see such a convenience retained that I warn the House of what must follow if the measure is to be overloaded with proposals which should be brought down in separate Bills in the ordinary way.

Mr. PARATA.—I wish to call attention to paragraph 40. That refers to a reserve which was set apart as a landing-place for the Natives who wished to bring their produce to sell at Port Chalmers. There was a similar reserve at Dunedin. As to this land at Port Chalmers, when the Court sat in 1868 it was awarded to four trustees; but only three trustees were named in the grant. The name of Horomona Pohio was omitted. That was an error. What I want to secure now is that the land shall be available to the Natives for the purpose for which it was intended—that the Natives shall not lose their landing-place.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I have just one or two words to say in reply to what was stated by the honourable member for Geraldine. I should regret it as much as any one if the useful character of this Bill, which is brought down annually, were in any way impaired or destroyed; but I do not think there is anything unusual in this Bill. I am inclined to think it follows upon the practice of the Legislature since 1882. Now, I will take up the clause to which the honourable gentleman refers, which is, apparently, an amendment of the Land Act—it provides that one tenure shall be changed into another; but in another sense it is not an amendment of the Land Act, for the tenure that it changes—namely, deferred-payment pastoral land—is not provided in the Land Act, and therefore the change is not of a permanent character at all, but purely temporary. The provision in this Bill is to have that tenure transmuted into another, for the purpose of affording relief to a large number of people. It is, as I have said, purely of a temporary character, and applies only to existing cases, and not to many of them. This cannot be enforced in future, since the section of the old Act to which it refers has been repealed, and each case goes before the Waste Lands Committee, precisely the same as any other petition. I think it is clear that the Bill has not departed from the usual lines which Bills of this kind have taken in past times. With regard to the Motueka clause, I admit that on the face of it it does look strange that a trust should be affected; but that matter has been discussed before the Native Affairs Committee, and has been fully inquired into. It is impossible for us to discuss the merits of each clause during the second reading of a Bill; but I would point out that the instance referred to by the honourable member for Geraldine is an unfortunate instance from his point of view, and shows clearly that we have not departed from the usual custom. I agree that a Bill of this kind is intended to meet exceptional cases—it is not intended to affect the public statutes of the colony; and I should be sorry to see it go in the direction of qualifying or amending the general laws. But in the instance referred to nothing of the kind has been done, the reference being only to what has been repealed, and only affecting a certain number of cases. I will say no more on the question; but it can be fully discussed in Committee. I have thought it necessary to say thus much, because I believe no more useful measure can be introduced into this House. It remedies a great number of distinct grievances; and honourable members know the difficulty of local-Bill legislation in this House.

Bill read a second time.

On the question, That the Bill be referred to the Waste Lands Committee,

Mr. LAKE said,—I have no intention of importing debatable matter into the question; but I wish to ask the Minister of Lands a question. I have carefully looked through the Special Powers and Contracts Bill, and I cannot see any allusion to one measure of temporary relief that is required—I mean, one remedying the discrepancy between the Forest-trees-planting Act and the Act of 1872. Is the Minister aware that the 50th section of the Act of 1885, specially intended to give relief to those who have *bonâ fide* carried out forest-tree-planting, simply refers to the Act of 1871 instead of to the Act of 1872, and consequently that the bulk of *bonâ fide* claims are unintentionally excluded? It appears to me that some provision to rectify this obvious mistake would be a proper thing to introduce into a Bill of this kind.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I may say we found, under the provisions of the Forests Act of last session, that it was impossible to make payments in cash to those who had claims. The Auditor would not pass the accounts, as he found a difficulty in the way. It was too late to insert a clause in this Bill; but a clause has

sen prepared, and will be submitted to the Waste Lands Committee.

Mr. FULTON.—I quite agree that there is no difficulty the honourable gentleman has referred to with regard to local Bills; but I entirely demur to the proposition that local Bills are to be dealt with in this way unless proper notice is given in the districts affected.

Bill referred to the Waste Lands Committee.

DISTRICT RAILWAYS PURCHASING BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 4.—Governor may issue debenture-bonds sufficient to realize purchase-money.

Mr. MONTGOMERY moved, That from the words "thirty-five thousand pounds" "thirty-five" be struck out, with a view to insert another word.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word be retained."

AYES, 21.

Ballance	Locke	Richardson, E.
Bevan	Macandrew	Richardson, G.
Dargaville	McKenzie, J.	Turnbull
Fraser	Moat	Walker.
Gore	Moss	*Tellers.*
Hakuene	O'Callaghan	Cowan
Harper	Parata	Steward, W. J.
Hatch		

NOES, 21.

Beetham	Ormond	Thompson, T.
Bruce	Pearson	Thomson, J. W.
Bryce	Reese	Trimble
Buckland, W. F.	Rolleston	Whyte.
Conolly	Samuel	*Tellers.*
Grey	Stewart, W. D.	Hislop
Mackenzie, M.	Sutter	Peacock.
Montgomery		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Brown	Hursthouse
Fergus	Allwright
Hirst, H.	Fulton
Lance	Wilson
O'Conor	Mitchelson
Pyke	Hobbs
Tole.	Macarthur.

Mr. CHAIRMAN.—It devolves upon me to give a casting-vote. I shall vote with the "Noes," with a view to lessening taxation.

Word struck out.

Colonel TRIMBLE moved, That the word "twenty-seven" be inserted.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 29.

Atkinson	Fitzherbert	Reese
Barron	Fulton	Rolleston
Beetham	Grey	Ross
Bruce	Ivess	Russell
Bryce	Lake	Samuel
Buchanan	Mackenzie, M.	Thomson, J. W.
Buckland, J. C.	Montgomery	Whyte.
Buckland, W. F.	Newman	*Tellers.*
Conolly	Ormond	Sutter
Duncan	Pearson	Trimble.

NOES, 28.

Ballance	Joyce	Richardson, G.
Bevan	Kerr	Smith
B.-Bradshaw	Macandrew	Steward, W. J.
Dargaville	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, T.
Fraser	Moat	Turnbull
Garrick	O'Callaghan	Walker.
Grace	Parata	
Harper	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Hatch	Reid	Cowan
Hislop	Richardson, E.	Gore.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Brown	Hursthouse
Fergus	Allwright
Lance	Wilson
Moss	Fisher
O'Conor	Mitchelson
Pyke	Hobbs
Stewart, W. D.	Locke
Tole.	Macarthur.

Majority for, 1.

Word inserted.

Progress reported.

SHAG POINT COAL COMPANY.

On the motion, That the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply,

Mr. MACANDREW said,—I wish to move, That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should take measures to give effect to the recommendation of the Waste Lands Committee in the sessions of 1884 and 1886 on the petition of F. D. Rich and others in relation to the Shag Point Coal-mine; and also to give effect to the recommendations of the said Committee on the petitions of the same petitioners in the sessions of 1883, 1884, and 1886, in relation to the Shag Point Railway. If honourable gentlemen will give me their attention for a few moments I think I shall be able to induce them to agree unanimously to the reports of the Committee. I will read those reports. The first report was as follows:—

"That, looking at the capital expended on this mine, and the need of keeping open a coal-mine in the district, a lease of the submarine coalfields for a long term should be granted to Messrs. Rich and Williams, and an extension of the existing lease, if no private rights are interfered with."

I may say that that has been done, so that no action is required in reference to that. Then the report goes on to say,—

"That a Government grant should be made in aid of reopening the mine, such grant not to exceed one-third of the total cost of such reopening, and in no case to exceed £5,000."

That has been recommended by the Waste Lands Committee in the session of 1884 and this session. I may say that it has been discovered that £3,000 will suffice; that if £3,000 is given the company will spend £6,000. Then, the other report referring to the railway is as follows:—

"The Committee has the honour to report that, failing the Government exercising its power to purchase, the petitioner is

be paid a rental from year to year, so as to cover the interest on the cost of construction of the branch line."

That was the Committee's report in 1883; and in 1884 the same report was brought up with this addition:—

"Such payment to reckon during the period that the railway was working, and to apply when the railway resumes working."

The railway in the meantime had ceased running, as I shall presently show. These were the reports made. I am sorry to take up the time of the House at any length in reference to this question, but I must state as shortly as I can the facts of the case. Some ten years ago the proprietors of this coal-mine entered into correspondence with the Government of the day—I think the honourable member for Napier (Mr. Ormond) was then Minister for Public Works—with the view of constructing a branch line of railway from the coal-mine to the main line at Palmerston; but, owing to a variety of local prejudices and jealousies, nothing came out of it for two years. In 1878, however, a Railways Construction Act was passed, which contained the following clause:—

"The construction of the branch line of railway mentioned in the First Schedule as 'Main Line to Shag Point' shall be contingent upon the cost thereof being defrayed by the Shag Point Coal Company (Limited); and such branch line, when constructed, shall be managed and worked upon such terms and conditions as shall be agreed upon by the Minister for Public Works and the said company."

Accordingly, a branch line was constructed by the company,—costing, I think, some £8,000. The rails were valued at £1,000. It happened that the Government had at that time a large quantity of rails on hand, and, in order to save time, the Government agreed to let the company have the necessary rails. Of course they were to be replaced by other new rails, or to be paid for; which would have been done long ago had the recommendations of the Waste Lands Committee been given effect to. Now, the result of the company's enterprise was that a village was created in what was previously, comparatively speaking, a barren wilderness—a village containing some five hundred or six hundred inhabitants, old and young. There was a school there, having a hundred and fifty children in attendance. There were a hundred and forty heads of families engaged in the mine, and of course that meant that a considerable amount of revenue was derived through the Customs from the place. When the mine was at its zenith it turned out thirty-six thousand tons of coal in twelve months, and a large amount of traffic was thus obtained for the railway. I suppose that the Government got 6s. per ton haulage on the main line. Besides that, the railway got its own coal very cheap, and at a much lower price than the Government had been paying previously. So far all went well; but by-and-by it turned out that the mine was supposed to be unsafe, the working being chiefly submarine, and it was alleged that there was danger to life in working it. I do not apply any harsher term to the order to stop working than that it was an error of judgment on the part of the authority for the time being; but certainly it was a very grievous error of judgment; and the mine, in consequence of that order, ceased working—in fact, it was submerged. The result of that action was that a property which cost the proprietors somewhere about £40,000, including the railway, was rendered absolutely valueless; and another result was that a thriving and industrious population was scattered to the four winds. Not only that, but during the time the mine was closed a very large and important district, extending from Waikouaiti to Oamaru, and inland as far as Macrae's and Naseby, had to pay 6s. a ton more for fuel than before. Coals had to be imported from Newcastle to Oamaru; and I believe at the very lowest computation 6s. was the difference in price. If the mine had been allowed to continue working, I believe the output would have been fifty thousand tons a year, and that would have meant a revenue of £15,000 a year to the main line of railway. The proprietors of the mine begged and prayed the Government that, before the mine was ordered to be closed, a Commission of experts should be appointed to inquire into it at the proprietors' own expense.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—No. The mine was closed in February, and the application was not made until July.

Mr. MACANDREW.—There were two applications. Unfortunately I have not got the evidence here, but I can vouch for the truth of that. It is a matter which can be confirmed by evidence. That is what aggravates the thing. These people, who had spent so much money on the property, entreated the Government. They said, "Nominate your own men, and we will pay for them." The thing came before the House on petition the session before last, and the petitioners went to an expense of £400 in employing counsel and bringing up witnesses to give evidence before the Waste Lands Committee. I have no personal interest, direct or indirect, in this matter—I have no cousin, aunt, or uncle concerned in it. I take the matter up on public grounds chiefly, but also to try to do justice to an injured man—one of the most enterprising men in the colony—who has been all but ruined by the action of the Government in connection with this matter. I have not the slightest doubt that, if it had been possible for these people to go into a Court of equity, instead of getting £3,000 to enable the mine to be started again they would have been awarded very large compensation. As it is, they are asking for nothing for their own pockets. All I ask is that the recommendation of the Committee, made in two different sessions, may be given effect to. I may say that on the strength of that recommendation the proprietors have already spent £4,000 in reopening the mine, and they are now turning out some 800 to 1,000 tons of coal a

nth. The whole thing must, however, col-
se unless a further amount of some
,000 is expended; and, unless the recom-
ndation of the Committee is given effect to,
d some measure of justice is done to these
en, we may depend upon it that this House
ll not hear the last of it on the part of the
strict for many years to come. I say it is
onstrous that a large and important district,
nsisting, you may say, of three electorates,
ould be put in the position it will be put in
the House refuses to accede to the recom-
ndation of the Committee. I beg to move
e resolution which I have read.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I should like to explain
the House what I believe to be the present
sition of this matter. The honourable mem-
r for Port Chalmers has not gone very closely
to the merits of the case. He has referred
the reports of the Committee—one made in
84 and one during the present session. As to
e report of 1884, the Committee were almost
qually divided on the matter; and I have
doubt, myself, after reading the evidence,
at the position was clearly established that
e mine was in a dangerous condition before
was closed. That seems to me to have
een proved, and it does not appear that
here is any evidence to the contrary. The
onourable gentleman certainly has not pro-
nced any. The mine was flooded with salt
ater before it was closed. I am aware that
e honourable gentleman has stated pre-
iously in the House that when the mine was
umped out it was found to be fresh water;
ut I have been told since that it really was
lt water, and that the mine was in a most
angerous position. I am not now going into
he merits of the case, but I am trying to put
efore the House what I believe to be the true
osition we now occupy with regard to this
uestion. It is this: that the question has
een virtually settled; that the terms proposed
y the Government after the Committee had
eported in 1884 were accepted by Mr. Rich;
nd that he has no right to come to the
Iouse now and ask for a reconsideration of the
natter. I think the documents show that the
Iovernment's offer to Mr. Rich in 1884 was
eally accepted by him in final settlement of
he whole case. Here is a letter sent from the
lepartment to Mr. Rich on his repeated re-
quest for a settlement of the question:—

"Wellington, 3rd March, 1885.

"SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge the
eceipt of your two letters, dated the 19th and
6th January last, with respect to the exten-
ion of the lease of the Shag Point Coal-mine
o Mr. Hutchison, in terms of the recommenda-
ion of the Waste Lands Committee of last
ession, and applying for payment of the sum
f £1,094, on account of expenditure incurred
y you, amounting to £3,284 1s. 1d., as shown
n a schedule which you forwarded. In reply,
I have to inform you that, as the working of
he coal-mine will be of great importance to a
arge district, the Government is prepared to
grant an extension of the lease on the present
terms and conditions for the term of fifty years;
but it cannot undertake to make any money
payments.—I have, &c., "J. BALLANCE."

Immediately after that letter was written, Mr. Rich attended at the office of the Commissioner of Crown Lands to arrange with him for the surrender of the old lease to Mr. Hutchison and for the taking of the new lease. A dispute arose as to whether the new lease was to cover the two areas or only one, and the department, being telegraphed to, replied that the new lease was to cover both areas; and Mr. Rich expressed his satisfaction at this arrangement. Here is a telegram from the Commissioner of Crown Lands as to what took place at the time the new lease was accepted:—

"Dunedin, 1st August, 1886.

"The Under-Secretary,
"Crown Lands Department.

"I don't recollect that Mr. Rich made any remonstrance as to claim for money payment in addition, when he obtained the Shag Point lease for fifty years. "J. P. MAITLAND."

That is the position. The evidence on the question is very voluminous, and is to be found in the Appendices. Mr. Rich accepted the extension of the lease for fifty years, and appeared to be satisfied with the arrangement; and now he comes and asks the House to grant him something else. It does appear to me that when he accepted the new lease the whole question was at an end, and that Mr. Rich has no further claim on the colony. I do not think my honourable friend has made out any case. No doubt the closing of the mine was a very serious matter to the owners and to the district, and if any wrong had been done it would be only right that a remedy should be afforded; but I have no doubt that the mine was properly closed, and when Mr. Rich accepted the offer made him by the Government in 1884 I understood the matter was finally settled.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I will make but a few remarks; but I do not think I should be doing justice to what I know of this matter if I allowed the occasion to pass without saying anything. It is well known that the honourable member for Port Chalmers feels very strongly on this matter; but I think he has rather allowed his feelings to get the better of his judgment in dealing with it. He has stated that the Inspector committed a grievous error of judgment in closing the mine, and I understood him to say that the then Government was asked, before the mine was closed, to grant an inquiry into its condition. Now, the Waste Lands Committee made a most careful inquiry into the matter in 1884—an exhaustive inquiry, lasting over many days—and the Committee came to the conclusion that the Inspector of Mines was warranted in closing the mine. I think the honourable member, when referring to the report of the Committee, should have stated that to the House. If any honourable member will read the evidence taken by the Committee, the statement of the Inspector, and all [illegible] passed in relation to this mine, I a[illegible]

tain he will agree that no impartial mind could come to any other conclusion than that the Inspector did his duty, and did the only thing that could be done where there was such a risk to life as there was in this case. I do not think that, after the sad experience this colony has already had, it should hesitate for one moment to take precautions to prevent the recurrence of a similar disaster. In 1878 the same Inspector reported upon the condition of another mine, and recommended that precautions should be taken to prevent an accident in that mine. That advice was not followed—I will not say it was neglected, for I do not wish to use too harsh a term, but, at any rate, it was not acted upon—and the consequence was that the most terrible disaster which the colony has ever experienced resulted. The colony may well be satisfied that it has in its service an officer who, in spite of all the influence that was brought against him, and of pressure the resistance to which might have cost him his means of livelihood, had the courage to say that for the protection of life that mine must be closed. However, that is not what we are now considering. It was in the month of February, after receiving the surveys and reports upon the different parts of this mine, the Inspector came to the conclusion that the mine was unsafe; but simultaneously with that, or, if I mistake not, before it, the miners had determined for themselves that the place was unsafe, and had left it. As a matter of fact, the water was at that time coming in. The Inspector met the manager of the mine, and, if I mistake not, the proprietor of the mine; and a mutual agreement was come to that the mine was unsafe, and that the men must be withdrawn from it. There, again, the honourable member for Port Chalmers was wrong in the statement he has made. He has given the House to understand that there was some dispute about the matter; but there was no dispute whatever. The Inspector of Mines, the manager of the mine, and the miners all came to the conclusion that the mine was dangerous to life. That is fully borne out by the evidence that has been given on the subject; and it was in the firm belief that the mine was unsafe that the Inspector of Mines gave the direction that he did. It was not until the following July, or six months after this, that an application was made to the Government, when the water had advanced very considerably into the mine, as it must necessarily do through the cessation of work. This application was that an inquiry should be made; but the only object of that could have been to establish a claim as against the Government, and not to pretend that that ought not to have been done which had been rendered necessary on account of the danger to life. As I have said, I think the honourable gentleman has let his judgment be run away with by his feelings of sympathy in one direction; I maintain that his sympathy ought to be in another direction altogether, and that is, the direction of sympathy with those who took precautions to prevent such a catastrophe occurring as must have come to pass if they had not acted as they did. That catastrophe must have occurred but for the action taken by the Inspector of Mines and the Government of the day, or, rather, I should say, by myself, who was Minister of Mines at the time. The question first came before the House this session when the Minister of Mines sat down after making his Statement about mining expenditure. In that Statement he had said that this mine was closed in consequence of an irruption of sea-water. The honourable member for Port Chalmers assured the House that it was no such thing—that there had been no irruption of sea-water; and this report of the Waste Lands Committee was based upon the assurance of the honourable gentleman that there had been no irruption of sea-water, and therefore the whole thing had been proved to have been what the honourable gentleman had said—an error of judgment on the part of the Inspector of Mines and of the Minister of Mines of the day. Will it be believed that there was at that very time in the public offices of the department a report—to which the Minister of Lands has referred—of an analysis of the water, sent by Mr. Binns, the Inspector, from the mine to the Government Analyst, Mr. Skey, to ascertain whether it was sea-water, and that the report of that analysis entirely confirms the fact that it was sea-water which had broken into the mine? I do not wish to go further into the matter, for I feel that to do so would necessitate making an analysis of the whole of the evidence which was taken by the Committee. I therefore refer honourable gentlemen to that evidence, for it would be impossible for me to go into it. Nor is it necessary, for I am not here on my defence, and the House is bound to make itself acquainted with the facts of the case before it votes in any way contravening the report of the Committee with regard to the action taken for the protection of life. All I have to say is, that if the House votes the money it ought not to be given as compensation to Mr. Rich, but as a relief to the district.

Mr. MACANDREW.—It is to open the mine.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Then the honourable gentleman should have based his argument on that ground. If he had said that this money was wanted in the interests of the district, and that, as the Government were scattering money all over the country in bonuses to coal-mines of all descriptions, not, perhaps, so valuable as this one, they should also give something to it, he would have had better ground to go upon. But the honourable gentleman is doing a public wrong when he asks the House to assent to his proposal on the ground that a wrong has been done to Mr. Rich by the Inspector of Mines insisting upon taking action to prevent loss of life. That is where the honourable gentleman is wrong. If the House entertains the question of a money-grant, it should simply do so as a matter of bonus to the district; and, if it does that, then it will be for the Government to guide the House in the matter; and, if the House votes a bonus in

this case because an accident has occurred, then we shall certainly have to do so in other cases. I acknowledge it is a great misfortune to the proprietor of the mine; but, while I admit that, I also say that there was gross mismanagement, that the pillars of the mine were improperly taken away, that the mine was mismanaged, and that the result was danger and financial disaster. I am only thankful, from the bottom of my heart, that no worse disaster than a financial disaster has occurred; and I shall be content to the last day of my life, even though it should cost £20,000 or £30,000, so long as my action has prevented loss of life.

Mr. J. C. BUCKLAND.—I am sorry that the Minister of Lands and the honourable member for Geraldine should lose sight of the justice of this case in their anxiety to defend their own action. The Minister of Mines says that the mine was flooded with sea-water; but I say that sea-water never broke into the mine. The water which was sent up for analysis, as may be seen from the evidence, was taken not from the underground workings but from a tricklet of sea-water in the shaft which has always come in there since the shaft was first opened. The water pumped from the mine was all fresh water; and will the honourable member say that if the sea had broken in it would have taken twelve months to fill the workings? The fact of the matter is that Mr. Binns, without fully weighing or understanding the conseqnences, ordered the mine manager to discontinue pumping: this the manager resisted for some time, but, unfortunately, the owner of the mine, who just then arrived from England, somewhat hastily consented to stop pumping the upper workings, which was speedily followed by all the consequences predicted by the mine manager. In 1884 the Waste Lands Committee inquired into the closing of the mine, and brought in a report saying that the closing was warranted. But the mine was then full of water, and it was not known till afterwards that it was fresh water except the tricklet which I have said was running down the shaft. I say it is nonsense to state that there was any danger in the matter. Why, the Minister well knows that the mine is being worked now, and that coal is being got out of it. If there was danger then, there is danger now; but the mine has actually been pumped dry. I consider that the action of the honourable gentleman was very wrong; and the statement which he has now made is only for the purpose of defending it. The Committee reported that the proprietor of the mine should have an extension of his lease for a certain time to open the mine, and that he should have a pound for every three pounds he spent in so doing. The owner of the mine, thinking that the recommendation of a Select Committee was as good as a bond, set to work in an enterprising manner which very few men in New Zealand would have shown, and succeeded in pumping out the mine. The law says that such mines shall have two shafts: but the owner is unable to find the money to make a second shaft; and unless the House sees its way to give effect to the recommendation of the Committee the mine will have to be closed, because the time is fast slipping away when the second shaft can be made. It is all very well for Ministers to say this and the other, but here we have the reports of two Committees who sat upon the case, and took the fullest evidence. No expense was spared in getting all the evidence possible, and I should be afraid to say how many hundreds of pounds were spent in that way. The result is that we have reports and recommendations, which I think should be taken against the statements of two honourable members of the House who are, of course, deeply interested in defending their own action.

Mr. HARPER. — I think the honourable member for Geraldine has rather missed the point in this case. I shall not go into the question of the evidence before the Committee: that is not so much a matter for the House to consider now. What we have now to consider is the report of the Committee, and the recommendations made by the Committee upon the evidence that was before them. Now, the Committee says,—

"That, looking at the capital expended on this mine, and the need of keeping open a coal-mine in the district, a lease of the submarine coalfields for a long term should be granted to Messrs. Rich and Williams, and an extension of the existing lease if no private rights are interfered with. That a Government grant should be made in aid of reopening the mine, such grant not to exceed one-third of the total cost of such reopening, and in no case to exceed £5,000."

Now, we have it, on the statements of members of this House, and I believe it to be a fact, that Mr. Rich has expended a large amount of money in reopening the mine, and that he has done so entirely on the faith that this recommendation would be carried out. In the question now before the House it is simply asked, as an act of justice, that the recommendation made by the Committee appointed by this House should be carried out. I may say that the statement the Minister of Lands has made appears to me not to answer the question. He has said that Mr. Rich accepted the lease, and by his silence consented to abandon the claim to a money grant. But there appears to be no evidence of that before the House, and certainly no evidence has been brought forward by the Minister of Lands that Mr. Rich had any understanding when he had the lease granted that he was to abandon the claim for a grant of money. Until we have better evidence than that which we have had brought before us, I cannot see on what grounds the Government refuse to carry out the recommendation of the Committee. At all events, they should have warned Mr. Rich at the time, before he spent a shilling, that the recommendation of the Committee was to be waste-paper. If they had done that it would have been a different thing; but it appears that he acted on the faith that the recommendation of the Committee would be carried out, and it

appears now very unfair that any question should be raised as to his right to claim any money on account of the money which he expended, relying on the recommendation of the Committee. He asks for no compensation, but for a third of the expense he has gone to in the matter. In the face of the fact that we know that this is a very large and useful undertaking for the district, I think the House should not hesitate to indorse the recommendation of the Committee. I think the honourable member for Geraldine misses the point rather regarding the closing of the mine. I had something to do with this before I was a member of the House, as Mr. Rich consulted me on the subject. Mr. Williams also informed me as to the state of the case; and the point was not so much that the outer workings were closed by the Inspector, but that he was prevented from pumping the water out. If I recollect aright, he offered to take every precaution the Inspector might think proper or ask him to take, and all he desired to do was simply to keep that part of the mine free from water. The Inspector said that the water should be allowed to accumulate there, and that, by building certain dams which he recommended, the water would be kept from doing further damage. Mr. Rich states that he carried out those directions, but found them to be futile. The dams that were to keep the water down were quite unserviceable, and the water gradually filled up the mine. It was not a matter of life or death to any one. Mr. Rich was willing to close up that part of the mine, and never had the slightest desire to work it when it was unsafe, but wanted to use it merely to keep the water down. In this matter the judgment of the Inspector of Mines was shown to be wrong: but that is not the question now before us. It might not have been so much an error of judgment as spite; but that is disproved by the report of the Committee—they did not seem to think that to be the case; but, I repeat again, the House has simply, in my opinion, to consider the recommendation of the Committee, upon the faith of which a certain gentleman who is a petitioner to this House has expended a large sum of money, and whose claim, in my opinion, should be favourably considered.

Mr. DUNCAN.—The honourable member for Geraldine, in his efforts to support the recommendation of the Inspector of Mines, has, I think, gone too far, because every one who takes the trouble to read the reports, and who knows anything at all about mining, must know that letting water into a mine is not the right thing to do, either with regard to present or future working. It was one of the very worst things that could have been done, unless the mine was actually on fire, and that was never shown to be the case. Therefore that part of the Inspector's work was certainly wrong. There can be no doubt about that, as letting water into a mine is the surest way of permanently destroying it. As to the telegram read by the present Minister of Lands, what does that amount to? In it Mr. Maitland simply says, "I do not recollect that Mr. Rich ever made a claim further than for the extension of the lease." Mr. Maitland does not say, as a fact, that no such claim was made at the time, and we have it in evidence in other ways that a claim was made. It looks as though it were convenient to say he does not recollect; it looks to me more like a way of slipping out of the arrangement without giving a direct answer than anything else. I speak feelingly for the district, in one sense. The district I represent has been put to a great loss owing to this mine not being in full work. It supplied a very useful article, and, besides that, the number of people employed there consumed produce. We wanted the coal for the district; and the closing of the mine has also caused a loss to the railway. I cannot understand why the Government should hesitate to advance a sum, as subsidy, of one pound to every two pounds, towards repairing the damage that was done, after it has stood the crucial test of an investigation by a Committee of this House. I hope that, even at this late hour, the House will follow the recommendation of the Committee.

Mr. BRUCE.—I should like to say a few words on this question, because I was one of the Committee. I think it has been admirably placed before the House by the honourable member for Avon, and I shall not again travel over the same ground. But I wish to point out to the House that, in carrying out the report of the Committee, they are in no way censuring the action of the Government Inspector. I almost concluded, listening to the remarks of the honourable member for Geraldine, that such must be the case. When Mr. Rich approached this House by petition he wished to make it appear that he had suffered loss from the action of the Government Inspector. The first question the Committee had to consider was this: Was the action of the Government Inspector justifiable or otherwise? Well, a great deal of evidence was taken. A considerable conflict of opinion prevailed. It was decided, if I recollect aright, by a narrow majority; but I was one of those who gave an emphatic expression of opinion, and I said that, in my opinion, the action of the Government Inspector was justifiable throughout, but that, if there was any doubt in the matter, at least he should have the benefit of the doubt, as human life was at stake. The second question we had to consider was, whether we should recommend that anything should be given to the spirited and enterprising proprietor, who, I believe, by his enterprise, had conferred great benefits on the district; and that, too, was carried, and I voted for it. These were the two points the Committee had to consider; and I think the House, in carrying out the recommendation of the Committee, will be in no way censuring the Government Inspector. With reference to the remarks of the Minister of Lands, I can quite understand the position Mr. Rich took up when concurring with Mr. Maitland on the subject of the lease. He assumed as a matter of course that the recommendation would be carried out. In reference to this grant, I voted for the grant in the same

way, as I said at the time, as I voted last session for the expenditure on the harbours where coal was the export; and it was shown most conclusively that in this district very great hardship was entailed on a very large population by the closing of this mine, and also that loss was sustained by one of the Government railway-lines losing the coal-traffic. In conclusion, I would again urge on the House the fact that in adopting the recommendation of the Committee we shall in no way censure the Inspector.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I think, considering the dreadful rate at which we have been going on lately, buying district railways, insurance properties, sites for defence purposes, and everything, it would be much better for us to bring in a general buying Bill; and then, whenever a matter of this sort comes up, the Government could buy in large quantities, instead of coming to the House to ask permission when they want to purchase. Some honourable members speak as though we were to do nothing here, month after month, but vote sums of money for fresh purchases. Here is a gentleman of property, who has sunk a good deal of money in trying to make himself very rich, and he has not made himself wealthy, and, because he has failed, he comes here and asks for a sum of money to enable him to go on. Every man has a right to go into the Supreme Court, without petitioning this House. Week after week we go on buying, buying, buying; and here is a gentleman who is one of the wealthiest landowners in the colony, and we are asked to give him a sum of money to enrich him while we are taking from the wages of the workmen, issuing circulars to take off 6d. a day from the labouring-men. I hope the House will resolve at all events that for this session we shall not buy more, and that the motion will be lost.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I regret very much the tone in which the honourable gentleman who has just addressed the House has spoken. It seems to me that he has lost sight of the justice of the claim which is now before the House, and has simply addressed himself to mere prejudices. What has the question of this gentleman being a large landowner to do with the justice of his claim? I fail altogether to see that that has anything whatever to do with it. The honourable gentleman finishes by asking the House not to grant any more of these claims, at all events, this session. Surely he cannot at all have considered what he gave utterance to when he asked the House to take action on such grounds as those. I, for one, should be very sorry to be influenced by such considerations as the honourable gentleman has put before us.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I think the logic of the honourable member for Thorndon is almost as bad as his sense of justice, and that is saying a great deal. I have some general knowledge of this subject, but I am not particularly acquainted with its details. I have a very strong conviction that Mr. Rich has suffered very serious wrong at the hands of this colony, and I am rather disposed to think that the honourable member for Geraldine, in his speech, was really giving a defence of his own administration, or, at all events, of the position he took up as a member of the Ministry. I was not able to follow the honourable gentleman's argument to the conclusion he wished to arrive at. On the contrary, it seemed to me to be a speech in defence either of the maladministration of some officer in his department, or of himself—I am not prepared to say which. An honourable member says "Both." It is not necessary that it should be both. The speech of the Minister of Lands I can very well understand. It was one of those speeches which a gentleman guarding the Treasury is bound to make in defence of the funds of the colony. I do not really think that the honourable gentleman was very much in earnest, and I do not think he would be very much surprised if he found himself bound to pay this money. I think the honourable member for Avon has touched the keynote of the whole matter, and that is that, when this recommendation of the Committee was made, Mr. Rich was led to believe that this House would not repudiate the action of its own Committee. And, upon the faith of that report, he expended a large sum of money, and he says, "Fulfil your part, now that I have fulfilled mine." After we have got Mr. Rich to expend his money, we try to repudiate the report of the Committee, which recommended that he should receive this money. I believe that this money, instead of recouping him what he is entitled to, will still leave him a very considerable loser; and the property, which was of very great value, has been depreciated very considerably through what I conceive to be the precipitate action of the Government. I am quite satisfied that the House will not listen to the arguments of the honourable member for Thorndon as to workmen's wages, and Mr. Rich being a wealthy man, and so on. I was really surprised to hear him use such irrelevant arguments. What possible connection can these things have with this House doing justice to Mr. Rich? The amount of his claim is in no way disputed, and as long as this remains unsatisfied this colony will not have discharged its liabilities.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—If the remarks of the honourable member for Thorndon were somewhat out of place, those of the honourable member for Dunedin West are surely still more so. He tells us that Mr. Rich, the petitioner, spent a great deal of money on the strength of a report by a Select Committee, and that this House, in not adopting that report, has repudiated an engagement. Was such a thing ever heard of in this House as that a report of a Select Committee constitutes an engagement on the part of the colony before the report is adopted by the House? A report of a Select Committee goes for nothing until it is adopted; and if a man chooses, of his own free will, to spend a sum of money on the strength of a report not yet considered, it is his own affair. This is the first time I have ever heard of such a thing as that it is repudiation on our part if we do not adopt

a report. Such a principle would absolutely abolish the constitutional right of this House to deal with public money. It would be handing over the control of the public finances to a Select Committee. Such a thing is preposterous. I never before heard such an argument advanced. Does it not happen every day that Committees bring up reports which either lie on the table or are rejected? Such a bad argument as that advanced by the honourable gentleman would damage the best of cases, and it has very much damaged this case, I am sure. Many of us have been weighing in the balance, wishing to be informed by honourable gentlemen as to the rights of this case; but I never heard more contradictory speeches. Such an argument as that used by the honourable member for Dunedin West is enough to damn the case he has taken up—that we are repudiating a just claim because we do not give up our constitutional right and adopt the report of the Select Committee.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—Which was acted upon with the knowledge of the Government.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—What has that to do with it? It would be absolutely limiting and restricting the constitutional right of this House to control the public finances. The more fool he, if he acted on the report of a Committee before it was considered by the House. The honourable member says it was acted upon with the knowledge of the Government. Why, the Government themselves are responsible to this House, and this House has a perfect right to control the action of the Government as well as the report of the Committee. The honourable member is plunging from one blunder into another. I sympathize with the owner of the mine to the extent that I can see he has suffered a disaster; but it has not been shown, throughout the whole debate, that he suffered that loss in any way at the hands of the Government, except in so far as the Government were compelled to protect the lives of the people employed in the mine; and the lives of the people are ten thousand times more important to me, as an individual member of the House—and, I believe, to the House as a whole—than the whole fortune of the individual owner of the mine. Many of us have to suffer disasters—they come to all men; but is this House to lay down a rule that the Government ought to sacrifice the lives of workpeople to the interests of mine-owners? or are we to say that this House is to provide funds to repay the owner of a mine for damage done in consequence of his own carelessness and mismanagement of the mine, which imperilled the lives of his workpeople? Notwithstanding the exceedingly able arguments of the honourable member for Avon, and the speech of the honourable member for Rangitikei—to whose views on a case of this kind I attach the greatest importance—I believe that the honourable member for Geraldine and the present Minister of Lands have led the House aright in this matter, and that we should be doing wrong to accept the motion.

Mr. GARRICK.—Although I have no acquaintance with the facts of this case, I think that the honourable member for Port Chalmers made out a reasonably strong case, and that Mr. Rich is entitled to the sympathy of this House. As I understand the matter, it is simply this: that, beyond doubt, a very great catastrophe happened, resulting in considerable loss to Mr. Rich, after he had incurred a very large outlay in advancing an undertaking which is one of the most important that could be carried out in connection with the general welfare of the colony. It seems to me that the whole thing lies in a nutshell—whether or not this mine was closed by an error of the Government; and it seems to me clearly that it was. The strongest thing that has been said about this has been said by the honourable member for Geraldine. It does not appear to me, however, that he made out any case to disentitle Mr. Rich to have the recommendation of the several Committees given effect to. It appears perfectly clear, after listening to the explanation of the honourable member for Avon, and to the still more important explanation of the honourable member for Waikouaiti, that, however desirable it was to err on the side of humanity, and to close the mine when there was the least probability of risk to life, still the closing was a blunder. The only thing that appears to the contrary is the very lame excuse of the Minister of Lands, who puts me in mind of the young lady who, when she said "No," meant "Yes." That is how I interpreted his observations: he would like to take a certain course if he could, but he did not know how he could; and he used a double negative meaning an affirmative. He would like the recommendation of the Committee to be carried out, but he had made a sort of analysis of a teacupful of the water sent up from the mine, and he found that it tasted salty. He did not know where it came from,—whether it really was salt water,—but he, on this evidence, would justify closing the mine, as to which the utmost that can be said is that this mine was closed by a very praiseworthy blunder, but, undoubtedly, a blunder on the part of an inexperienced gentleman, who either did not know or did not take the trouble to ascertain what the real facts of the case were. The wrongs of Mr. Rich were submitted to two Committees, who made two recommendations, one of which the Government gave effect to by granting an extension of the lease. The other recommendation was that he should be assisted to put this important industry in the same condition in which it was before the blunder of this officer, by receiving a sum of money proportionate to what was expended by the owner in opening out the mine. The honourable member for Selwyn argued that the Government were not to be trusted, and that the recommendation of the Committee should not be carried out. I do not think the House will adopt the very peculiar sentiments expressed by the honourable gentleman. His speech was full of very strong adjectives; but I think his arguments were inconclusive. I think any one would be reasonably

justified in believing that, where effect was given to one portion of the recommendation, the other recommendation as to pecuniary assistance would also be carried out, especially in view of the very great encouragement properly given by the Government to everything in the shape of local industry. It must undoubtedly be admitted that assistance has been given and promised on all occasions to foster and advance enterprises such as this. No doubt the honourable member for Thorndon hit out right and left, but I fear that his dinner must have disagreed with him. He evidently was suffering from indigestion, and immediately vacated his seat. No doubt it is exceedingly praiseworthy of the Government to endeavour to sustain the action of their officer; but the evidence shows that he was wrong, and I really think that Mr. Rich has a very strong claim on the consideration of this House, and to have the recommendations of the Committee given effect to.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I wish to say that I never said anything of the kind that the honourable gentleman has just attributed to me. He has altogether misrepresented what I said—quite unconsciously, no doubt. What I said was, that a man was a fool who spent a large amount of money on the strength of the report of a Select Committee until it had been considered by this House; and I believe that every member who takes a proper constitutional view of the matter will agree with that.

Mr. FULTON.—I have not had the advantage of hearing all that has been said; but perhaps the House will permit me, as having been Chairman of the Committee that brought up the report on which this motion is made, to say a few words, simply as to a statement of fact, in reply to the allegation of the honourable member for St. Albans that the action of the officer, Mr. Binns, was not supported by the department. I venture to say that the honourable gentleman could not have read the evidence given before the Committee or he would not have made that statement. The taking of evidence by the Committee extended from the 18th September to the 25th October, and the action taken by Mr. Binns was approved by Mr. Gordon, I think, and by Dr. Hector. At any rate, it was so far justified that the Committee took up the view, in the first paragraph of the report, that the action of the Inspector of Mines was warranted. Now with regard to the other question, which has been made a good deal of, as to the Government not having carried out the recommendation of the Committee: perhaps I may be allowed to say that the present Minister of Mines was not on the Committee, but the Premier was, and carefully attended it. When the Committee came to its decision upon the last clause, that a sum of £5,000 should be granted, a division was taken, and there was simply a majority of one in favour of the recommendation. The Premier asked me, as Chairman, whether I would not give a deliberative vote as well as a casting-vote. I told him I had no power to do that, and then he asked me if I would express my opinion, and I expressed my opinion against the recommendation that the £5,000 should be granted. Therefore, as honourable members will see, the Committee was exactly divided with regard to this £5,000. The Premier was perfectly frank and open, for he at once said that he certainly would not carry out that recommendation of the Committee. I thought it was right to put that circumstance before the House.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—As Chairman of the Committee that brought up the second report, I should like to say that I intend to vote against the amendment. I have been carefully over the papers, and I have come to a conclusion very much the same as that just stated by the honourable member for Selwyn, that Mr. Rich acted rashly and carelessly in going to great expense depending simply upon the recommendations that had been made by the Committee. There was no evidence to show that Mr. Rich had ever obtained any assurance from the Government that they would put the amount upon the estimates and ask the House to vote it; but Mr. Rich accepted the extension of lease without making any reference to this money grant, and as soon as the extension was granted he applied for the money. I think he acted rashly in that, more especially when, as the honourable member for the Taieri has explained, the recommendation was made on a very narrow majority in the Committee.

The House divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 24.

Allwright	Kerr	Sutter
Atkinson	Lake	Taylor
Ballance	Larnach	Thomson, J. W.
Barron	McMillan	Vogel
Beetham	Newman	Wakefield.
Bevan	Reese	*Tellers.*
Hakuene	Richardson, E.	O'Callaghan
Hatch	Samuel	Rolleston.
Joyce		

NOES, 34.

Bruce	Hislop	Russell
Buchanan	Ivess	Smith
Buckland, J. C.	Locke	Steward, W. J.
Buckland, W. F.	Mackenzie, M.	Stewart, W. D.
Cadman	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, T.
Dargaville	Menteath	Turnbull
Duncan	Ormond	Walker
Fraser	Parata	Whyte.
Gore	Peacock	
Grace	Pearson	*Tellers.*
Hamlin	Reid	Garrick
Harper	Ross	Macandrew.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Fergus	Stout
Fitzherbert	Conolly
Hobbs	Trimble
Holmes	Dodson
Lance	Wilson
Macarthur	Tole

Mitchelson	Moat
Pyke	Fulton
Seddon.	Richardson, G. F.

Majority against, 10.

Words struck out.

On the question, That the words of Mr. Macandrew's amendment be inserted,

Mr. LAKE said,—I think there ought to be some information as to the amount of the claim.

Mr. MACANDREW. — Three thousand pounds.

Mr. LAKE.—On what is that based?

Mr. MACANDREW.—On the report of the Committee.

The House divided.

AYES, 34.

Bruce	Hislop	Ross
Buchanan	Ivess	Russell
Buckland, W.F.	Locke	Smith
Cadman	Macandrew	Steward, W. J.
Dargaville	Mackenzie, M.	Thompson, T.
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Turnbull
Fraser	Menteath	Walker
Garrick	Ormond	Whyte.
Gore	Parata	
Grace	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Hamlin	Pearson	Buckland, J.C.
Harper	Reid	Stewart, W. D.

NOES, 26.

Allwright	Kerr	Samuel
Atkinson	Larnach	Sutter
Ballance	McMillan	Taylor
Beetham	Montgomery	Thomson, J.W.
Bevan	Newman	Vogel
Cowan	O'Callaghan	Wakefield.
Hakuene	Reese	*Tellers.*
Hatch	Richardson, E.	Barron
Joyce	Rolleston	Lake.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Conolly	Fitzherbert
Dodson	Holmes
Fulton	Pyke
Moat	Mitchelson
Richardson, G. F.	Seddon
Stout	Fergus
Tole	Macarthur
Trimble	Hobbs
Wilson.	Lance.

Majority for, 8.

Amendment carried.

Motion, as amended, agreed to.

SITTING OF PARLIAMENT AT CHRISTCHURCH.

On the question, That Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair, in order that the House may resolve itself into Committee of Supply,

Mr. TAYLOR said,—I have an amendment to move which I believe commends itself to a great majority of this House. It is not necessary that I should detain the House with many unnecessary remarks, and therefore I will simply read it: That the next sitting of the General Assembly be held at Christchurch. Being a very new member, I have come to the conclusion that it is very desirable that some honourable members should have a change of climate, because I believe it would have a very beneficial effect not only on their constitutions, but on the manner in which they conduct their business. And there are other reasons. The central position of Christchurch and the facility for travel from there would enable a very large number of members to get home very much oftener than they can do at present. But it is not my intention to detain the House, and I simply move my amendment.

Amendment negatived, and motion agreed to.

SUPPLY.

IN COMMITTEE.

CLASS XI.—MINISTER FOR PUBLIC WORKS.

Working railways, £761,000, agreed to.

Government domains, £1,300, agreed to.

Public buildings, £37,100, agreed to.

Miscellaneous services, £160, agreed to.

CLASS X.—MINISTER OF MINES.

Mines Department, £2,268.

Mr. ALLWRIGHT asked why there was an increase of £50 to the salary of the Inspecting Engineer.

Mr. LARNACH said this gentleman was a very old and most valuable officer. In fact, it would be very hard, in connection with the particular duties he had to perform, to replace him. He had most arduous duties to perform, and his salary was very small for the services he rendered.

Mr. ALLWRIGHT asked whether he received travelling allowance.

Mr. LARNACH said he received a certain amount, but it did not defray the expenses he incurred at all times in carrying out his duties.

Mr. ALLWRIGHT moved, That the item "Inspecting Engineer, £500," be reduced by £50. When they were reducing working-men's wages was not the time for increasing salaries like this.

Mr. BRUCE asked what duties the officer had to perform.

Mr. LARNACH said his duties were multifarious. He had to inspect mines, make estimates for roads and surveys, draw up estimates and specifications for works of various kinds, make analyses, and many other duties. Honourable gentlemen were aware of the very valuable report which this officer had made on mining and mining machinery in Australia about two years ago.

Mr. ROLLESTON could bear testimony to the valuable services which this officer rendered. The reports laid on the table this year and last year reflected the greatest credit on the department and on the colony, and these were mainly due to this officer.

Mr. Allwright's motion negatived, and vote, £2,268, agreed to.

Geological and Meteorological, £3,495, agreed to.

Miscellaneous services, £25,950.

Mr. SUTTER called attention to the item, "Maintenance and raising sluice, Kumara

Sludge-channel, £7,000." Last year the Minister said that this work should be handed over to the County Council. A meeting was afterwards held at Kumara, and the member for the district told the people there that they wanted more money from the Government before they took the channel over, and the meeting ended by expressing satisfaction at still "milking the Treasury." The Minister, in his Mines Statement, tried to make out that this was the only industry in the colony which was of any good; but the fact was that it was dwindling down every day, and cost more to the country than it returned. He moved, That the item be struck out.

Mr. LARNACH said it was true that this work had been offered to the County Council; but it could not be forced on that body, and the matter was still under negotiation. It was only reasonable that the County Council should require that the work should be completed before agreeing to take it over. If the Committee struck out this item it would mean stopping the works, and that would be a great injury to the district. The works were already paying a very good percentage on the outlay.

Mr. SUTTER said it was absurd to be spending something like £10,000 every year on this work. If the honourable gentleman would give him an assurance that this would be the last vote for the purpose, he would withdraw his motion; but, if not, he hoped the House would strike it out, as it was time miners were taught to find machinery for working their water.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked whether the Government proposed to subsidize the second channel.

Mr. LARNACH said a sum had been given last year or the year before in connection with the second channel. It was not intended to annually subsidize it.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked if there had been a lawsuit against the Government during the recess.

Mr. LARNACH.—No; not recently.

Mr. ROLLESTON wished to know if there had not been an action entered against the Government for depositing *débris* from the sludge-channel in the Teremakau.

Mr. LARNACH replied, No. Some claims were set up, but nothing came of them excepting one case.

Mr. FULTON said there was a separate item for local museums. Apparently the sum voted last year had not been expended, and now an extra sum was asked for. Would the honourable gentleman be good enough to say where the museums were for which this vote was granted; and also give some explanation with regard to the large increased expenditure in connection with Professor Black's lectures—£4,000, instead of the £1,700 last year?

Mr. PEACOCK, with regard to the expenditure of money in mining centres, would say that some dissatisfaction was expressed last year owing to the fact that the services of professors in Auckland were not obtained to lecture on mining at the Thames—that Professor Black was sent up from Dunedin to do that work, thus involving large additional expenditure. He would like to know whether the same thing would happen this year, or if the professional talent in Auckland would be made available in the districts near Auckland.

Mr. LARNACH said, as to the £550 for museums, that was for specimens which had arrived in the colony, and which were to be distributed amongst the different mining centres where there were mining schools. There were altogether ten or eleven sets, and these would enable miners to obtain a good knowledge of different specimens. As to amount, members, on referring to Professor Black's report, would know exactly how that money was proposed to be spent. The sum was smaller last year; but the duties had considerably increased since then, and the assistance required had also increased. It was found that the work which had been done was of very good service, and was really worth keeping up. Many miners had already learned to test minerals for themselves, and some had made themselves so proficient as to be able to teach others. In reference to what the honourable member for Newton had said, he would say that the Government would have been prepared last year to accept the services of a professor in Auckland, but they had already arranged with Dr. Black to undertake the work; though he believed Dr. Black was willing to enter into an arrangement with those gentlemen, so that they might do it, but they were unable to come to terms.

Mr. PEACOCK might say that the Council of the Auckland University College had expressed their willingness to allow a professor to undertake the work; but some misunderstanding arose, and therefore he had asked the question respecting what the Minister proposed this year. He thought that the professor in Auckland, being available, should do the work, and that it was a waste of money to send one from Dunedin.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE desired to corroborate what had fallen from the honourable member for Newton. Professors in Auckland had arrived recently from Home who undoubtedly possessed the highest qualifications, and the Council of the University College had arranged that they should go to the Thames for the purpose of opening a mining school. Application was then made to the Minister of Mines, seeing there was a sum on the estimates, for a contribution for that purpose; but the reply was that the whole vote had been placed at the disposal of Professor Black. He (Sir Maurice O'Rorke) was in favour of the establishment of such lectures at mining centres; but he thought that the sum of £4,000 ought not to be wholly spent as a contribution to the salary of a professor of the Otago University, to the exclusion of professors of other university colleges. The Otago University possessed a revenue of £10,000 a year; yet this £4,000 was to be given to it—with the exception that a professor in Canterbury College was also to be employed. If the lectures were worth £4,000 a year, he

thought it would be fair, in the interest of mining and in the interest of science, that a couple of gentlemen should be stationed permanently—one at the West Coast and one at the Thames—to lecture on mining, in which he included not only chemistry, but geology. They could be got for £700 a year each, and, allowing £300 a year for expenses, mining lectures would be given at the Thames and at the West Coast for half the money, while the lecturers would be able to give the benefits of their services throughout the whole year. He could not say himself what the amount of benefit was that was conferred on mining by these lectures, but he thought that, if the system of establishing mining lectures was advisable, it would be better to locate a couple of gentlemen in the manner he had mentioned than to put the work exclusively in the hands of Professor Black. The members from the West Coast would be able to say how far they got value for the money spent under the present arrangement.

Mr. FULTON said the Otago University Council derived not one penny of benefit from the vote for this purpose. The professors were paid, the Council thought, adequately for the services they rendered, and during recess they were at liberty to employ themselves in any manner they thought desirable. He quite agreed that it was unreasonable to expect that the Auckland professors would subordinate themselves to Dr. Black, and thought that the services of professors residing near the mining centres should be utilized for those centres.

Mr. SUTTER said that, following up the question of the honourable member for Geraldine, to which the answer had been in the negative, he would like to know if an action was not brought on the 13th October, 1885, by Gustave Steele and others, before the Warden's Court at Kumara, and if damages were not given amounting to £275 3s.

Mr. LARNACH said he remembered that there had been such an action in the Warden's Court; but it was settled. There was no action pending.

Mr. SEDDON said that the action referred to had arisen out of the laxity of the late Minister of Mines, the honourable member for Geraldine. He had refused to construct a channel past a piece of land, and the result was that *débris* had been deposited, and the ground had been completely covered up. The matter was brought before the Warden's Court after the parties had offered to submit to arbitration. The injury had been done to private owners; the Crown had no right to do what it had done, and, very properly, damages had been given. With regard to the sludge-channel, he was prepared to say that no work in the hands of the colony at the present time would be so profitable as this channel, taking into connection with it the Kumara Race. These works, within three or four years, would recoup the Government every penny of capital and give 10 per cent. on the outlay. He held in his hand a return for the Kumara Race, including the sludge-channel. Taking the race, the receipts were £12,132, and the outlay £2,566. Then, taking the sludge-channel, the revenue was £2,366, and the outlay £6,275. There was also a credit balance due of £2,623. Adding the two together, and deducting the loss from the sludge-channel, they would find that the profits arising from the total amount of capital expended on both really gave 12½ per cent.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why does not the County Council take it?

Mr. SEDDON said they had offered to do it, but the Government insisted on connecting the Waimea Water-race with the Kumara Race. There were two hundred and fifty-six men kept fully employed at fair wages at the present time. If this channel and race were done away with, these men would probably be like a great many more at the present time—they would be leaving for Kimberley. He had hoped that, after hearing the figures he had quoted that evening, the honourable member for Gladstone would be open to conviction. The men were now working full time, and next year he believed the return would be one of 30 per cent. He sincerely hoped the Committee would not object to the amount set down.

Mr. SUTTER asked the Minister whether he would promise to the Committee, before this vote was passed, that it should be the last for the work, and that he would insist on the local body taking over the thing altogether.

Mr. LARNACH would do nothing of the kind. He was not going to mislead the Committee. He had referred this matter to the local body, and the Government were in negotiation with them now on the subject. He hoped that before next year they would have entered into some arrangement about the matter. If no arrangement was come to, he apprehended that this vote, or something similar, would have to appear again on the estimates from time to time.

Mr. SEDDON said that last year there was a profit on the works of £6,000, on a total expenditure of £37,000. The men were willing to relieve the Government of loss if a bonus of £5,000 were given. Why did not the Government put these works in the market, either to sell or to lease?—and it would get a company to take them over for the money. Had they any railways that would do that? These works were keeping the district going. It had occurred to him that honourable members were under the impression that this £7,000 was a new expenditure, to be added to the capital account; instead of which, it was for maintenance only. There was not a penny on the estimates to go to the capital account on account of the Kumara Sludge-channel this year.

Mr. MACARTHUR did not altogether understand the figures quoted by the honourable member for Kumara. If he understood the honourable member rightly, he said that the channel and the water-race were giving a very large percentage—something like 23 per cent. If that was the case, how was it possible that, if the works were put up to auction to-morrow,

y would only fetch what they had cost the ny—about £37,000?

Mr. SEDDON.—I did not say they would h only that; but they would fetch that.

Mr. MACARTHUR said, with reference to question about the railways, the cases were analogous.

Mr. SEDDON said, if a company got the nnel and water-races they would injure the ny by increasing the fees and charges, and ould pay them to give more than £37,000; if the works were put into the hands of a npany the Government would have to sell h restrictions, so as not to allow the com- y to increase the charges.

olonel FRASER thought the Committee understood the matter. The water-race the only thing from which any profit was ived. If another system of accounts were pted there would be no necessity for coming the Committee to ask for these votes, be- se it could be taken out of the profits of ter-race. The reason of the difficulty with County Council was that there was another ter-race, which had been a losing concern, l the Government wished them to take that r as well as the sludge-channel. If they nted to throw away a net profit of £6,000 annum, the Committee would reject the m, but if they wanted to retain it to the solidated fund they would pass it.

Mr. SUTTER said this was a very pretty ry; but the honourable gentleman knew hing about it.

olonel FRASER.—I will give you a cheque £10,000 for it now.

Mr. SUTTER said the very fact of the nty Council refusing to take the works over wed the value of this story. He wished withdraw his amendment, and substitute 000 for the £7,000.

Leave refused.

Mr. SEDDON said if there was any member the House who knew nothing about this tter it was the honourable member for dstone. That honourable gentleman was remely fond of sludge-channels: being now to his neck in the mud, there he would ve him. The Westland County Council l not refused to take over the Kumara ter-race and Sludge-channel. As the nister of Mines had stated, negotiations e still going on. The County Council that they would get a good bargain if got this water-race without the draw- of the Waimea Water-race, which was o way connected with it. The affairs of two races should be kept quite sepa- To take off £2,000 would mean taking he maintenance, and would prevent the being worked.

r. BEETHAM said the Minister had stated assistance to establish museums in ten res of the colony would be given, and he d point out that it would be a great ntage to other districts than mining dis- s to have museums. One had been esta- hed at Masterton. Would the Minister assist the local efforts there to obtain speci- mens?

Mr. LARNACH said he had not the slightest objection to offering the same facilities to such districts as the honourable gentleman repre- sented as were granted to mining centres.

Mr. LAKE asked whether the Waimea and Kumara water-races were not practically the same.

Mr. SEDDON replied that there was no connection whatever between the two races.

Mr. BRYCE asked whether there was suffi- cient water in the Kumara Race for the purpose required without the extra supply which was received from the overflow from the Waimea Race.

Mr. SEDDON replied that there was suffi- cient water.

Motion negatived.

Mr. SUTTER moved, That the item be re- duced by £2,000.

Motion negatived.

Mr. PEACOCK moved the reduction by £2,000 of the item, "To defray cost of lectures by Professor Black and others in the principal mining centres throughout the colony, and for schools of mines, contribution of £1 for £1, £4,000." He thought the amount was too large, in consequence of the expenditure incurred for travelling allowances. He found that there was no less a sum than £1,450 paid for travelling and hotel allowances, while the salaries were £1,690. Professor Black received £450 for salary and £300 for travelling ex- penses. There was another item of £150 for travelling expenses for Mr. Montgomery. These were for six months. The whole system on which the Minister was proceeding was wrong. There were gentlemen of ample ability and talent to be found in Auckland to do the work at the Thames at a much less sum for salary, and scarcely anything for travelling expenses. Then, there was a subsidy of 5s. for 480 copies of Black's Chemistry, to enable them to be sold at half-price—£120. He thought this item could well be reduced by £2,000.

Colonel FRASER regretted exceedingly that the honourable member for Newton should set up the College of Auckland against the Col- lege of Otago. Some time ago it was found necessary that somebody should give the miners some practical instruction in the chemistry of mining, and an arrangement was made with Professor Black, who had proved himself one of the best of the order that he had ever seen or read of. Professor Black's visit to the Thames had created jealousy among the *savans* in Auckland, the ground of their jealousy being that a man had been imported from Dunedin; but it was a remarkable fact that when the Auckland gentlemen came to the Thames in connection with other business they did not possess sufficient enthusiasm to visit the mines; and, though they might be most estimable gentlemen, they did not possess that practical capacity which Professor Black had. His grudge against Dunedin was that Dr. was not a resident in the northern the colony. He aroused such enthus

all the various mining centres that the results of his visit were of a lasting character, and £500 had been subscribed locally for the purpose of carrying on a school of mines. Mr. Montgomery, who was a pupil of Dr. Black's, and was following in that gentleman's footsteps, was at present resident at the Thames; and he (Colonel Fraser) hoped that he would remain there, because his services would be of immense value. This jealousy between the colleges was greatly to be regretted.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the point raised by the honourable member for Manukau was this: that if so much expense was incurred it would be much better to have some one who would give his whole time to the work of the Mines Department, instead of adding to the already large salaries given to gentlemen connected with the work of general education. Some of these professors were getting £700 or £800 a year, and they might very well be called upon to give all their time for that money. It seemed reasonable that if competent persons were resident in the localities they should be employed to do this work, instead of so much being spent in travelling expenses.

Mr. BRADSHAIGH-BRADSHAW said that he took exception to the vote last year, when it was only £1,750, because he could not see that any good could come of the expenditure; and he was more pronounced in his opposition now, when it was increased to £4,000. Chemistry could not be taught in this way, and, so far as he could see, the only result of Professor Black's lectures was that he burned blue lights, caused explosions, and created stinks.

Mr. SEDDON replied that the practical results of Professor Black's work were appreciated by all who had a knowledge of the goldfields. He possessed the practical faculty of imparting knowledge to others; and the proof of that was to be found in the circumstance that young men who had been pupils of his could now lecture on these sciences, and could hold an audience spellbound for hours while giving information on these subjects. Professor Black was not content with talking in technical terms, but he took men up the leads, and taught them in the most practical way lessons that were of the utmost value in their every-day work. So far as the cost was concerned, if Professor Black was the right man—and those who knew anything on the subject must be aware that he was—it did not matter if the cost was £2,000 a year. The money was well spent, and the value obtained for it undoubted by those who were able to appreciate it.

Colonel TRIMBLE said that, assuming that Professor Black was all that he was represented to be—which he did not dispute, for he knew nothing of the gentleman—the question still was, whether they were not paying too much. The cost increased from £1,700 in the first year to £4,000 in the second year. Where was it to end? It seemed to him that it would be better to employ the persons residing in the various localities than to spend so much in travelling expenses. He could not be accused of having any local jealousy, and he thought it was a pity that Professor Black's name had been mentioned.

Mr. LAKE said it was perfect nonsense to pay £4,000 for services of such doubtful value. For half that amount four men could be got, and kept lecturing all the year round in the different mining centres.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said, although he represented a mining constituency, and was anxious to do anything to promote the industry, he thought this vote a very doubtful one. Professor Black was a personal friend of his own, and he had seen him at work and had seen the enthusiasm which followed his lectures: but the effect was entirely evanescent, and permanent results were by no means likely to be produced. The same thing had been tried in Victoria, and a great deal of money spent, and it resulted in no permanent benefit whatever. There was really no way of popularizing science. Professor Black was a very able man, and very enthusiastic; but, speaking generally, science to be of any benefit could not be learned in that way—it was in the main charlatanism. The money would be better spent in prospecting. If this vote were passed the amount should be much reduced, and should be considered merely an experiment.

Mr. FULTON said, as representing the Otago University Council, he could not but feel gratified at the way Professor Black's services had been spoken of by the goldfields members, and he only hoped the results would be as permanent as those honourable gentlemen believed.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE said the honourable member for the Thames should know the facts too well to attribute jealousy to the Auckland professors. The Board of Governors of the Thames Grammar School—of which the honourable member for the Thames was or had been chairman—applied to the authorities in Auckland for the services of professors of geology and chemistry during the collegiate vacation. The professors were willing to go, and he, knowing that a vote of £1,750 had been passed last session, applied to the Government for a small portion of that vote to defray expenses. He had not mentioned any amount, but had thought that probably £100 would be enough. The Government replied that arrangements had been made to put the whole vote at the disposal of Professor Black. The Thames people, learning this, were better pleased to have the services of a gentleman with £1,750 in his pocket than those of gentlemen who would have come for their mere expenses. The Auckland authorities had no desire to do anything except on the wish of the Thames people. Of course, if the people in the mining districts were satisfied with the services of three- and four-year students, laboratory attendants, and so forth, that was for their consideration. He thought, if they had £4,000 to use, it would be better to get with it the whole of the services of three or four men, rather than the fag-end of the labours of a gentleman who was not fully employed in a university that it was understood that he and his brother professors

required six months' vacation to recruit from their labours. He did not think the results to be attained justified the spending of £4,000 a year in this way.

Mr. BROWN had never heard a vote discussed where the speaking was all so much on one side or had created so much interest. This was great testimony to the value of Professor Black's services. Two years ago he (Mr. Brown), as President of the Lawrence Mining Institute, had invited Professor Ulrich to visit Lawrence—his expenses being guaranteed by the Institute—to give instruction to the miners through lectures or classes, with a view to the establishing of a school of mines. That gentleman came up, but only labelled the specimens in the Lawrence Museum. Professor Black willingly offered his services, and his lectures and classes were largely attended, and a deep interest by miners and others was taken in the work; and this was the origin of these popular lectures. In his district the lectures evoked so much enthusiasm that they were followed by the establishment of classes, and he believed it had been the same in other districts. The immense amount of good the goldfields members had ascribed to the lectures was the best testimony as to their value. Probably the whole of this vote would not be expended, but whatever was spent would result in an immense amount of good.

Mr. FERGUS said the vote was only to subsidize at the rate of pound for pound; and when those in the mining districts ceased to get any benefit from the lectures they would cease to subscribe the amount to be subsidized. He knew that the miners agreed that the lectures had done a considerable amount of good, and they had inculcated theories of study that had not been possessed before. He had the testimony of some of the best miners in the country that they had derived a considerable amount of benefit from the lectures, and he had also had ocular demonstration of the fact. Members generally had no idea of the warmth with which the subject was taken up in the mining districts, and how eagerly study was pursued. He agreed that the money would be better spent on several competent lecturers always engaged; but half a loaf was better than no bread, and he hoped the House would agree to pass the vote. So long as the residents in the mining districts were willing to give a pound for every pound that was voted by the House, surely the House, in its generosity, should meet these men, who had but little favour granted to them by the country at large.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked whether, as the vote was for subsidizing pound for pound, the salary of this gentleman was double what was put down.

Mr. LARNACH said the subsidy was for the cost of lecturers for the schools of mines and the buildings. The travelling expenses for the lectures appeared to be rather high, because the lecturers had to be always moving, and had to travel very long distances in parts of the country where travelling was very expensive. Professor Black was continually travelling when on the goldfields, and worked almost night and day. The travelling expenses might appear high, but they were unavoidable under the circumstances. As to what had been said by the honourable member for Manukau, that honourable gentleman and the Auckland professors had been hardly fair. The honourable member was present last session when the vote of £1,750 was proposed, discussed, and passed, and he knew the object it was for; but neither he nor the Auckland professors applied or made any sign then. They made no sign of being prepared to take part in the lecturing, and would never have made any sign had not Professor Black appeared in Auckland with his staff. The reason it had been necessary for this gentleman to travel about so much was that the system was new; and they could not get officers to act until he had trained more students to follow in his track. He would be glad if the Auckland professors were prepared to take up the work, to relieve Professor Black of work in that part of the colony. He hoped the House would not strike out the vote, as it was a very valuable object; and it must be remembered that, as a large part of the financial year had expired, a considerable portion of it had been expended.

Mr. BEVAN said it was impossible to overestimate the importance of this vote. From a want of that knowledge which Professor Black imparted the miners had suffered great losses in the past. Now schools had been established in many places, and great interest was excited among the miners, and they began to be able to distinguish the different metals for themselves. Through this means, besides gold, tin, copper, and nickel had been discovered on the West Coast, and there was no doubt that if this system were continued it would be found ere long that New Zealand was another Nevada.

Mr. LAKE said it must be remembered that, while they were employing Professor Black in improving the miners, he could not attend to his duties in connection with the University of Otago, and the authorities there might find it necessary to replace him. The reason given by the Minister of Mines for the travelling expenses being so high showed that there ought to be local lecturers.

Mr. ROSS held that, though it was right to employ Professor Black in lecturing occasionally while the system was being initiated, it was not fair to the University to which he was attached to take him away constantly.

Mr. CADMAN had voted for this item rather reluctantly last year, because he had no idea of these lectures being so beneficial, but, having seen the enthusiasm with which Professor Black was received by the miners, he had changed his opinion. He regretted the tenor of the remarks of the honourable members for Newton and Manukau, as they showed jealousy of Professor Black, and he warned those at the head of the institution in Auckland that if pre-

fessors came from Auckland to the Thames or Coromandel to lecture they must not come in dress-suits and tall hats, and step back on to the steamer as soon as their lecture was delivered, but must stay there a week or two and go about among the miners, letting it be felt that they were there for the benefit of these people, and not for their own pecuniary advantage solely.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said that a less sum than this would provide ten resident lecturers, who could educate the whole of the mining community. Professor Black could not get to the smaller centres.

Mr. BROWN said that Professor Black had gone to every place to which he had been asked to go, and the greatest interest was taken in his lectures. There seemed to be some jealousy amongst other professors because Professor Black had so popularized his lectures. This vote was not only for lectures, but also for the establishment of schools of mines; and all the localities in his district were ready to contribute half to establish these schools.

Mr. BUCHANAN thought there were other interests in the colony deserving of consideration, and would suggest that lecturers might be appointed to enlighten those who followed agricultural and pastoral pursuits.

Mr. LOCKE was of opinion that £4,000 was a very large sum for the purpose proposed, and that a number of lectures might be printed and circulated for £400 or £500, and a very large amount of money saved.

Mr. HATCH had no doubt the vote would have been passed more quickly if an explanation had been given as to how the money would be spent. The sum seemed a large one for expenses connected with lecturing.

Mr. LARNACH said that already thirty schools of mines had been established in different portions of the colony, and part of the vote was to be available as subsidies for schools of mines buildings.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the item be reduced by £2,000."

AYES, 25.

Allwright	Macarthur	Russell
Atkinson	Mackenzie, M.	Sutter
Beetham	McMillan	Thompson, T.
Buchanan	Newman	Trimble
Buckland, W.F.	O'Rorke	Wilson.
Conolly	Reese	
Cowan	Richardson, G.	*Tellers.*
Fulton	Rolleston	B.-Bradshaw
Lake	Ross	Peacock.

NOES, 28.

Ballance	Ivess	Richardson, E.
Bevan	Joyce	Taylor
Bruce	Kerr	Tole
Cadman	Larnach	Turnbull
Duncan	Levestam	Walker
Fergus	McKenzie, J.	Whyte.
Fraser	Menteath	
Guinness	Moat	*Tellers.*
Hatch	Moss	Brown
Hislop	Parata	Seddon.

Mr. Carroll

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Dodson	Holmes
Hirst, H.	Vogel
Hobbs	Pyke
Mitchelson	O'Conor
Montgomery	Macandrew
Pearson	Gore
Thomson, J. W.	Fitzherbert
Wakefield.	Lance.

Majority against, 3.

Mr. Peacock's motion negatived.

Mr. PEACOCK thought that the amount set down for travelling expenses and hotel expenses—£1,450—was simply monstrous, and moved, That the item, £4,000, be reduced by £1,000.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the item be reduced by £1,000."

AYES, 28.

Allwright	Locke	Rolleston
Atkinson	Macarthur	Ross
Beetham	Mackenzie, M.	Russell
B.-Bradshaw	McMillan	Sutter
Buchanan	Newman	Thompson, T.
Buckland, W.F.	O'Rorke	Wilson.
Conolly	Parata	
Cowan	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Fulton	Reese	Buckland, J.O.
Lake	Richardson, G.	Trimble.

NOES, 27.

Ballance	Ivess	Richardson, E.
Bevan	Joyce	Taylor
Brown	Kerr	Tole
Bruce	Larnach	Turnbull
Cadman	Levestam	Walker
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Whyte.
Fergus	Menteath	*Tellers.*
Guinness	Moat	Fraser
Hatch	Moss	Seddon.
Hislop		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Dodson	Holmes
Hirst, H.	Vogel
Hobbs	Pyke
Mitchelson	O'Conor
Montgomery	Macandrew
Pearson	Gore
Thomson, J. W.	Fitzherbert
Wakefield.	Lance.

Majority for, 1.

Item reduced.

Mr. LOCKE referred to the item of £1,800 for "contingencies," and asked for an explanation. He said there was £20,000 or £30,000 in the estimates altogether for "contingencies" and "miscellaneous expenses," which was not accounted for in any shape or form. He thought the matter was one of great importance. He moved, That the item be reduced by £500.

Colonel TRIMBLE suggested that the reduction should be for £200.

Mr. LARNACH said the amount was for

travelling expenses of officers, and other contingencies that arose from year to year.

Motion negatived.

Dr. NEWMAN moved, That the item, "Contingencies, £1,800," be reduced by £200.

Mr. LARNACH said that to this item were charged, besides travelling expenses of Inspectors, work done by the Survey Department for the Mines Department, &c.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 21.

Allwright	Locke	Sutter
Beetham	Macarthur	Thompson, T.
Bruce	Peacock	Trimble
Buchanan	Reese	Wilson.
Buckland, J. C.	Richardson, G.	*Tellers.*
Conolly	Rolleston	Buckland, W.F.
Hislop	Russell	Newman.
Lake		

NOES, 27.

Ballance	Hursthouse	Parata
B.-Bradshaw	Ivess	Richardson, E.
Brown	Joyce	Ross
Cadman	Kerr	Taylor
Cowan	Larnach	Tole
Duncan	Levestam	Turnbull.
Fergus	Mackenzie, M.	*Tellers.*
Fraser	McKenzie, J.	Bevan.
Guinness	Menteath	Walker.
Hatch		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Atkinson	McMillan
Dodson	Holmes
Fulton	Seddon
Hirst	Vogel
Hobbs	Pyke
Mitchelson	O'Conor
Montgomery	Macandrew
Pearson	Gore
Thomson, J. W.	Fitzherbert
Wakefield	Lance
Whyte	O'Callaghan.

Majority against, 6.

Motion negatived.

Vote, as reduced, £24,950, agreed to.

CLASS I.—LEGISLATIVE.

Legislative, £17,390, agreed to.

CLASS II.—COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Colonial Secretary's Office, £2,025, agreed to.

Ministers' Secretaries, £800, agreed to.

Messengers and office-keepers, £3,720, agreed to.

Electoral Department, £2,980, agreed to.

Audit Office, £6,875, agreed to.

Registrar-General's Department, £17,972, agreed to.

Agent-General's Department, £4,325, agreed to.

Charitable, £1,120.

Mr. HATCH referred to the item, "Inspector of Lunatic Asylums (also Inspector of Hospitals, £200), £1,000"—in all, £1,200. He understood that this officer had a three years' engagement at this salary, having recently taken the place of Dr. Grabham. It seemed to him that a considerable saving ought to have been effected in this item. In the first place, the hospitals had now been handed over to local management, and elected Trustees were responsible, and therefore the cost of inspection to the General Government should not be so large. In the second place, Dr. Grabham, who had been specially imported to reorganize the hospitals and lunatic asylums, had suggested that the officers of the chief institution in each Island should be appointed to act as Inspectors. It was somewhat strange, but, having some knowledge on the subject, he had arrived at exactly the same conclusion as it turned out Dr. Grabham had come to on this point. It was not right to keep those two gentlemen at their respective asylums from one year's end to another. They should have had a little assistance in the shape of a junior—of whom there were many who would be glad of such an opportunity to improve themselves—and a little increase to their salary, and have had cast upon them the work of inspection. The work would have been done as well, and, perhaps, better, and the colony would have been saved, perhaps, £600 or £700 a year.

Mr. TOLE said the matter had been fully considered by the Government, and they felt that to have two officers would impair the efficiency of the inspection; also, it must be remembered that the transfer of the charge of hospitals to local bodies would in no way diminish the necessity of maintaining a rigid system of inspection.

Mr. CONOLLY could hardly imagine that it had been seriously recommended by Dr. Grabham that the course referred to by the honourable member for Invercargill should be adopted. To his mind it was extremely undesirable that a gentleman who was in charge of one asylum should be appointed inspector to another asylum. Who was to inspect the asylums of these two gentlemen?

Vote, £1,120, agreed to.

Lunatic asylums, £42,808.

Mr. HATCH asked why there was a number of increases at different asylums, such as £255 at Wellington, £277 at Auckland, and £215 at Seacliff. Were these increases due to higher rates of payment for the attendants, or to an increase in the number of lunatics?

Mr. TOLE said, to both. The number of patients increased, and some of the officers received a small annual increase.

Mr. PEACOCK asked why there was such a difference in the payment of similar officers in different places. At Christchurch and Seacliff the Resident Medical Superintendents got £600 a year, while at Auckland and Wellington they got only £400. At Christchurch, too, there was a house-steward at £300, and one at Seacliff at £130; which was in excess of the salaries of similar officers in the other asylums.

Mr. TOLE said these salaries had been perpetuated on the estimates; but he thought some steps should be taken to equalize them next year, and the Government had the matter under consideration.

Mr. LEVESTAM pointed out the great evil

that arose from inebriates being committed to lunatic asylums, and being mixed up with the lunatics. This had been rendered necessary through there being no place for their accommodation; and he trusted the Minister would take steps to remedy the evil.

Mr. TOLE said, no doubt the question would have to be faced, as there was no institution at present which satisfied the demands of the Act, and the Judges committed these persons to lunatic asylums, where the best was done to keep them separate. It was a question which required serious consideration, as it involved considerable expense; but he would call the attention of the Colonial Secretary to a suggestion which had been made by the honourable member for Nelson.

Mr. LEVESTAM said his suggestion had been that the Nelson Gaol, which was not now used, should be set aside for this purpose.

Mr. TURNBULL said there was ample accommodation in the Sunnyside Lunatic Asylum to keep inebriates distinct.

Vote, £42,808, agreed to.

Printing and stationery, £22,322, agreed to.

Stock branch, £29,115.

Mr. GUINNESS asked who were the forty-five Inspectors mentioned under this vote.

Mr. TOLE said they were both Sheep and Rabbit Inspectors. As soon as the colony was free of scab a great reduction would be made.

Major ATKINSON said that would not help the general revenue, because when these Inspectors were got rid of he hoped the sheep-owners would have to pay a less sheep-rate.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked whether the £3,000 for the destruction of scabby sheep on Crown lands was for one block only or more than one.

Mr. TOLE said it was for all over the colony.

Vote, £29,115, agreed to.

Miscellaneous services, £21,663.

Mr. HATCH called attention to the item, "Civil Service Examination Board, £250." A saving might be made here, as the gentlemen who composed this Board got high salaries, and might very well do the work in their spare time instead of going to the races or sitting on the Bench as Justices of the Peace to try drunkards.

Mr. TOLE said the Minister of Education had this under consideration, and he believed it was intended that this work should be done in the Education Department; and the Board would be done away with.

Mr. BROWN wished to know why copies of the "Transactions of the New Zealand Institute" were not sent to the public libraries, seeing that there was a vote of £500 towards the printing of the Transactions.

Mr. TOLE said the money was given to the Institute, and was wholly under the control of the Institute; but he would make representations to have the distribution of the work referred to extended.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON asked if it was the case that the £250 set down for the Civil Service Examination Board was paid in sums of £50 each to five gentlemen in receipt of high salaries.

Mr. TOLE replied that he believed that it was simply for the expenses of holding the examinations.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked for some explanation of the vote of £300 in connection with the Maori History.

Mr. BALLANCE said that a number of volumes of the Maori History were in course of preparation, and one volume was now in the hands of the Printer. He believed that next session there would be four volumes ready.

Mr. LAKE wished to know how much it was thought the work would ultimately cost, and when it would be finished.

Mr. BALLANCE replied that he expected the work would be finished in 1890. There would be a great number of volumes—almost a library in itself.

Mr. BROWN wished to know if the Minister could give any explanation with regard to the item, "Wellington Patent Slip Company, guarantee of interest, £2,450." Was that an annual charge?

Mr. BALLANCE replied that it was the guarantee of the late Provincial Government, and was a legacy from them. It had been paid for about eleven years, and would have to be paid for ten years longer.

Mr. LAKE wished to know what was covered under the item, "Encouragement of local industries, £1,250."

Mr. TOLE replied that the vote was to enable the Government to offer bonuses; but the particular industries to which the bonuses were to be offered were, as yet, undetermined.

Dr. NEWMAN considered that the contribution towards New Guinea, £2,669, was the most absurd waste of money the colony had indulged in. He understood last year that a reduced amount was to be voted this year.

Mr. GUINNESS said the question was mentioned last year, and it was then stated that the vote was for three years. This was the second year, so that it would have to be paid once more, and then he thought it would be unwise for the House to repeat it.

Dr. NEWMAN thought the item, "John Brace, compensation for injuries received while in the service of the colony, £50," was totally inadequate.

Mr. CONOLLY said this man had received compensation previously, and this £50 was a bonus.

Vote, £21,663, agreed to.

The Committee divided on the question, "That progress be reported."

AYES, 25.

Atkinson	Macarthur	Taylor
Ballance	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, T.
Bevan	McMillan	Tole
Brown	Newman	Turnbull
Bruce	Peacock	Walker.
Buchanan	Reese	
Conolly	Richardson, E.	*Tellers.*
Lake	Rolleston	Duncan
Larnach	Ross	Richardson, G.

NOES, 11.

wright	Hatch	Levestam.
lman	Hislop	*Tellers.*
ser	Joyce	Buckland, W. F.
inness	Kerr	Ivess.

Majority for, 14.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to ee o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 6th August, 1886.

ird Readings — Harbours Bill — Public Bodies' Leaseholds Bill — Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill—North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Application Bill—Mining Bill—Deeds and Instruments Registration Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at lf-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

THIRD READINGS.

Civil Service Reform Bill, Deceased Persons' tates Duties Bill.

HARBOURS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN brought up the following reasons for disagreeing with the amendents made by the House of Representatives this Bill:—

"Clause 16, authorizing a tug-boat to act as ferry-boat, is undesirable for the following asons:—

"(1.) It is extremely dangerous to carry pasngers on deck while a vessel is engaged in wing, as a sudden jerk or swerve of the vessel ıuses the towing line or lines to be carried ddenly to one side or other of the deck.

"(2.) If the tug-steamer is engaged in ferryg passengers, she may frequently be absent igaged in this work when her services may be quired for towing; and, in a case of wreck vessel in distress, the delay in recalling her ight be attended by disastrous results.

"(3.) The employment of a tug occasionally r ferrying would interfere directly with the tablishment of regular ferry services by priate enterprise, in some cases prevent such a rvice being established at all, and in other ıses injuriously affect the legitimate trade of e ordinary ferry-boat.

"Clause 23. The present law fixes the rate for ort dues at a maximum of 6d. per ton each ix months, and no good reason has been shown r quadrupling this impost. Special provision made in the Harbours Act for charging, in ddition to this, such rates as Harbour Boards ıay think fit for the following things: Wharfge dues for lying alongside and use of harves; for use of cranes, weighbridges, &c.; r landing goods on wharves; for storage on harves; for transhipping goods on or alongide wharves; for light dues; for harbour fees; or pilotage; for special improvements, rates p to 2s. per ton. It is most undesirable in the interests of trade that increased burdens should be placed on shipping in addition to the numerous special charges for which they are already liable. For the above reasons the Council disagree with 2s. as a maximum rate, but are willing to accept the new clause 23 if, in line 3 of the clause, the words 'two shillings' are struck out and the words 'one shilling' are inserted in lieu thereof.

"Clause 24. It is unfair that the Colonial Government should be allowed the accommodation afforded at great outlay of good wharves and appliances for the easy discharge of their cargo without payment, as it will interfere materially with the revenue of Harbour Boards, and, from the character of a large portion of goods, such as railway material, consigned to the Colonial Government, the wharves are considerably strained and injured.

"Clauses 26, 27, 28, 29. It is not desirable that the sum of £1,500 should be expended on the erection of salt-water baths without distinct evidence that this is the best way of expending this sum, and that it is the expressed wish of the inhabitants of Moeraki that the amount shall be so expended. The appropriation of the money to this object should not be made till this is fully ascertained."

He moved that the reasons be agreed to.

The Hon. Mr. SWANSON hoped the Council would, for its own sake, strike out the first reason. He had been brought up all his life in connection with harbours, and he could not conceive of any vessel carrying people across a ferry and towing at the same time. Even if it were possible that such a thing could happen the ferry-boat would have to be specially constructed, and the towing arrangement would have to be on a special plan. There was no doubt that the sudden swerving of a vessel in towing would sweep the passengers off the deck. Neither could he conceive of a ferry-boat towing across a ferry where the water was too shallow on either side. He agreed with the other reasons as brought forward, but this was certainly objectionable.

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN said he knew as much about towing as any honourable gentleman there, and had never yet known a mishap to take place when towing with passengers on board, as care was taken not to allow them to come within reach of the rope.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR understood that the Committee recommended that the amendments should not be agreed to for the reason advanced. He had known persons to undergo narrow escapes, and others to be seriously injured, by the sudden swerving of the vessel. When a vessel was being towed over a bar, and she took a sudden swerve, the rope swung with a sudden jump from one side to the other, and placed the passengers in danger. They were objecting to the use of ferry-boats as tow-boats for these particular reasons.

The Hon. Mr. WILLIAMSON said, if a tug-boat was to be allowed to act as a ferry-boat, that would be out of the question altogether; but, if it were allowed, she should not be permitted during that time to carry passen-

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN presumed the Council had good reason for recommending what they did in this matter, which was discussed fully when the Council was in Committee, and the Council took that view of the case. It was specially stated in this Bill that tug-boats might carry passengers to and from any roadstead; and, so far as this amendment was concerned, he thought it better it should go with the rest, so that it might be objected to in another place if it were thought desirable to do so.

Report agreed to, and it was ordered that a message be transmitted to the House of Representatives accordingly.

PUBLIC BODIES' LEASEHOLDS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—Sir, in asking you to leave the chair in order that the Council may go into Committee on the Public Bodies' Leaseholds Bill, I wish to fulfil the promise I made in the Council when we read the Bill a second time — namely, that on going into Committee on the Bill I would explain its provisions. I am quite sure that, after the consideration which honourable members have given to this measure, it will be needless for me to do more than simply explain the provisions of the Bill, particularly those parts which I look upon as the most important portions of it. An honourable gentleman who sits not far from me persuaded me to let this Bill go to a Select Committee. I was weak enough on that occasion to yield to his blandishments; and, with that firmness which is characteristic of my honourable friend, he has cut the Bill to pieces. I refer to this because it is just possible that when we go into Committee my honourable friend will ask that the report of the Select Committee be read and considered; and I have no doubt it will be. The excision of the provisions which my honourable friend wishes to be excised from the Bill, I may say, will render it almost useless for the purpose for which it was introduced. I hope, therefore, that they will not be excised. I wish also to refer to the observations made by the Hon. Mr. Wilson, who expressed surprise that a Bill of such importance as this received no consideration in another place. I am assured on the best authority that a very able speech was made on the occasion of its introduction by the Premier; and, although the speech does not appear in *Hansard*, for some reason with which I am not acquainted, yet it has been published in the papers and commented upon very favourably. The Bill was introduced by the Government, at the instance of several local bodies, to answer the requirements of educational bodies and local bodies generally; and it was done for this purpose: Several of them wished to obtain authority from Parliament to lease the land over which they had control. That would have necessitated such a large number of Bills that it was considered advisable to introduce one general Bill to embrace them all, giving the greatest possible latitude, so as to meet the requirements of almost every body having the control of lands. This Bill, in its present shape, contains all the provisions necessary for giving those powers. It is a very important and seems to me a very simple one, and I have no doubt it has received full consideration at the hands of this Council, because of the observations—I can scarcely call it the debate—that were made when we were reading it a second time. The Bill defines what is a "leasing authority." This means—

" . . the Council of a borough or county, a Road Board, Town Board, Harbour Board respectively, in whom the management or control of any lands is vested for or on behalf of any of the corporate bodies such Councils or Boards represent; and also any authority (howsoever named) in whom any lands are vested for general educational purposes, or for the purposes of any public college or school, or for any other purposes of a public nature, with power to dispose of such lands by way of lease."

The "leasing authority" is referred to throughout the Bill as the authority to grant a lease to any person who may wish to have one. One very important amendment has been made by the Committee to whom the Bill was referred, with which I entirely agree, and that was that the Bill should not come into operation except with the sanction and consent of the leasing authority. This point seems to have escaped the attention of the other branch of the Legislature, but directly it was suggested to me I assented to it. It was never intended that this Bill should come into operation without the consent of the leasing authority. The Bill goes on to provide power to bring the Act into operation, with the consent of the leasing authority, by Order in Council, and then any old law in force in regard to the body concerned immediately ceases to operate; and further on the form of lease is provided. Leases are to be put up by public auction, and, if not sold in the first instance, they are to be put up a second time, in terms of clause 8. There is a provision in clause 10, to which the Committee refer, regarding which I wish to call the attention of the Council, because the Committee seem to have thought there is an inconsistency in the proviso to the clause; but I contend there is no inconsistency in it, and I hope to show that to the Council. It is proposed by this Bill that, six months before the expiration of a lease, the "leasing authority" may accept a surrender, and may again lease to the tenant at not less rental than the present existing rent; but, for the purpose of getting additional rents, it is proposed that the renewal shall be made in the manner prescribed by the Supreme Court Procedure Act. Section 11 is of somewhat similar character with regard to surrenders. I have to call the attention of the Council now to the clauses which the Committee suggest should be struck out—namely, the proviso to clause 11, and clauses 13, 14, and 15. These have been inserted at the instance of the leasing authorities, because it is desirable to give them the power to take advantage of the provisions of this Bill. The

Bill, of itself, contains nothing more to which attention need be called. I will now ask the Council to follow me whilst I refer to the schedule. A provision is made in the schedule by which the valuations are to be made—one valuation of the land, the other of the ground-rent; and provision also is made, which is intended to be incorporated in every future lease, by which a proper valuation may be taken, and the lessor may be represented. Further provision is made by which, in the event of the landlord himself wishing to purchase the property, the valuation of the improvements may be made. I do not know that there is any other special provision in the schedule except that one. There are also provisions relating to what are more commonly known as conditions of sale at auction, and the usual conditions of sale are incorporated in the schedule. I hope that when we go into Committee on the question we shall have an opportunity of discussing those points to which objection has been taken by the Committee. I now therefore move, That you, Sir, do leave the chair.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES. — Before that question is put I should like to make a few remarks. First of all, I quite agree (rest of sentence inaudible). I think that, before I conclude my remarks, I shall be able to satisfy the Council that in taking that course I was actuated by a desire to see the Bill amended and improved, I will venture to say, in the direction of maintaining its consistency with the action that this Council has uniformly taken in the past. It seemed desirable that these particular provisions should come under the notice of the Select Committee, in order to enable them to draw the attention of the Council to the inconsistency which existed in the Bill, as originally introduced with existing Acts. In the early part of the session, some honourable members of both Houses, from the South, knowing very well the circumstances in which a number of Crown tenants, or, more properly speaking, the tenants of Crown lands and of public reserves—and including in that term the holders of perpetual leases and all lands on deferred payments — were suffering from the general depression, from the very low prices of produce of all kinds, and from the heavy taxation, and that they stood in need of some relief, if such could possibly be given, cast about for some way of giving that relief. In the case of lands which were leased or sold on deferred payments by any of the bodies that have the administration of endowments, the existing Acts did not permit of their giving any relief in any shape, either in the way of giving a surrender, or of reducing the rent, or of extending the period over which the rents may be paid. I should say, however, with regard to the acceptance of a surrender, that the point is rather doubtful. I know of one body having the administration of certain reserves which conceived that it had the power to accept the surrender of a lease, and did so in one or two instances; but subsequently a doubt was suggested as to the power of the body to take such action, the matter was submitted to the legal adviser of the leasing authority, and the advice given was that the question was somewhat doubtful, and that it would be more prudent not to exercise that power,—which advice was accepted. This being the feeling among a number of members from the South, it was considered advisable to approach the Government and represent the matter to them, and inquire whether the Government could see its way to give some relief by introducing a Bill which would alter the Land Act in such a way as to allow Waste Lands Boards—the "leasing authorities," to use the term which appears in this Bill—to reduce rent temporarily, to accept surrender, or to extend the period within which deferred-payment settlers could pay up their liabilities; but the Premier, who received the deputation on the subject, gave no hope that the Government could comply with that request. Nothing further was heard of the matter except that the question was referred to the Waste Lands Committee in another place; but when this Bill came up the title seemed to indicate that the Government had reconsidered the matter, and that the measure might contain some provision which would enable the existing authorities to give some relief. It was with this view that I hailed the Bill with satisfaction before I came to know what the main provisions were. On looking over it, however, I found that the chief provision was the introduction of measures intended to induce uniformity in the character of the leases given of such public reserves; and, although apparently it contained provisions which would seem to authorize those district authorities to give some relief to the occupants of public lands, yet that was not sufficiently clear and unequivocal without further alteration. I believe a very little alteration will enable the Council to confer a great public benefit by enabling the leasing authorities to give this relief. Possibly, thus, many struggling settlers who are on the brink of insolvency would be able to hold out a little longer, till matters in the colony are more prosperous. Very little alteration in the Bill will enable the Council to give this relief. I see no objection to the proposal to have leases granted on a uniform plan, and I think the form in the schedule is one which we can accept with very little alteration. The only alteration which I would suggest is one which has been indicated in the remarks of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary—namely, that it is desirable to make the provisions of the 1st paragraph of the schedule uniform with the provisions of section 10 of the Bill. But, while I say so much in praise of certain parts of the Bill, and as to the general purport of it if amended — and I trust the Council will amend it—there are some portions which, I think, are open to grave objection. One of these occurred to the Committee, and has been referred to by the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, and the honourable gentleman agrees to amend the Bill in that respect. It was proposed in clause 3 to enable the Governor in Council, by spontaneous action, to bring this Bill into

operation. That would be an exceedingly objectionable course of proceeding. The provisions might be very good in themselves, but it would be a most arbitrary proceeding on the part of the Executive to bring those provisions into operation unless the leasing authorities themselves desired it. But the alteration which the Committee have recommended in their report I am glad to think will be acceded to by the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, and I regret the honourable gentleman will not also accede, on the part of the Government, to the other recommendations which the Committee have made, by striking out the proposal to introduce the perpetual-leasing system. The Council will remember very well that the question of perpetual leasing has been fought over on different occasions; and on each of those occasions the introduction of the system, so far as the administration of reserves is concerned, has been successfully resisted. That particular portion of the land administration has been retained in the Land Acts; but, so far as its operation on reserves is concerned, it is only brought into operation there at the desire of the leasing authority. I think it would be well to adhere to the same line of policy. If certain sections of this Bill in its present form are agreed to, then the Governor in Council will have power to introduce this mode of administration, first, to a certain extent, but it would be possible gradually to supersede all other modes of administering the land. I think that would be exceedingly objectionable. These are the main provisions to which I individually take exception, and I am glad to see that the Select Committee to which the Bill was referred has also taken exception to them, and has recommended that they be excised from the Bill. I am quite certain, if the provisions recommended by the Committee are accepted, they will be far more useful and generally acceptable than those in the Bill in its present shape, and I trust the Council will concur in the recommendations made by the Select Committee to excise these clauses. There are some other minor alterations which may be required when the Bill is passing through Committee; but this point to which I have referred is the most important. There are some apparent inconsistencies—to which the Hon. the Colonial Secretary has referred—in the 10th section,—for example, in referring, first of all, the question of future rents to arbitration, and then limiting the power of the arbitrators so far as regards the minimum. I think, if a question of that kind is referred to arbitration, it is a mere mockery to fix either a maximum or a minimum. That ought to be determined by the arbitrators. However, these are questions which might be discussed in Committee, and what further remarks I have to make I shall reserve to a future stage of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—Notwithstanding the explanation which has been given I do not think the Council fully understands the nature of this Bill. This is in the worst sense one of a class of Bills which has always been reprobated here. There are many safeguards which we may endeavour to erect; but I am certain they will be evaded. In the case of a Corporation which has leased land extensively at high rates, under this Bill the tenants will have only to use certain influence, which they can very easily do, to alter what has been done. The honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill tells us it has been asked for by some Corporations in the South. That may be so, but it does not follow that the Bill is a good one. I can easily understand, however, that leases have been granted at rents which are now excessive, owing to the depression; but it is new to me to know that an Act of this kind is wanted, and until I am shown to the contrary I shall say still that these Corporations have the power to do what is the best in the circumstances. I understand words will be put in to render this Act inoperative unless the leasing body in question asks for the Act to be put in operation. We should have heard nothing at all about this matter if property had risen in value. Even if transactions have not been absolutely bad ones, if the tenants can see their way to get a reduction in the rents they will try to get it, and it will be a popular cry. I believe this Bill is simply brought forward at the request of two or three of the local bodies, at the instance of some people who have made bad bargains. I should like to know another thing: If this is to extend to the deferred-payment settlers and the perpetual-leaseholders, where are the freeholders to get redress? If you once open the door in this respect I do not know where it is to end. I believe the object of introducing this Bill is a very bad one, and I think the Council will do well to throw out the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—There is one strange feature about this Bill—that is, the power given under the clauses of the Bill to be exercised, as the Hon. the Colonial Secretary has said, only on the application of the leasing bodies. Power is conferred under this Bill which will override and supersede special Acts passed in respect of the leasing-powers of various local bodies. This very session we have devoted a great deal of time to three public bodies' leasing Bills—the City of Dunedin, the Otago Harbour Board, and the Wellington Harbour Board. The provisions of these Bills have been carefully watched by the respective localities, and every effort has been made to adapt those Bills not only to the necessities of the place, but also to the requirements of the public bodies which have to administer the Acts, and also to protect the public interests, which may be affected by a too zealous exercise of authority on the part of the local bodies. The whole of our labour in that respect is to be gone over again. By a simple application to the Government one of these public bodies can get this Bill brought into force. The last clause of the Bill is worthy of considerable notice, as a mode of legislation which I think is very objectionable and very much to be deprecated. Clause 18 says,—

"Upon the provisions of this Act or any of

them being applied to any leasing authority, the provisions of any other Act inconsistent with such first-mentioned provisions shall be and the same are hereby repealed, but without prejudice to any lease, act, matter, or thing executed or done prior to the passing of this Act."

I do not think, unless the Legislature is to abrogate its functions altogether, and to hand over to these public bodies the power of doing that which is good in their own eyes, that clause is a proper one to put into any Bill. Honourable members will have to watch this Bill narrowly in order to prevent the various localities being deprived of the safeguards which have been introduced in their behalf in the Acts we have passed; and I think it is contrary to the whole spirit of Parliament that this system of passing a Bill to override measures already passed during this session should be tolerated.

The Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON.—I think that the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Mantell to a certain extent justify the introduction of this Bill, because he drew attention to the fact that a good portion of the time during this session has been spent in the consideration of some local Bills, by which certain powers—amongst others, that of leasing—were given to local bodies. The object of this Bill is, no doubt, to get a uniform mode of leasing land throughout the colony. For many years past attention has been drawn to that. Public bodies having land of this description to lease have complained that they did not possess the powers of leasing which have been granted in other cases to other local bodies, and the argument used was that, if a system of leasing was considered right in one part of the colony, there was no reason why such a system should not be extended to another part of the colony. And, if we go back some years, I think honourable members will recollect some discussions and the amount of time which was spent in considering the questions relating to leasing lands in the South, and Dunedin, I think, especially—questions relating to the leasing of lands in the same manner as is provided by this very schedule. I am not a strong supporter of a Bill of this description, because I am always afraid of introducing measures of so sweeping a kind without having some assurance that we are not overlooking the effect that such a Bill will have in particular cases. But, were we making a commencement, I should say it would be very right that conditions of this description should be introduced, and that such powers should be given to all local bodies. I cannot see why similar powers of leasing should not be given to all local bodies; and the conditions contained in the schedule appear to me to be those which have been approved again and again of late years by members in this Council. I merely mention this as a justification of the Bill. As I have said, I am not a very strong supporter of it; but so much, I think, may be said for it. As regards the 18th clause, the Committee have recommended that it be struck out, and I trust it will be struck out.

Bill committed.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—Interpretation.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the following words be struck out: "or for any other purposes of a public nature."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 14.

Barnicoat	Lahmann	Shrimski
Bonar	McLean	Swanson
Buckley	Menzies	Taiaroa
Dignan	Peacock	Williams.
Kenny	Shephard	

NOES, 17.

Brandon	Johnson, G. R.	Robinson
Brett	Mantell	Walker
Campbell	Miller	Whitaker
Fraser	Peter	Williamson
Grace	Pollen	Wilson.
Holmes	Reeves	

Majority against, 3.

Words struck out.

Clause as amended agreed to.

Clause 10.—Surrender of existing leases may be accepted, and new lease granted.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES moved to strike out the following words: "and the rent to be payable in respect of such new lease shall in no case be less than that payable under the previous lease."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 22.

Barnicoat	Johnson, G. R.	Reeves
Bathgate	Kenny	Robinson
Bonar	Lahmann	Shephard
Brett	Martin	Swanson
Buckley	McLean	Whitaker
Dignan	Peacock	Williamson
Fraser	Pollen	Wilson.
Grace		

NOES, 9.

Acland	Mantell	Peter
Brandon	Menzies	Walker
Campbell	Miller	Wigley.

Majority for, 13.

Words retained.

Clause 11.—Other surrenders and reduction of rent in certain cases.

The Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON moved, That all the words of the proviso to the word "respectively" be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 18.

Barnicoat	Fraser	Reeves
Bathgate	Grace	Shephard
Bonar	Kenny	Shrimski
Brett	Lahmann	Swanson
Buckley	McLean	Williams
Dignan	Peacock	Wilson.

NOES, 10.

Campbell	Miller	Walker
Johnson, G. R.	Peter	Whitaker
Mantell	Pollen	Williamson.
Menzies		

Majority for, 8.

Words retained.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER moved, That the clause be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 20.

Acland	Grace	Peter
Barnicoat	Johnson, G. R.	Reeves
Bathgate	Kenny	Shephard
Brett	Lahmann	Swanson
Buckley	McLean	Walker
Campbell	Menzies	Williams.
Dignan	Miller	

NOES, 8.

Bonar	Peacock	Williamson
Fraser	Pollen	Wilson.
Mantell	Whitaker	

Majority for, 12.

Clause retained.

Clause 13.—Power to adopt certain parts of "The Land Act, 1885."

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES moved, That the clause be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 18.

Acland	Dignan	Peacock
Barnicoat	Fraser	Reeves
Bathgate	Grace	Shephard
Bonar	Kenny	Swanson
Brett	Lahmann	Whitaker
Buckley	McLean	Williams.

NOES, 9.

Campbell	Menzies	Pollen
Johnson, G. R.	Miller	Williamson
Mantell	Peter	Wilson.

Majority for, 9.

Clause retained.

Clause 14.—Governor in Council may modify provisions as necessary.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY moved, That the clause be agreed to.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 18.

Acland	Fraser	Swanson
Barnicoat	Kenny	Walker
Bathgate	Lahmann	Whitaker
Bonar	Peacock	Williams
Buckley	Reeves	Williamson
Dignan	Shephard	Wilson.

NOES, 11.

Brandon	Holmes	Menzies
Brett	Johnson, G. R.	Miller
Campbell	Mantell	Peter.
Grace	McLean	

Majority for, 7.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 15.—Resolution of leasing authority to be approved by the Governor in Council.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES moved, That the clause be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 21.

Acland	Fraser	Shephard
Barnicoat	Grace	Swanson
Bathgate	Kenny	Walker
Bonar	Lahmann	Whitaker
Brett	Miller	Williams
Buckley	Peacock	Williamson
Dignan	Reeves	Wilson.

NOES, 8.

Brandon	Mantell	Peter
Campbell	McLean	Pollen.
Holmes	Menzies	

Majority for, 13.

Clause agreed to.

Clause 18.—Repeal of inconsistent provisions on application of Act.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES moved, That the clause be expunged.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 20.

Acland	Fraser	Shrimski
Barnicoat	Kenny	Swanson
Bathgate	Lahmann	Walker
Bonar	McLean	Williams
Brett	Peacock	Williamson
Buckley	Reeves	Wilson.
Dignan	Shephard	

NOES, 9.

Grace	Mantell	Peter
Holmes	Menzies	Pollen
Johnson, G. R.	Miller	Whitaker.

Majority for, 11.

Clause agreed to.

GOVERNMENT LOANS TO LOCAL BODIES BILL.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—It will not be necessary for me to explain this Bill—the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill—further than merely to state that it is a similar Bill to that which was set aside by this Council two days ago. There are, however, a few amendments in it, but they are of no particular consequence. The following words are attached to the 27th clause: "For the purposes of this and the next succeeding four sections, the expression 'local authority' shall include a Borough Council that has issued debentures under the Act therein mentioned." The words "local bodies" have been inserted after the word "authority." And then, section 46 is a new section altogether: it is as follows:—

"The Treasurer may cause any scrip or debentures which may be issued under this Part of this Act to be converted into stock, and inscribed in the manner provided by 'The New Zealand Colonial-inscribed Stock Loan Act, 1882,' or may, in lieu of issuing such scrip or debentures, cause an equivalent amount to be

scribed in the manner aforesaid; and all the provisions of the said last-mentioned Act, excepting those contained in the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth sections, shall apply to stock subscribed under the provisions of this section."

These are the differences between the Bill set aside and the present one. I move, That this Bill be now read the second time.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—It is as well that honourable members should be aware of the fact that this is not the same Bill altogether that was authorized to be set aside; but the only portion of the difference it contains which will bring under the notice of the Council now is the paragraph of the 37th clause,—

"If no sum be so appropriated in any financial year, the Treasurer may make loans under the authority of this Act in such year to a total amount not exceeding two hundred thousand pounds, and such amount shall be in addition to any loans agreed by the Treasurer to be made previously but not yet complete."

It was intended that this should be struck out of the clause altogether, but it escaped somehow, and comes back to us in the form we now have it in. I consider the Council would be wanting in its duty to the colony if it passed such a clause as this, because it is permitting the Colonial Treasurer at his own free-will to appropriate £200,000 just as he pleases. I do not think such a proposition was ever entertained in any deliberative Assembly before. However, we have had a good deal of bad legislation this session, and I think we are fairly beginning to shoot Niagara. I feel satisfied this is merely an addition to the bad legislation that has taken place already, and I intend to move, when in Committee, that that portion of clause 37 be expunged.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—It is my duty to state to members of the Council that an amendment of that sort cannot be put.

Bill read a second time.

NORTH ISLAND MAIN TRUNK RAILWAY LOAN APPLICATION BILL.

On the motion for the committal of the North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan Application Bill,

The Hon. Captain FRASER said,—I wish to say a few words on this Bill before it goes into Committee, because I had not an opportunity of speaking on the second reading. I do not agree with what some honourable members have said with reference to this Bill. I think the Native Minister deserves great credit for the manner in which he has conducted negotiations with the Natives. He had to deal with a Maori nobleman of very acute intellect, and who had not a very high opinion of our honesty; and he would never have permitted the land to be sold until he got a guarantee that the railway was to be made. I think Mr. Ballance has shown, in these transactions with the Natives, that he deserves the confidence of this House.

Bill committed, and read a third time.

MINING BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 8.—Existing rights not affected.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the clause be postponed.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 12.

Acland	Grace	Swanson
Bonar	Miller	Whitaker
Brett	Peter	Williamson
Fraser	Pollen	Wilson.

NOES, 7.

Barnicoat	Lahmann	Reynolds
Bathgate	McLean	Walker.
Buckley		

Majority for, 5.

Clause postponed.

Progress reported.

DEEDS AND INSTRUMENTS REGISTRATION BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I hope the Council will read this Bill a second time, for this reason: that there is a portion of it which I think will be very useful, and I have no doubt that when we get into Committee we shall be able to amend the Bill and make it more useful.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I think this Bill on the whole is a good one. There are portions of it which I very much admire—very much more, I am sure, than the Hon. the Colonial Secretary does. I admire the Bill now more than I did on hearing the lucid remarks that were made by the Hon. the Minister in charge on the motion for its second reading, and I hope it will be read a second time.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—The Hon. Dr. Pollen has just stated that the Bill looks much better since he has had an opportunity of looking into it than it did from the introductory remarks. The Bill is a very simple one; and I trust honourable members read their Bills before they come on for discussion. I stated the principles of the Bill, and the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker took exception to the words I used—that it would require special personal attendance. I am advised that it does require special personal attendance. I did not mean to say that, if the honourable gentleman, for instance, had a deed to register, it required his personal attendance; but it requires some one representing him to be specially present. That is all I stated. I said that it would not be necessary for any one to give his special personal attendance. All that a person would have to do would be to hand over the deed to the agent—the Postmaster, for example—and he would forward it to be registered, and it would come back again without his having to go to the office at all. The Hon. Mr. Wilson remarked that it was strange that the Hon. the Colonial Secretary did not take charge of this Bill. The Colonial Secretary I know has his hands pretty f

can give him any assistance I feel it my duty to do so. It is not I who court the taking-charge of these Bills. I would far rather that the honourable gentleman should take charge of these Bills himself. I do not think it is right to throw the whole of the work on my honourable colleague.

Amendment negatived, and Bill read a second time.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes to ten o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 6th August, 1886.

Midland Railway—Survey of Coast—Springston Telephone—Homestead System—Volunteers—Supply of Statutes to Libraries—Paymasters—Makatoku Matamau Railway—Atiamuri Telephone—Native Lands Purchase—Rotorua Railway—Otakia Railway-station Volunteer Class-firing—Waikouaiti Natives—New Zealand Agricultural Company—Printing-paper—Tinwald Waterton Telegraph—Members' Telegrams—Government Life Insurance Bill—Harbours Bill—Distillation—Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

MIDLAND RAILWAY.

Mr. SEDDON asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will make arrangements to have supplied to members an additional number of copies of the report by Mr. W. N. Blair, C.E. (1886), on the Midland Railway; also, whether the Minister will supply free of cost to the various literary societies, County Councils, and Borough Councils in Canterbury, Westland, and Nelson, copies of the said report? He might say that great dissatisfaction existed among members because but few of them had been able to get more than a single copy of this report. The information contained in the report was so valuable that the more widespread the report was the better for the country. Persons who had no idea whatever of the character of the country referred to were now awake to the fact that it was far more valuable than it was previously understood to be. He had received communications from fifteen or twenty persons asking for copies of this report, and thought that the local bodies, at all events, should be supplied with them. He hoped the Minister would see his way to get more copies of the report printed, as it seemed to him the matter was one of colonial importance.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said a very large number of applications had been received from different parts of the colony for this report. He had made inquiries, and found that about 1,700 copies had been printed and circulated, and that the type had been distributed. It would cost about £50 to get the report set up again and printed, but, as there was a great amount of information in the report and in the maps, and as the subject was one of much interest, he thought it better that it should be reprinted, and proposed to give instructions accordingly.

SURVEY OF COAST.

Mr. BRUCE asked the Minister of Marine, Whether, in view of the recent volcanic disturbances, and having regard to the circumstance that the nautical survey of the New Zealand coast was left incomplete by the Admiralty, and that such survey is expedient in its bearing upon seismological science, upon increased safety to life and property, as well as upon the development of our deep-sea fisheries, the Government will, during the recess, take into consideration the question of the completion of such survey, with the aid, if possible, of Her Majesty's ships, or otherwise? The question was one which, in his opinion, was of very much larger importance than many honourable members were aware of. It was only natural that, having been a sailor, and his sympathies being still with those of his profession, he should endeavour to get others interested in the subject. Even under ordinary conditions, when their essentially maritime character and thousands of miles of seaboard were considered, it was extremely desirable that they should have full and accurate surveys of the coast; and, in view of the recent volcanic disturbances, some steps in this direction had become absolutely imperative. Long before he settled in the colony he had heard it alleged by seafaring men that some volcanic disturbance which took place many years ago had affected materially the soundings of this coast; and, the alteration being in the direction of the diminution of water, that seemed to him to have an extremely important bearing in reference to the safety of life and property. He just wished to glance briefly at it from another point of view. Nothing had astonished him in this colony more than the maritime enterprise of its inhabitants. They had here a coastal and intercolonial service which, in his opinion—and he spoke with very much more experience than most seafaring men of his own age—was one of which New Zealand colonists might be proud, and which was in his opinion superior to that of any other country in the world. He thought that the Government ought to respond generously to such enterprise on the part of the inhabitants of the colony, and take steps in the direction of preserving—to speak from a low point of view—the floating capital of those companies. It would be universally conceded by all thinking men that, when they considered that they lived in a highly volcanic country, any contribution to their knowledge of seismic science such as this survey might afford was extremely desirable.

Mr. LARNACH replied that, so far, no indication of any necessity for a resurvey of the coast had come before the Government. The "Hinemoa" was up by the East Coast just after the late eruption, and no difference was noticed in the depth of the water near the coast. During the recess the Government would send the "Hinemoa"

ound that part of the coast again in order make soundings. He might say that the ficulties resulting and occasioned by this lcanic eruption had been very much overted. For instance, it was supposed that all e land in the district had been destroyed or ndered useless. Now, he had in his hand a legram which he had just received from the ayor of Tauranga, addressed to the Premier, nich would, no doubt, be of interest to the ouse. It was to the effect that a good-sized rm had been sold just recently by auction, alizing over £6 per acre; which certainly was ry reassuring.

Mr. MACANDREW would like the honourle gentleman to give an answer as to whether e Government would communicate with the nperial authorities with a view of getting one Her Majesty's ships to make a survey.

Mr. LARNACH said that the Government ould have no objection to do so, but he did ot think much good would come from it. He d not think Her Majesty's Government would nd any ship to do the work, but they might lace at the disposal of the Government one or wo officers.

Sir G. GREY had no doubt whatever that e Home Government would order a survey applied to. At the present time they were arrying on a survey of Australia, and he had a etter the other day from the officer in charge f the survey. He was sure that the Hydroraphical Branch of the Admiralty would have he survey made if asked, as the Imperial Goernment really charged themselves with the uty of providing for the navigation of the orld.

Mr. LARNACH had already stated that the overnment would have no objection to make uch an application during the recess.

SPRINGSTON TELEPHONE.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked the Commissioner of Telegraphs, Whether he will provide for the establishment of a telephone station at Springston, on the Southbridge line?

Sir J. VOGEL replied that he had had this question inquired into. They were not undertaking any new works until next year, when this line would be made.

HOMESTEAD SYSTEM.

Mr. PYKE asked the Minister of Lands, What has been done to give effect to the homestead clauses of the Land Act in the Provincial District of Otago?

Mr. BALLANCE replied that the Government proposed to set aside three thousand acres near Waikawa Harbour. The Land Board had set aside a thousand acres near the harbour; but it was found that it had been allotted for the crofters, and it was not thought wise to disturb that arrangement until the agent who had been sent Home forwarded his final report. The Government had now selected three thousand acres in what they believed to be a suitable position, and, if the Land Board agreed to the recommendation, the land would be set aside for the system.

VOLUNTEERS.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister of Defence,—(1.) Why is all mention of the fact that certain Volunteer officers held rank in Her Majesty's army or navy omitted in the "New Zealand Army List," whereas full particulars are given in the same list of the services of Militia officers, the Militia being a paper force and the Volunteer Force being a reality? (2.) With regard to long-service medals, will broken service be allowed to reckon, or service in Her Majesty's army or navy, or service in the British Volunteer Forces?

Mr. BALLANCE replied, with reference to the first part of the question, that it was a fact that the "New Zealand Army List" did not contain the names of Volunteer officers, and he saw no justification at all for that omission, which would be repaired in future. With regard to the second question, it was intended that long-service medals should be given to Volunteers after twenty years' service; and there would also be good-conduct and long-service medals for the police.

SUPPLY OF STATUTES TO LIBRARIES.

Mr. IVESS asked the Minister of Justice, If he will cause the statutes passed during each session of Parliament to be supplied to the various libraries in the colony?

Mr. TOLE replied that these libraries were for the first time last year supplied with the statutes of the colony; and it was proposed this year to pursue the same course.

PAYMASTERS.

Mr. REESE asked the Colonial Treasurer, If it is the intention of the Government to establish paymasters in each of the provincial districts, as promised by him last session? Great delay took place in the payment of contractors throughout the colony, and during the session he had had several applications to hunt up payments in the Buildings here. He found now that complaints were coming from contractors in Otago to the same effect, and he knew that great inconvenience was caused by such delays. In the early days of the public works policy the Government appointed paymasters in the several districts.

Sir J. VOGEL said it was not intended to appoint paymasters in the various parts of the colony, as the cost would be very heavy; but a plan had been maturing for some months, and he hoped to give effect to it almost immediately after the session. There were many difficulties in the way, but he hoped that the engineers in charge of public works would be enabled to make payments at once without reference to Wellington. The honourable member did not in the least exaggerate the importance of the matter. He was of opinion that they paid more heavily for their contracts, because contractors knew of the difficulties and the time that elapsed before payment was made. On account of that this new system was proposed. It was one which required more safeguards; but he thought he might say that the Public Works Department and the Treasury were

far agreed that he hoped that in a month or so they would be able to carry it out.

MAKATOKU-MATAMAU RAILWAY.

Mr. SMITH asked the Minister for Public Works, If instructions have been given to fence the piece of railway-line between Makatoku and Matamau, as promised some time ago?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON replied that instructions were given some days ago to have this small piece of fencing done.

ATIAMURI TELEPHONE.

Mr. GRACE asked the Commissioner of Telegraphs, Whether the Government will this year place a telephone at Atiamuri, so as to connect the telegraph stations at Waotu, Rotorua, and Tapuaeharuru with that place? This place was at the junction of the Napier, Tauranga, and Cambridge Roads, and it was equidistant from the telegraph stations mentioned in the question, being about thirty miles from each place. The telegraph line passed close by the hotel there, so that the cost of connecting with the telephone would only be that of a few yards of wire and four telephone instruments. The want of this communication had been very much felt in the past, especially to Europeans travelling the roads. Over a thousand Europeans travelled that road in the course of a year, and also as many as fifty thousand sheep, besides a great number of large cattle on their way to the northern markets from the south, passed that way in a year. He believed that if the telephone were placed there the hotelkeeper—a person of excellent character—would be only too glad to undertake the management, under the usual conditions.

Sir J. VOGEL replied that he had inquired into this matter, and he was sorry to say that it was not practicable. The wires to which the honourable member referred were telegraph-wires, which could not be worked in connection with the telephone. It would cost a thousand pounds, at least, to make a connection with Taupo and Atiamuri, and the settlement was not yet in such a state as to warrant such an expenditure.

Mr. GRACE was under the impression that the ordinary telegraph-wire could be used for telephone purposes.

Sir J. VOGEL said it could not be used indiscriminately for both purposes.

NATIVE LANDS PURCHASE.

Mr. GRACE asked the Native Minister, Whether it is the intention of the Government during the recess to adopt more vigorous measures than have been hitherto taken to complete the negotiations for the purchase of the Native lands in the vicinity of Tauranga, and also on the west side of the Waikato River, Thames Valley, with a view to the early settlement of the extensive unoccupied lands in those localities? Settlement in this neighbourhood, in the opinion of the settlers, had been very much retarded owing to the fact of these lands being allowed to lie unoccupied in the hands of the Maoris for such a long time. In the hope that the Government would expedite the purchase of those lands he now asked the question.

Mr. BALLANCE could not give the honourable gentleman a promise that these lands would be acquired; but the matter would be carefully considered. It was the intention of the Government immediately after the session to consider the whole question of the purchase of Native lands in relation to the Native Land Administration Act which had been passed.

ROTORUA RAILWAY.

Mr. GRACE asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether it is the intention of the Government to call for tenders for the construction of a section of the Morrinsville-Rotorua Railway-line at the Rotorua end; and whether, in connection therewith, it is intended to set apart some of the Crown lands along the line for village settlements, in the same manner as has been done in the Seventy-Mile Bush? The letting of a section at the Rotorua end would greatly accelerate the completion of the line, and be a good opportunity for relieving the depression and allaying the apprehensions caused in the district by the recent volcanic eruptions. The land at the Rotorua end of the line, near the bush, was specially fitted for village settlement, the land being exceptionally good, and, if settled by a suitable class of labourers, who would find employment on the railway works asked for, it would, in a year or two, lead to the prosperous settlement of a large number of families at that end of the line.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said, as to the first part of the question, the Government were not yet in a position to call for tenders. The survey was complete or nearly so; but the work would have to be delayed, because it was necessary, owing to recent disturbances in the district, to consider the exact route that should be taken. As to the second part of the question, the Minister of Lands authorized him to state that some villages would be laid out along the line.

OTAKIA RAILWAY-STATION.

Mr. FULTON asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will provide the requisite facilities for loading sheep and cattle at the Otakia Railway-station? He asked the question in consequence of an application having been made to him.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said no application had reached the department; but inquiries would be made.

VOLUNTEER CLASS-FIRING.

Mr. HAMLIN asked the Defence Minister, Whether, in the new Volunteer Regulations, he will do away with the necessity for Volunteers going through class-firing to qualify them for capitation, and, in lieu thereof, will direct that every member of a Volunteer corps shall fire forty rounds of ball-cartridge as target-practice, such ball-practice to be under the supervision of a commissioned or non-commissioned officer, and a return of such

shooting to be forwarded to the Defence Office on the 31st of December in each year? The matter was one he had taken great interest in for many years, and it was one that was generally taken an interest in by those who had any experience in it. Under the present regulations, every Volunteer, to be returned for capitation, had to go through judging-distance practice, and had to fire forty shots at a target—ten shots standing at 200yd., ten kneeling, and twenty in any position at a second-class target at 400yd. This latter part of the regulations was absurd. The rifle was put into the hands of a raw recruit, and, without knowing anything of the effect of windage, or the sun's reflection—before he scarcely knew how to load—he had to fire the forty shots, which was simply throwing the ammunition away. He hoped that, under the new regulations which he understood were to be issued, it would be provided that the firing should be under proper instruction, and not a sheer throwing-away of the ammunition, as now. This would tend to make infinitely better shots than the present system could, and the ammunition supplied by the country to the Volunteers would be properly used, instead of so much of it being merely thrown away. The question was one of vital importance, and he earnestly hoped the honourable gentleman would give his attention to the suggestion he had made.

Mr. BALLANCE said they had not made such progress in the consideration of the subject as to lead them to the conclusion that class-firing should be done away with altogether. He thought class-firing should be maintained: but the honourable member had made a valuable suggestion, which should receive due consideration. The new regulations, before being issued, would be circulated among the Volunteers throughout the country, and no doubt many useful suggestions expressing the mind of the Volunteers would be received. He hoped this would satisfy the honourable gentleman.

Mr. FITZHERBERT would move the adjournment of the House to enable him to add one or two remarks to what had been said by the honourable member who asked the question. The absurdity of the thing was that the forty rounds might be fired in the air: if every shot missed it counted, and had the same effect as if the bull's-eye was hit every time. It was the same with judging distances: so many distances had to be judged, and it did not matter whether those judging judged right or wrong. The Volunteer might fire in the air, and it was all the same as qualifying.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Why should they fire in the air?

Mr. FITZHERBERT said the Volunteer might if he liked, and he still passed. It was all the same if he fired in the air or hit the target every time.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

WAIKOUAITI NATIVES.

Mr. PARATA asked the Government, What steps they are going to take with reference to the petition of Natives in the Middle Island residing at Waikouaiti regarding the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act, which has been put in force in their district since the year 1882 to the year 1885? None of these rates on Native land were spent on roads which benefited the Natives, who themselves made the roads within their own boundaries. The Natives petitioned that the rates should be paid back by the County Council to the Colonial Treasury; otherwise the Natives would have to repay them hereafter. The lands would be divided up shortly, and, if the money were kept and spent on road-making through the lands, then the Natives would not object; but, as it was, the Maoris there were in this position: that they would ultimately have to repay to the Treasury the rates that had been advanced on account of their land, without having received any benefit whatever from the spending of the funds.

Mr. BALLANCE said it was the intention of the Government to consider the subject of the petition during the recess, and a reply to that effect had been sent to the petitioners.

NEW ZEALAND AGRICULTURAL COMPANY.

Sir G. GREY asked the Minister of Lands the date of a private letter, said to have been received from Mr. Larnach when he was in England, inviting the Premier and others to take shares in the New Zealand Agricultural Company; the date on which that letter was received here; and the name of the person to whom it was addressed.

Mr. BALLANCE replied that the question seemed to be somewhat mysterious, and he could not understand why it had been addressed to the Minister of Lands. It was not the custom of the Lands Department to file private letters, and, so far as he was concerned, he knew of no such letter. It appeared, according to the honourable gentleman's question, that it was the then Premier (Sir G. Grey) who had received the letter, and of course it was for the Premier, if that was so, to produce it.

Sir G. GREY might explain that Sir George Whitmore, in a speech in another place, had furnished particulars of this letter in part; and the name of the honourable gentleman had been coupled with it. He was sorry if he had made any mistake in the manner in which he had put this question, but he had thought that the honourable gentleman would be the proper person to apply to. His reason for putting the question was this: that he had not heard or seen anything of this letter until Sir George Whitmore had quoted its contents, and it was a matter of importance to him that he should see the letter.

Mr. BALLANCE could only say that he had no recollection of such a letter, nor had he any recollection of the speech made by Sir George Whitmore. It must have been made many years ago.

Sir G. GREY said that perhaps the honourable gentleman would read the speech.

Mr. BALLANCE replied that the honourable gentleman should have given particulars when asking his question.

Mr. LARNACH said that, as his name had been mixed up in this affair, perhaps he might be allowed to say that, if the honourable member for Auckland East had desired to see his private letters, he should have had the manliness and straightforwardness to come to him and ask to be allowed to see them, or he might have gone to the person to whom they were addressed, or he might have moved, for what it was worth, that his (Mr. Larnach's) private-letter book be laid on the table of the House. He (Mr. Larnach) might add that he had no recollection of ever having written such a letter as that which had been referred to. It appeared to him that the honourable member for Auckland City, not only during this session and last session, but for some years past, had lost no opportunity of referring to other people's affairs in terms unworthy and——

Mr. SPEAKER reminded the honourable gentleman that, in personal explanation, he could not introduce matter which must lead to debate.

Mr. LARNACH would only say, then, that he had never written such a letter, and that, if he had done so, it was no business whatever of the honourable gentleman to interfere in his private affairs. The honourable gentleman (Sir G. Grey) was a little too fond of that sort of thing.

Sir G. GREY might be allowed to explain that the statement in the letter, as it appeared, was that an invitation had been sent to him to join the Agricultural Company; and that was a matter in which he was intimately concerned. He wished to interfere with no person's private business; but, if such a letter had been sent, he had only to say that it had never reached him. He wished to ascertain if such a letter had been sent.

On the motion of Sir G. GREY, it was ordered, That there be laid on the table copies of all letters and telegrams which passed between Sir George Grey and Sir Julius Vogel relative to the latter holding the office of director in the New Zealand Agricultural Company whilst he was Agent-General of this colony.

PRINTING-PAPER.

Mr. GORE asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will consider the advisability of granting a bonus for the manufacture of printing paper in the colony? Efforts had been made to start this industry, but, like all new industries, it had a good deal to contend with. This industry gave employment to a large number of men, and used the natural products of the colony; and he thought that a little judicious assistance from the Government would enable the industry to be carried on to a successful issue.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that the matter would be considered by the Government, with other bonuses, during the recess.

TINWALD-WATERTON TELEGRAPH

Mr. IVESS asked the Commissioner Telegraphs, Whether he will take steps ascertain the desirability of extending the graph from Tinwald to Waterton, Longb district? A very large population had set in this district, the last census returns show that it had reached 1,155. If any of th people wished to send a telegram they had travel a distance of ten miles to Tinwald, wh was a great inconvenience. If the Minis saw his way to extend the telephone the r dents in the district would be disposed to m up the deficiency, if any, that might be curred in working the line.

Sir J. VOGEL replied that there could no possible objection to "ascertaining desirability," but it was not proposed to un take any new works during the current yea

MEMBERS' TELEGRAMS.

Mr. DARGAVILLE asked the Postmas General, If he will take such steps as may necessary to enable members of the Ho of Representatives, during session, to send layed telegrams to their constituents on pu matters at, say, double the prices charged Press messages?

Sir J. VOGEL said it was somewhat diffi to answer this question. He recognised t there were many communications made members to their constituents which wer such a character that, if sent by Ministers, t would certainly be franked; and it seem hardly fair that members should be placed a disadvantage in this respect. But, on other hand, the price at which the honour member asked to have these messages sent such that it would not pay the Governm In the case of Press messages the concess resulted in loss to the department. Howe he would undertake to consider the ma during the recess, and see what was the lo rate at which these messages might be sent members without loss to the department, what facilities could be given.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Postmaster-G ral if he would also take into consider the desirability of allowing members to telegrams to the Government on public ser free of cost.

Sir J. VOGEL said that where the busin was purely a public character the Minis did frank telegrams; but, where it was members or any other persons were liable to surcharged. Persons telegraphing to Minis must take the risk.

GOVERNMENT LIFE INSURANCE BIL

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 10.—Other part of such moneys m be lent to policy-holders on mortgage.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE moved the om sion of the words "four thousand pounds," w a view to insert "ten thousand pounds."

The Committee divided on the questi "That the words proposed to be struck stand part of the clause."

AYES, 30.

rright	Guinness	Steward, W. J.
ance	Joyce	Taylor
an	Levestam	Thompson, T.
Bradshaw	Macandrew	Thomson, J. W.
wn	McKenzie, J.	Tole
man	McMillan	Turnbull
gaville	Parata	Vogel.
son	Pyke	*Tellers.*
ican	Richardson, E.	Ivess
herbert	Ross	O'Callaghan.
ser		

NOES, 32.

inson	Johnston	Richardson, G.
ron	Lake	Rolleston
ce	Lance	Russell
hanan	Larnach	Sutter
kland, J. C.	Macarthur	Trimble
kland, W.F.	Mitchelson	Walker
olly	Moat	Whyte
an	Montgomery	Wilson.
ton	Moss	*Tellers.*
st, H.	Newman	Mackenzie, M.
rthouse	Peacock	Pearson.

Majority against, 2.

Words struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the blank be filled up with the words 'n thousand.'"

AYES, 29.

inson	Hirst, H.	Richardson, G.
ron	Johnston	Rolleston
uce	Lake	Russell
yce	Larnach	Sutter
chanan	Macarthur	Trimble
ckland, J. C.	Mitchelson	Whyte
ckland, W.F.	Moat	Wilson.
nolly	Moss	*Tellers.*
wan	Newman	Mackenzie, M.
lton	Peacock	Montgomery.

NOES, 32.

wright	Hatch	Ross
llance	Hursthouse	Steward, W. J.
van	Ivess	Taylor
-Bradshaw	Joyce	Thompson, T.
own	Lance	Thomson, J. W.
dman	Levestam	Tole
rgaville	Macandrew	Turnbull
dson	McKenzie, J.	Vogel.
ncan	Parata	*Tellers.*
aser	Pyke	Guinness
re	Richardson, E.	O'Callaghan.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Pearson	Fitzherbert
Smith	Wakefield
Walker.	Stout.

Majority against, 3.

Motion negatived.

Clause 11, subsection (2).—"No one loan on mortgage shall exceed five thousand pounds in amount; and, so far as practicable, applications for such loans not exceeding five hundred pounds shall have priority over applications for other sums."

Mr. MONTGOMERY moved, That the word "and" be struck out, with a view to testing whether preference shall be given to small loans.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 38.

Ballance	Hursthouse	Richardson, E.
Barron	Ivess	Smith
B.-Bradshaw	Joyce	Steward, W. J.
Brown	Kerr	Taylor
Cowan	Lance	Thompson, T.
Dargaville	Larnach	Thomson, J. W.
Dodson	Levestam	Tole
Fraser	Macandrew	Turnbull
Garrick	McKenzie, J.	Vogel
Grey	McMillan	Walker.
Guinness	Montgomery	*Tellers.*
Hatch	Moss	Duncan
Hobbs	O'Callaghan	Richardson, G.

NOES, 26.

Allwright	Hirst, H.	Reese
Bevan	Johnston	Rolleston
Bruce	Lake	Ross
Bryce	Monteath	Samuel
Buchanan	Mitchelson	Stewart, W. D.
Cadman	Moat	Sutter.
Conolly	Newman	*Tellers.*
Fergus	Parata	Mackenzie, M.
Fulton	Pearson	Trimble.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Cadman	Buckland, W. F.
Grace	Wakefield
Harper	Macarthur
Holmes	Buckland, J. C.
Stout.	Atkinson.

Majority for, 12.

Word retained.

Bill reported.

HARBOURS BILL.

A message was received from the Legislative Council forwarding reasons for insisting on its amendments in this Bill, as follows:—

[See proceedings of Legislative Council this day.]

Mr. LARNACH.—I move, That a Committee, consisting of Mr. Macandrew, Mr. J. McKenzie, and the mover, be appointed to prepare reasons for disagreeing with the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill.

Mr. SUTTER.—I wish to point out that the clause raising the tonnage dues is absolutely necessary for Harbour Boards at the present time. The old charge was fixed at a time when nearly the whole of the carrying trade was done by sailing-ships, whose visits to the ports were not so frequent as those of steamers are now; probably those vessels did not visit a port more than once or twice a year: but now almost the whole of the trade is monopolized by one or two steamers. Take the case of Timaru, where one steamer actually monopolizes the coasting trade, and comes in and out some like 104 times a year, but it only pr

ton for the twelve months. Honourable members will see from this that the dues derived by the Harbour Boards are very small, and it is absolutely necessary to increase them if the Boards are to have any revenue. I therefore trust that the Committee appointed to draw up reasons will insist upon this clause being accepted by the other branch of the Legislature as it passed this House.

Mr. HATCH.—I would like to point out that the clause in reference to tug-boats seems to be misunderstood. There is no idea of boats being used in towing- and ferrying-work at the same time. The thing is monstrous. The clause inserted in the Bill in this House is necessary in circumstances which have occurred in connection with the service between the Bluff and Stewart Island. The Bluff tug-boat is employed in carrying the mails to Stewart Island, and at the same time takes passengers. The service was established by the Government, and a subsidy is paid to the Board for the use of the tug. When the Bill was before the House it appeared to me, and also to the Minister in charge of the Bill, that this service which has been so successfully carried on would have to be suspended unless provision was made that tug-boats belonging to Harbour Boards in such special cases should be allowed to carry passengers; and that, unless something was done, this particular service, which has worked so satisfactorily, would have to be suspended. I hope the Committee will take this into consideration, and explain the matter thoroughly to those who may represent the other House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I may be permitted to observe that in the amendments made by the Legislative Council there is one which interferes with our powers of rating—one of the special privileges of this House. It is true that this is not a money Bill, and need not be laid aside if the House is disposed to waive its privileges in this instance; but undoubtedly there is an interference with our undoubted privileges in making an amendment in a rating clause, and I think that the reasons to be transmitted to the Council should include one protesting against the Legislative Council encroaching upon our privileges in this matter of rating and dealing with public money—privileges which belong exclusively to this House.

Major ATKINSON.—I understand you, Sir, to say the Legislative Council has no power to alter rating clauses, and that you advise us not to agree to any alteration.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The Legislative Council has no power to make alterations in rating clauses, unless they be such as would not materially infringe the privileges of this House, as, for instance, that they were in furtherance of the intention of the House. This is not a money Bill in the sense which would require me to advise the House to lay it aside; but we should draw the attention of the Council to the circumstance as a matter of procedure, if not of privilege.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Sutter

DISTILLATION.

On the motion to go into Committee of Supply,

Mr. LEVESTAM moved, That, in the opinion of this House, the distillation of spirits within the colony ought to be encouraged, so as to afford the farmers a local market for their grain. He said,—I would submit that if such a proposal as this were carried out it would be of great benefit to the farmers and to the grain producing people of the colony. The total quantity of spirits imported into this colony last year was 342,000 gallons, the value of which was £134,097. I know it has been argued that spirits ought to be kept out of the country; but, so long as it is the fact that we import this quantity of spirits into the country, I think it would be well for us to consider whether we cannot have the spirits manufactured in the country, so that the money shall be kept among ourselves, and that work shall be provided for a good many of our colonists. But there is another side to this question. The total quantity of barley grown in New Zealand is a million and a quarter bushels. Of this quantity, 128,000 bushels are exported, and 468,000 bushels are used in brewing, so that there is nearly half a million bushels of barley held in stock, which the people do not know what to do with. If we had distilleries, not only should we encourage the manufacture of an article which we at present import, but we should be able to provide an export to other countries—notably to the Australian Colonies; because New Zealand is one of those countries which are particularly well fitted for the growing of barley and cereals. Independently of all these things there is this to be said: that when barley is damaged now by wet or bad harvests it is entirely spoiled and lost to the farmer, whereas if we had distillery-works the farmers would be able to sell it at full prices, notwithstanding its being damaged; because, although barley which has been damaged by wet is not good for brewing, it is good for distillation purposes. An argument I have heard used against this motion is that we tried something of the same kind before, and that we failed. It is true that we did fail, in one sense; but I, for one, do not agree that we failed altogether, because I have been told by some of the best judges of whiskey that that which was produced locally is better than that which was imported. So far, therefore, as the quality of the article is concerned, there was no failure. I admit that the revenue lost a much larger sum by distillation than it ought to have lost, and therefore it was deemed necessary to put a stop to it; but that was entirely the fault of the Government in having allowed too large differential duties. I believe it cost something like £27,000 to buy out the distilleries. Now, I want to point out that this resolution, if carried, does not bind the House to anything—it simply says that distillation should be encouraged; and it will be afterwards for the House to make a law as to differential duties which it may think best calculated to meet the object in view

own opinion is that, instead of imposing ifferential duty, we might give distillers this antage: that until they sold their whiskey hould be stored in bond, and there should no duty paid upon it. As soon as the iskey was exported or issued for home conption, then the distiller, having got his ney, should pay the duty; but during the e it was in bond he should not be called n to lie out of his money. I have already nted out the advantages which would arise n distilleries. We should keep the money he place, we should find a local market for farmers for an enormous quantity of barley, l we should encourage an industry which ld give employment to a good number of ple. I do not know any argument which be brought against passing this bare resoion. It means nothing—that is to say, it s not bind the House to anything. If it is ried, next session the Government can come n with a Bill to give effect to it; and if the use does not want differential duties they d not be agreed to.

Sir J. VOGEL. — I only wish to say this: t I do not think the Government are altoher at one in their opinions on this subject. e Premier is opposed to it, whilst I believe t some members of the Government—at rate, I can speak for myself—believe this olution ought to be passed, and, moreover, t we should give effect to it, but on a clear derstanding that there is not to be any large ference between the Excise and the import ty. I do not think we have any right to ow sentiment to enter into this question. ere will be a certain amount of alcohol orbed by the people of the colony, and refore we may at once put on one side that estion, and go into the other—whether, as is expenditure of money has to be made, it is tter that we should use the native-grown in, and spend our money in the colony in ploying labour, instead of sending the ney so many thousands of miles away. pposing that there is not a large differential ty, I see no reason why we should not use e native-grown barley, and thus not only do ay with the necessity of importing so much rit, but manufacture an article for which we ght get an outside market. I shall give my te for the resolution.

Mr. TAYLOR. — I cannot understand why is House is asked to stultify the proceedings at took place some years ago in reference to is very matter. We all know—at any rate, know—that one distillery in Auckland and other in Dunedin had to be bought out at a ry great cost, and I am quite sure the Treaer himself is not in favour of repeating that se. My object in drawing the attention of e House to this matter is simply this: hile I agree with the Treasurer that it is solutely necessary to utilize the products of is country if they can be utilized in a satistory and definite manner, I would like to k this question: Seeing that this House me years ago decided that it was not to the terest of the colony that these distilleries should exist, and seeing that large sums of money were spent in closing them, why do we want to create ditto?

Sir J. VOGEL.—The differential duty was so enormous that the revenue suffered greatly; and I would take care that if we did it again the revenue should not suffer.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Well, I would like to know, before I vote on a thing of this character, how the revenue is going to be affected.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Not at all.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Upon my word, I cannot understand the logic of some honourable members.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Perhaps the honourable member did not hear what I said. I said the facilities I would give would be these: that during the time the whiskey lies awaiting sale the manufacturer should not be obliged to pay Excise duty, but, when he sells it, then he should pay the ordinary duty. That would make no difference to the revenue whatever.

Mr. TAYLOR.—The honourable member for Nelson does not deal with the principle at all: he is simply dealing with the matter of storing. Members must all know very well that the older whiskey is the better it is. At any rate, I know that. It is desirable to see that the whiskey is stored, so that it may mature before it is sold: but that is not before us at the present time.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—That is one of the facilities I would offer.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I beg the honourable gentleman's pardon; but I must certainly say this: that I am absolutely astonished at what I call his acumen. He is, as a rule, a logical reasoner, but now he is a bit off. I am absolutely astounded to hear the honourable gentleman get up and talk about a matter which is not before the House at all. We know it is desirable that farmers should sell their barley for malting and making whiskey; but, seeing the experience which the House has had some years ago, and the large amount of money it cost to buy out these distilleries, we must feel that it is not in the interest of the colony that we should repeat the same thing. That is what this amendment means, and therefore I shall vote against it.

Amendment negatived, and motion agreed to.

SUPPLY.

IN COMMITTEE.

CLASS IV.—MINISTER OF JUSTICE.

Department of Justice, £950, agreed to.
Crown Law Office, £2,325, agreed to.
Patent Office, £220, agreed to.
Supreme Court, £8,665, agreed to.
Bankruptcy, £5,566.

Mr. PEACOCK would be glad to hear from the Minister how the fees derived from the Official Assignees in Bankruptcy compared with the expenses of the department.

Mr. TOLE said the receipts for the year ended the 31st March, 1886, were £10,948, and the expenditure against that was £6,334, showing a balance of £4,614.

Vote, £5,566, agreed to.

District, Resident Magistrates', and Wardens' Courts, £48,798.

Mr. BUCHANAN noticed that the Wellington Resident Magistrate received only £550 a year, while those for Christchurch and Dunedin got £600 each. The latter also received some fees as Coroners, which amounted to about £100. He understood that the Magistrates were paid with some regard to seniority, and he believed that the Wellington Resident Magistrate was the oldest in the colony. How was it that he got practically £150 less than the others?

Mr. TOLE replied that this gentleman had come from the Wairarapa to accept the position of metropolitan Magistrate on the present terms, being an increase of £150 per annum over his previous salary: he also had a free railway-pass, which brought his salary up to nearly £600. Besides that, the work was heavier in Dunedin and Christchurch than in Wellington. The Wellington Magistrate sat 94 days in the year, the Dunedin Magistrate 116, and the Christchurch one 112 for six months; and the cases dealt with in Dunedin and Christchurch were greater in number. It would be seen that there was a considerable difference in the work, and there was also a difference in the revenue from the several Courts, and it appeared to him that the Wellington Magistrate was sufficiently paid in comparison with the work done.

Mr. BUCHANAN understood that the salary paid to the present Magistrate's predecessor was on a par with those paid to the Magistrates at Dunedin and Christchurch, and there was a feeling throughout the community that the present Magistrate was not justly treated; so that he hoped the Government would take the matter into consideration.

Mr. TOLE said that the immediate predecessor of the present Magistrate was District Judge as well as Magistrate.

Vote, £48,798, agreed to.

Criminal prosecutions, £11,000, agreed to.

Prisons, £34,170.

Mr. HATCH would like to know if the advances were made on a uniform system. He understood that was to be the case; but apparently it was not, as the advances were not uniform.

Mr. TOLE replied that first-class Gaolers received an increase annually of £10, and second-class Gaolers an increase at the rate of £5 per annum, up to the maximum salaries allowed each class.

Vote, £34,170, agreed to.

Miscellaneous, £2,500, agreed to.

CLASS XIII.—MINISTER OF LANDS.

Crown Lands Department, £22,004, agreed to.

Expenses, Thermal Springs Act, £1,175, agreed to.

Miscellaneous services, £2,861.

Mr. DODSON would like to have some information with regard to the item of £1,500 for fees to members of Waste Lands Boards, including travelling expenses. They had an instructive return laid on the table lately with respect to this matter, from which it would be seen that certain Boards cost double as much as others. There were various stories afloat in connection with the matter, such as members of the House, having railway free-passes, charging the Boards for travelling expenses, including railway-fares. He hoped he should get some information about it.

Mr. PEARSON moved, That the item be reduced by £500.

Dr. NEWMAN said the return he had moved for had proved more interesting than he had expected. The expenses of the Otago Board amounted within a certain period to £1,084, while during the same period the Auckland Board cost £244, and the Wellington Board £376. The position, as shown by the return, was that, while these Boards used to be economically administered, under the present rule the expenses and honoraria were most extravagant. When they found that one gentleman, for one hour's attendance on a Board, cost the colony £7 3s. 10d., and another £7 4s. 8d., it was time that the Committee set to work to reform that sort of thing. Since the new rule came into force the expenses would amount to £3,000 or £4,000 per annum.

Mr. BALLANCE said this was a permanent appropriation fixed by statute, and must be paid to members of Land Boards. The difference between the expenses of the various Boards arose from the fact that some Boards had more onerous duties to perform than others. The Otago Board met in Dunedin once a week, and sometimes oftener, and select committees were appointed to go over the country and classify the land. Some Boards had to perform treble as much work as others.

Mr. FULTON said the matter was, to some extent, in the hands of the Minister, as, if he appointed members from Oamaru and another from Invercargill to the Otago Board, the expenses would be much greater than otherwise.

Mr. REID said that was the point he wished to refer to. In Otago they had more agricultural land and pastoral country than all the rest of the colony put together. Different parts of the country desired to be fairly represented on the Board, as Dunedin members could not possibly know anything about the back country or the goldfields; and that naturally increased the expenditure in connection with the Board. One of his own constituents, Mr. Henry Clarke, was, and for years past had been, a member of the Otago Board. He was a capital man for the position, was well acquainted with the greater portion of Otago, and was continually being consulted by settlers for information on the various subjects that usually occupied the attention of the Board. If town men only were appointed, all country settlers would have to travel long distances to obtain information.

Mr. SEDDON thought the way to reduction was not by decreasing this item—which could not be legally done—but by electing the Land Boards; and then they might be the same men

as the members of the local bodies, and the one travelling expense would serve for all the capacities in which they acted. The present item was only a little more than half the amount of the vote of last year.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said that the return laid on the table showed that some of the Dunedin members of the Otago Land Board were paid more than the country members. Therefore, if the whole of the Board were Dunedin men the charge would be heavier than it was now. What puzzled him was how the town members could charge more than the members from the country districts.

Mr. PEARSON would do away with the Boards. It was not a satisfactory way of administering the land, and he hoped that next year the House would do away with the Boards altogether.

Dr. NEWMAN asked if there was any one responsible for checking the charges made.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Yes.

Dr. NEWMAN thought it was done in a very slovenly way, because some members took the opportunity of charging as much as possible.

Mr. BALLANCE.—No.

Dr. NEWMAN said the Minister might say "No," but the return presented showed that one member charged £190 a year for attending once a fortnight, which was nearly as much as members of that House got for four months' work.

Mr. SUTTER would abolish the Land Boards, and let Ministers and officers of the Lands Department do the work. That would be much more satisfactory and cheaper. The Survey Department knew the country quite as well as did members of the Land Boards, many of whom were town residents and knew nothing about the land. The present system was simply a disgrace to the country, and he hoped the Minister would see to it.

Mr. O'CONOR said that South-west Nelson was not represented at all on the Nelson Land Board, and the members of that Board knew nothing about the land in that district. He thought there should be a separate Board for that district, but the one Commissioner might do for the two districts. The members of the Inangahua and Buller County Councils might comprise the new Board.

Mr. SEDDON said, as the whole of the land on the West Coast had been withdrawn from sale as a consequence of the terms of the contract for the Midland Railway, he thought the Nelson and Westland Land Boards might be abolished, and the work left to the Commissioners, with the County Councils as Boards of Advice.

Mr. DODSON said the expense might be reduced by lessening the number of members of the Boards, as had been done in Marlborough. Some seats became vacant there, and the Minister forgot to fill them, and it was generally believed that the Board had not suffered much by the reduction. As all the land had been withdrawn, he did not see any necessity for Land Boards for Nelson and Westland.

Mr. ROSS thought the ability of the members of the Otago Board was shown by the fact that three of the members could do six times—according to the Minister—as much work as any other Board, while the other three members were away for a fourth of the year.

Mr. HOBBS agreed as to the superfluousness of Waste Lands Boards in Nelson and Westland in the present circumstances. No doubt the whole question of land administration would have to be gone into next year, and a Committee of Inquiry would have to be appointed. At present the country was put to a large cost for which it did not get value. The land revenue did not meet the charges on it. Instead of being the great asset that they were led to believe, it was in reality no asset at all. The whole question would soon have to be gone into.

Major ATKINSON hoped the Minister would take the large expense into consideration. No doubt there was some scandal connected with the matter at present. He quite understood the difficulty of dealing with the matter; but, still, they looked to the Minister of Lands to correct any abuses which might arise.

Mr. BALLANCE had not heard of any.

Major ATKINSON would not go into particulars, but the return presented showed that everything was not satisfactory. He did not think the country got the money's worth for what the Land Boards cost. His views were rather in the direction of abolishing the Land Boards. He hoped the Minister would go into the matter during the recess.

Mr. BALLANCE said, no doubt this question of policy would have to be dealt with at an early date. He was bound to say he did not think there had been any scandal, and did not think any member of any Land Board had received more as travelling expenses than he was entitled to. Every charge was examined by the Commissioner before coming to the Audit Office, and then it went to the department. The difference in charge was probably caused by the more frequent attendance of some members than others.

Major ATKINSON asked if it was true that members of the House, though they had railway-passes, yet charged their railway-fares when attending Land Boards.

Mr. BALLANCE had made inquiries, and believed that the reports were wholly without foundation.

Major ATKINSON was very glad to hear it.

Dr. NEWMAN thought the cost could be reduced by lessening the large number of members on some of the Boards.

Mr. DODSON said the Marlborough Board consisted now of three members and the District Surveyor.

Mr. CONOLLY asked why none of last year's vote of £100 for kea-destruction had been expended.

Mr. BALLANCE said the money for this purpose had formerly been expended by local bodies, but last year there had been no application, and no vote was now asked for.

Mr. Pearson's amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Vote, £2,861, agreed to.

Coalfields, £200, agreed to.

Survey Department, £80,812.

Mr. BROWN wished to draw the attention of the Minister of Lands to what he had referred to on previous occasions—namely, the fact that, in the case of lands offered for sale in the North Island, a full description of their quality, aspect, proximity to road and water, and other advantages, was advertised in the South Island; but in the case of lands offered for sale in the South Island these were not described so fully as they should be. During the past year they had disposed in Otago of more land and of a greater value in every respect than in the rest of the colony exclusive of Auckland. He wished the Government to instruct their surveyors to give this information, which would be of great value to intending purchasers. He had repeatedly asked this question, and had invariably got the same answer.

Mr. BALLANCE assured the honourable gentleman that the surveyors in the South Island gave the same information as in the North Island. There was no distinction made.

Mr. BROWN said this was just the reply he had expected to receive. What he complained of was, that the surveyors did not give information so fully in Otago as elsewhere. As a member of the Land Board he had brought the matter before that body, and the Commissioner said he had represented the matter to the Government, but was obliged to be economical in advertising, and he was carrying out the instructions of the Government as nearly as it could be done.

Mr. BALLANCE asked the honourable gentleman if he meant to say that the Commissioner brought the matter before the Government and got no reply.

Mr. BROWN said the Commissioner informed him that he had brought the matter before the attention of the Government; nothing had followed to enable him to give further information to the public than what was being done.

Mr. TAYLOR was rather astonished at the remarks of the honourable gentleman who had just spoken, because he knew, as a matter of fact, that the Minister was prepared to furnish any one who might apply with information as to deferred-payment settlement, and lands fit to be occupied. He instanced a case of this kind which occurred only the other day. The Minister did all he could to disseminate information in regard to the Crown land of the colony which the people could take up.

Mr. DUNCAN said that in the district he came from several sales of land had taken place before the people knew anything about them, and he hoped instruction would be given to prevent the possibility of that. With regard to the vote under discussion, it would appear that there were a number of draughtsmen down on the estimates who were unnecessary. He did not think, however, the number of surveyors was too large; but he always understood that one draughtsman was enough for two or three surveyors, yet on the estimates there was nearly as many draughtsmen as surveyors.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said that this matter of the number of draughtsmen as compared with the number of surveyors should be inquired into by the Government. His impression was that the large number of draughtsmen was caused, in a measure, not so much by the work of the department as by the Government keeping open unnecessary survey offices. If the Minister would look into that matter during the recess he would probably find that some survey offices could be closed without injury to the service, or to the public.

Mr. BALLANCE said this question of draughtsmen was gone into carefully about two years ago, when a very considerable reduction was made in the number of these officers. He had the assurance of the Surveyor-General that no more officers were employed than were absolutely required. It was a most difficult thing to close survey offices. He attempted to close one recently, but a strong protest was received from the district.

Mr. ROLLESTON said there was no doubt a large number of these draughtsmen were doing the work of other departments.

Mr. BALLANCE said the work done for other departments was charged against them.

Vote, £80,812, agreed to.

CLASS XV.—MINISTER OF LANDS.

State Forests Account, £9,750, agreed to.

CLASS XIV.—COLONIAL TREASURER.

Rates on Crown lands, £37,500, agreed to.

PUBLIC TRUST OFFICE EXPENSES ACCOUNT.

Public Trust Office, £5,764, agreed to.

PUBLIC WORKS FUND.

CLASS II.—PUBLIC WORKS, DEPARTMENTAL.

Public Works, departmental, £14,000.

Mr. GUINNESS asked if any bonuses had been paid to officers in this department.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that some half-dozen clerks had received small bonuses, but the salaries of these officers were under £200 a year. The bonus which had been paid to the Under-Secretary was for organizing the department in the previous year.

Vote, £14,000, agreed to.

CLASS III.—RAILWAYS.

New works, construction and land, £16,400, agreed to.

CLASS IV.—ROADS.

Main roads, £24,900, agreed to.

Miscellaneous roads and bridges, £52,600, agreed to.

Grants-in-aid, £97,000, agreed to.

Roads to open up lands before sale, £61,500.

Mr. BRYCE said that the liabilities up to the 31st March, 1886, were set down at £61,372, and the amount to be voted was about the same; but the amount required to be authorized, as shown in the third column, indicated that there was a margin left for liabilities to be incurred for the succeeding year of

£85,000. How was it that nothing more than £61,500 would be expended up to the 31st March next, and that £85,000 was required for prospective liabilities after that?

Mr. BALLANCE said that the liabilities spread over two or three years. They did not intend to spend the whole of the liabilities this year. Perhaps not more than £40,000 would be spent this year, leaving £20,000 to be expended after the 31st March. He might say that he thought this vote was too small, for £100,000 or £150,000 might with advantage be taken; but it was necessary to regulate expenditure according to the means at the disposal of the Government.

Mr. ROLLESTON said he should like to see the vote largely increased, but he thought the present Minister of Lands had had the same trouble that his predecessor had experienced. The tendency of this vote was to include appropriations for roads in settled districts, and the present Minister had given way a little more than the late Minister had done. He could not pretend to go into all the various items, but he might say that he could see indications of roads being undertaken in settled districts, instead of the vote being confined to opening up lands before sale. He was afraid that this vote, if they did not take care, would be made to cover roads and bridges which it was desirable to get off the estimates altogether. In his opinion the House should make definite appropriations from the sales, as the late Government proposed to do, and have the money appropriated exclusively to the opening-up of new roads. There were in this schedule a good many relics of the past, and some new items that were not to open up roads to Crown lands so much as roads in settled districts.

Mr. BALLANCE said the Wairarapa might be called a settled district, and yet roads were required there to open up Crown lands. In fact, every road branching from a main road was for that purpose, and yet might be said to be in a settled district.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the Government would get into difficulty if they left the expenditure of this money to local bodies which represented settled districts, and their officers would be anxious to display engineering skill rather than to open up great lengths of road into Crown lands.

Mr. BRUCE said his experience was not at all that of the honourable gentleman. His district had suffered from the honourable gentleman's own action in refusing to give the local body a sum of money to spend, when it would have been spent far more advantageously than it was, direct by the Government.

Mr. MONTGOMERY understood that, under these estimates, while the House voted £61,500, the Minister could contract an expenditure of £147,000. That he looked upon as being against the provisions of an Act passed to prevent the incurring of any more liabilities than appear in the Appropriation Act.

Mr. PEACOCK understood that the £61,500 would pay past liabilities, and then there would be no money in hand; and it was only because these works went on in a leisurely way that the Minister could have anything to spend.

Major ATKINSON explained that this was only a different form from the old one. Under the old form the House, instead of voting £61,500, would have voted the £147,000; but the Minister of Lands now, on considering the matter, told the House that they wished to spend so much money this year, and to ask authority to incur further liabilities. In the Appropriation Act authority would be given to spend the £61,500, and another clause would give authority to incur liabilities to the extent of £147,000. It was with pleasure that he heard the Minister of Lands confess in so straightforward a manner that he did not think this money was sufficient for the purpose. He saw the difficulty the honourable gentleman had in cutting his coat according to his cloth; but the reason for that was that the Government had taken a much larger piece of the cloth from this purpose and used it for railways. There was no doubt that next year there must be another loan. They might be persuaded by the Premier and Treasurer that it would not be necessary; but members might make their minds up that it would be necessary to raise another loan next year. He hoped the Minister of Lands would then see the necessity for placing a larger sum on the estimates for roads to open up Crown lands.

Mr. BRYCE was still of opinion that the discrepancy between the amount to be voted this year and the amount of the liabilities that were authorized was too large, and that a greater proportion should have been put down to be voted this year. He would call attention to items of £1,400, £1,000, £1,920, and £1,120 to be expended in roads to open land before sale in Westland, and would like to know the quantity of land that had been sold in that district. That would show whether the money was being used for opening up lands for sale or for expenditure in settled districts.

Mr. BALLANCE said that the Government were in hope of opening up a large number of village and special settlements in Westland during the current year. Not much land had yet been sold there for cash, but the work of road-making was very difficult.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked how much of this expenditure was to be on land within the limit of that to be taken by the Midland Railway.

Mr. SEDDON said that the £1,400 for the Teremakau to Bell Hill Road was the only one within that limit.

Mr. BUCHANAN must protest against the Minister of Lands being influenced against the expenditure of this money by the local bodies, for in a great majority of cases it would be spent much more economically by those bodies than by the Government direct.

Vote, £61,500, agreed to.

Village settlements, £5,000.

Mr. MONTGOMERY wished to have this item explained.

Mr. BALLANCE said they were now opening up some parts of Canterbury, where the land was available for village settlements; and

this was to enable the land to be cleared, and cottages to be built. For clearing the bush £2 10s. an acre was allowed, and £20 for the erection of a cottage upon the land.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked whether the expenditure would extend beyond this vote.

Mr. BALLANCE said that not more than £5,000 would be expended this year. This system had been commenced in various parts of the colony, and it had been attended with great success. He believed that a large number of people would be settled upon the land, and that this system would revolutionize the whole method of the settlement of land. He should have liked to ask for £20,000; but the sum of £5,000 would enable the system to be thoroughly tested.

Major ATKINSON wished to know what quantity of land was given.

Mr. BALLANCE replied, from five to fifty acres—generally from five to twenty acres—according to the quality of the land.

Major ATKINSON asked if the system was to be tried in the Taranaki District.

Mr. BALLANCE replied, Yes, it would be tried there. At Wairarapa they had opened twelve hundred acres, and the land had been taken up at once; and he had heard from a gentleman there that men were at work in all directions. He felt certain that this scheme would be infinitely superior to the "homestead" system, which had failed entirely.

Mr. ROLLESTON wanted to know upon what principle the assistance was given.

Mr. BALLANCE said that regulations had been prepared, and that monthly payments were made on account of bush cut down, the amount being capitalized, the rate of interest being 5 per cent. If the settlers did not pay up, they would forfeit their land; and, as the land was in close proximity to settlement, and the value of what was expended upon it was left, there would be no difficulty in realizing what had been paid.

Mr. KERR hoped that the plan would succeed, but his candid opinion was that it was a very foolish affair.

Mr. ROLLESTON would like to know from the Minister for Public Works what had been done in the way of providing platelayers with cottages; for it seemed to him desirable something should be done in that matter.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said they had not been able to do much in the matter referred to. He was afraid it would not do to encourage the men to build cottages, because, when it became necessary to remove a man, if he had built a cottage the question of compensation would arise. The Government had been building cottages and letting them to the men at a small rental.

Mr. ROLLESTON agreed that it was desirable for the Government to build the cottages.

Mr. MONTGOMERY wished to know if there was a price put on the land, and if the cost of the cottage and the £2 10s. an acre was added to that.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Yes; and the 5 per cent. was paid on the whole amount. The payments were made progressively, and a Steward of Village Settlements reported at the end of the month upon the amount of work done.

Mr. MONTGOMERY thought the system would be a failure.

Mr. BRYCE supposed the Minister of Lands expected to get advantage from this system because it provided people with work when they went on the land. There might be an advantage in that way; but he did not think the system was going to succeed. A little while ago he had heard a good deal of talk about three acres and a cow. This meant a good deal more than that: it meant from twenty to fifty acres, and enough to buy half a dozen cows. That would be all very well if the system were going to be tried fairly; but the experiment was not a fair one. So long as they got people in London to give them the money to be laid out in this way, and the proceeds went into the revenue, that was not a fair way of making the experiment.

Mr. BALLANCE said the honourable gentleman had not realized the position, or stated it correctly. That they borrowed money in London for the purpose, and that the interest was put into the current revenue, was true; but that was perfectly legitimate. The interest on the money was 5 per cent., and that was paid into the current revenue. The case was precisely analogous to the railway system.

Mr. BRYCE said the difference was that in this instance the property passed into private hands, whereas in the case of railways the works were the property of the colony.

Mr. BALLANCE said the property of the settler was as much the property of the colony as a railway was, because the colony would derive the interest. Improvements, on which interest was paid, were made on property in one case, and in the other a railway was constructed, and in both cases the colony was benefited. There was no difference at all. It did not matter how the money was invested so long as interest upon the investment was drawn; and the money lent to the settler would produce 5 per cent.

Mr. BRYCE could not understand how the honourable gentleman could say that, with the experience of the district railways before them, and the pressure brought to bear to be relieved from rates. From his observation of these bush-farms, he knew these people would have a hard struggle for existence, and they would be able to make out a very affecting story when they applied to be relieved of their rents.

Mr. BALLANCE said that was another question altogether, and he did not think there would be any pressure brought to bear to get relief, because of the great competition there would be for these holdings.

Mr. DODSON said the great difference between these holdings and railways was that railways were a realizable asset.

Mr. BALLANCE said there was no comparison between railways and these holdings, because the latter would pay interest at once,

ereas railways did not pay interest on the oney expended.

Mr. TURNBULL thought the best way to ing the matter to an issue was to move that e vote be struck out. They would then know o were for and who were against this prosal. Those who were opposing it quite lost ht of the fact that every acre brought under ltivation would add to the wealth of the lony.

Major ATKINSON was quite willing to see e experiment tried. The only thing he ared was the same evil as already existed in nnection with deferred-payment land, pertual-leasing land, and pastoral land held by nants of the Crown. The State was always deavouring to get more out of its tenants an it was possible for them to pay, and he as afraid, therefore, that these people would ot be able to pay 5 per cent. He did not think at any pressure would be brought to bear to be lieved of liabilities so long as men had a fair argin to live upon. The whole difficulty at resent arose from the Irish-landlord business n the part of the State. It would be absolutely ecessary to appoint a tribunal to fix the rents om time to time in accordance with the pronce. He wished to caution the Minister that e would not get 5 per cent. from bush-farms.

Mr. BALLANCE did not wish at present to iscuss the question of a tribunal; but he ould point out to the honourable gentleman hat the failure of the present system arose om people paying too much for land in cometition at auction.

Major ATKINSON said the honourable entleman was mistaken as to the auction sysem. He knew many men who had bought he land from those who had bought at auction, ho were being ruined.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked if these were to be illage settlements or special settlements.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Village settlements.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the Minister had been talking as if he meant special settlements. He was himself anxious to see this experiment put into such a shape that it would be successful. It was nearly fifteen years since he tried this system and succeeded, the present Arowhenua township being the result. The system might succeed if it were limited to providing men with comfortable residences, but if the Minister tried to make a commercial transaction of it beyond that he would fail.

Mr. MACARTHUR said the Minister stated that if the people left the land the land and improvements would be there; but he could say, from his own knowledge, that if these bush-sections were left unoccupied for any time they would get covered with scrub, and all the improvements would vanish. Then, again, these settlements were to be near towns, and it would be impossible to get the land at so low a price as the honourable gentleman mentioned; and if the price was higher than the honourable gentleman stated it would be impossible for those men to pay 5 per cent. on a farm of fifty acres.

Mr. HOBBS would like to see this system a success; but, unless the people who settled on this land were agriculturists, and had some small capital to enable them to live upon the land during the time they were clearing it, it was likely to be a failure. He knew that already some of these people were inquiring if the Government would provide them with "tucker." The Premier talked about putting the unemployed on these holdings; but those who knew anything about the facts knew that at present, with the low prices prevailing, those who owned small homesteads near towns had the greatest difficulty in getting a living. Unless the men got good land, and had some capital, or got work, and knew what they were doing, the result would be disastrous failure. The Minister also proposed to allow Natives to select. That was a very big question, and the House should be careful about it. Failure would be a very serious thing, and the people would be put in a most awkward position, and the charitable-aid fund of the district would be seriously taxed.

Mr. KERR said that when the New Zealand Company failed and the colony was in a very bad state a number of men were put on pieces of land. They were good men, the thing was carefully worked, and they came out fairly well; but, to succeed, men must be really good, and there must be good land given. It was also necessary that they should be able to get some work in the neighbourhood in the summer, and be able to clear their land in winter. If the Government thought that they were going to get men haphazard, and put them on land and give them £2 10s. per acre to clear it, and charge a rent for the land and interest on the £2 10s. besides, in his opinion there would be a great many failures. It would take every farthing they could earn and more, unless they were specially good men, to improve the land and keep them. In Nelson fifty-acre sections of land were cut up into from five-acre to twenty-acre blocks. These were taken up by men who had to pay up to £4 an acre for them, and all the assistance they got was three days' labour a week from the company. They succeeded very well, because they were really good men. The Government would regret their mistake if they did not get only the best sort of men; but, if they did get good men, the thing might work out very well, and the men become valuable settlers to the country and of great benefit to it. This system worked really well in Nelson, and not one case of failure did he ever hear of in the way he had indicated.

Mr. BUCHANAN said, unless the Government were very careful as to what they did about these village settlements a great many people would be put in a most unfortunate position. There were some places where village settlements would succeed admirably. At Woodend, in Canterbury, for instance, a lot of small settlers, having the very best land alongside a main road, and with a market close by for all they could possibly grow, had done very well in the great majority of cases; but the circumstances there were entirely exceptional.

But at Pahiatua the circumstances were altogether different. There, the people might fell the bush, but there would be no guarantee as to their being able to burn. Then, their range of production was very limited, because it was impossible to plough the land. Unless the settlers were an exceptionally good class of people, and had some means, or were able to get work in the neighbourhood, they would in a few years be landed in great difficulties. The Government should go to work with great caution regarding these village settlements. Mistakes were very easily made. In the growth of produce in New Zealand, under the most favourable circumstances, the growers had very formidable competitors in supplying the English market; and unless we grew and exported produce under the most favourable conditions we were bound to find ourselves worsted by competitors from other parts of the world. Through the auction system of buying Crown land no doubt many people had been led into great difficulties, owing to over-competition. It was difficult, however, for the Legislature to protect a man from the consequences of his own foolishness. He would again urge that the utmost care should be taken in regard to these village settlements, to prevent disaster and disappointment to many.

Vote, £5,000, agreed to.

CLASS V.—WATERWORKS ON GOLDFIELDS.

Vote, Water-races, Middle Island, £15,100, agreed to.

CLASS VI.—PURCHASE OF NATIVE LANDS.

Minister of Native Affairs, £20,000.

Mr. BRYCE would like to have a pledge that the Government were not going to buy Native land on commission. He believed that the law did not allow it, and of course the law should not be violated by a Minister of the Crown. He could not understand how, in the past, the vouchers had passed the Audit. The matter was one of considerable importance, and he should like to have a better opportunity for giving his reasons for the discontinuance of a system which he, at any rate, regarded as an improper system, and why it should not be again adopted, in view of the unfavourable experience the colony had already gained in regard to it.

Mr. BALLANCE said the system of purchasing Native land by commission had been confined to the district within the boundaries of the Restriction Act of 1884, and there the system had been resorted to for a special purpose. The Land Purchase officer at Wanganui, Mr. Butler, reported that he could not purchase land without certain assistance, and he made certain recommendations, with which the Government acquiesced, because they wanted to acquire the land. They thought that if they could get, say, half a million acres on the northern trunk line within twelve months—and that would, he believed, be unprecedented in the history of the colony—it would justify going on with the railway. That was the consideration which induced the Government to consent to pay by commission in this case, and the resumption of the system was carefully limited to the land required within a period of six months, and it would not be extended when the present negotiations came to an end. Subject to what he had said, he was quite prepared to give the honourable gentleman the pledge he had asked for. The Government did not intend to continue the system. He recognized fully that the whole system of purchase of Native land must undergo revision when the Native Land Administration Act came into force, because that materially altered the law and the system. He quite agreed that, as a rule, purchase by commission was not a good system; but, for the reasons he had stated, a carefully-limited agreement had been made as to purchase along the northern trunk line.

Mr. BRYCE said the honourable gentleman had relieved his mind very much by stating what he had. He wanted to direct attention, however, to one point. Take a large block on the western side of the railway: it would have a thousand owners. He supposed, as the honourable gentleman had himself pointed out, it would be a very easy thing to get a considerable proportion of the signatures of these owners; but as the number of those who had not signed grew less the difficulty would increase. This difficulty would arise as to several blocks, and at the end of the six months the whole of the signatures would not be obtained, although it might have been easy to get the first three-fourths. The commission agents would therefore be paid *pro ratâ*, in that way, for a part of the work, and just as they were approaching the main difficulty the time would have expired. He thought it would be unfair to the colony if the agents were paid in proportion to the number of signatures they obtained.

Mr. BALLANCE said the agent had to exert all his efforts to get as many people to sign as possible, knowing that every additional signature meant more commission. It was a very difficult thing to get signatures in some of the districts, but he hoped that in twelve months seven-eighths of the signatures to the block which had been referred to would be obtained.

Mr. BUCHANAN said there was one thing the Committee would note, and that was that the Native Minister had not really faced the point which the honourable member for Waitotara had raised as to the legality of these purchases on commission. The point to which he wished to draw the attention of the Committee was this: Mr. Butler was employed in negotiating the purchase of this land on behalf of the Government, assisted by Mr. Stevens, who was to be paid by a commission. He believed that Mr. Butler was one of the best men in the Service; but was he the right man in the right place to judge of the quality of the land for which he was paying away the money of the colony? Having had many years' experience in the occupation of land, he knew there was a very great difficulty indeed in arriving at any sound conclusion as to the value of land in the North Island. Here they had an officer of the Government, so far as he knew, without any

ecial knowledge on this head, paying large ums away, when he ought to be accompanied r another officer picked, as far as the Govern- ent was able to do it, for his knowledge of the lue of the various descriptions of lands.

Mr. BALLANCE said this block was in- pected before Mr. Butler was on the scene, ad the Government had a recommendation om Mr. Rochfort, who was a good judge of nd. They had full information as to the value f this land from various sources, which were horoughly reliable. With regard to the legal uestion in connection with the purchase of he land, he admitted that the spirit of the law ight not allow of purchase by commission. If e had known that at the time, he would not ave entered into this arrangement; but the rrangements were made entirely in the inter- sts of the colony for the purpose of acquiring his land, and he thought the results would be eneficial.

Mr. BUCHANAN thought the Committee ad reason to thank the Minister for the way n which he had met this question. With re- ard to Mr. Rochfort being a good judge of land, e should think it rather unreasonable to ex- ect that, as his time had been taken up in a otally different direction—in other words, he ad not gone through the "mill" of settlement pon the land.

Dr. NEWMAN thought the Minister had iven the Committee a very nice and full ex- planation of this matter. But it ought to bring them to a sense of their insecurity when they found that the Audit Office could pass such an account as correct, as Mr. Stevens, who had got three-fourths of the signatures already, was being paid at the rate of £2,500 for six months, which was nearly approaching the Governor's salary, and was altogether out of proportion to the work.

Mr. KERR had known Mr. Rochfort for the last thirty years—when he was a farmer, and surveying in Nelson, the Wairau, and Amuri—and, if there was a man in this country who knew what good land was, it was Mr. Rochfort, who was a practical farmer as well as a practical surveyor.

Dr. NEWMAN referred to the item of £202,000 for other liabilities for purchases of Native land, and asked the Minister when he expected the great proportion of that to come in.

Mr. BALLANCE said the Government had the whole of this in their hands. Large engagements had been made from time to time, as far back as twenty years ago, and money had had to be paid and advances made. These liabilities were not liabilities in the real sense of the word, and they could be indefinitely postponed.

Mr. BRYCE said it was true that formerly there were large engagements entered into, but most of them had been written off, and the liabilities were less a year or two ago than they were now: that was to say, there had been liabilities entered into during the last year or two which had increased the sum. To that extent it required explanation. In other respects the honourable gentleman's explanation was quite right.

Mr. HOBBS said it appeared to be a most unbusinesslike proceeding not to have a distinct understanding as to the terms of purchase of these lands.

Vote, £20,000, agreed to.

CLASS VII.—TELEGRAPH EXTENSION.

Telegraph extension, £21,700.

Mr. KERR said that a great deal of money was wasted in carrying telegraph poles from one part of the colony to another. He hoped the Government would take this matter into their consideration, and stop the heavy expenditure on these poles.

Vote, £21,700, agreed to.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at five minutes past two o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Monday, 9th August, 1886.

First Readings—Third Reading—New Zealand Loan Bill—Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill (No. 2)—Mining Bill—Joint Library Committee—Deeds and Instruments Registration Bill—Public Bodies' Leaseholds Bill—Beer Duty Bill—Otago Harbour Board Leasing Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Government Life Insurance Bill, Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Bill, Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Bill.

THIRD READING.

Beer Duty Bill.

NEW ZEALAND LOAN BILL.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER brought up the following report of the Select Committee on the New Zealand Loan Bill:—

"The Select Committee to whom was referred the New Zealand Loan Bill have the honour to report as follows:—

"1. All the railways specified in the schedule to the Loan Bill have been authorized, or purport to have been authorized, by special Acts, except the 'Helensville Northward,' of which only about four miles from the present terminus at Helensville of the Kaipara-Waikato line has been authorized by 'special Act.'

"It appears from the evidence of the Under-Secretary for Public Works that a Bill has been prepared for introduction into the House of Representatives having for one of its objects the authorization of a continuation of this line from Kaukapakapa to Omapere, a lake about half-way between the Bay of Islands and Hokianga. The Committee is of opinion that the special Act required by law to authorize the construction of any line should precede the

grant of money; otherwise the appropriation would be nugatory or its expenditure illegal.

"It also appears that by the same Bill it is proposed to authorize the construction of a railway 'from the main line of the Waitaki-Bluff Railway at Oamaru to the Oamaru Breakwater.' No sum appears in the schedule to the Loan Bill for this line, which has been taken over from the Oamaru Harbour Board, and paid for by an appropriation of £9,316 under 'The Immigration and Public Works Appropriation Act, 1885.' The object of introducing this line into the Bill is understood to be to legalize it and make good the title to the land over which it is constructed.

"The duty of determining whether it is expedient that any given line shall be constructed is imposed by law on the Legislative Council and House of Representatives equally. It is a question altogether apart from any money-vote; and the Committee is of opinion that the Council would abdicate its function in this respect and entirely neglect its duty if it failed to satisfy itself that all railway-lines to be constructed are duly authorized by special Acts in conformity with the requirements of the law.

"The Committee direct the attention of the Council to the fact that several of the lines appear in the schedule to the Bill under different names from those used in the Acts by which their construction is authorized. For instance, the 'Blenheim to Awatere' of the Loan Bill is supposed to be authorized by a special Act under the name of 'Picton-Hurunui'; the 'Seaward Bush Branch' under the description 'From the main line Waitaki-Bluff Railway to Oteramika-Toitois;' and the 'Edendale to Fortrose' by the name of the 'Waitaki-Bluff from Edendale to Toitois.'

"The Committee do not express any doubt that the several special Acts already passed were intended and are supposed to legalize these lines. How far they have done so the Committee do not think necessary to discuss in dealing with this Bill, but they may remark that whether the several descriptions of the lines in the special authorizing Acts are sufficient to identify the lines with their descriptions in the Loan and Appropriation Bills may become a question of interpretation for the Supreme Court, if any one should think it worth his while to raise it.

"The Committee have also to observe that the sum of £150,000 in the schedule to the Loan Bill provided for 'additions to open lines' is not intended to be spent in the construction of extensions, as might be supposed, but, according to the evidence, is to be applied in adding sidings, station-buildings, and other conveniences to lines already open.

"As regards the still larger sum of £326,000, it appears from the statement of the Under-Secretary that materials which have been purchased by money allocated to other works are to be used on the scheduled lines of the Loan Bill, and these materials it is intended to replace by materials purchased with part of the £326,000.

"2. With regard to the other branch of the reference, the Committee requested the Under-Secretary to tabulate his evidence on the subject in a return, which he has done, and it is annexed to this report. The Council will find that this return gives useful information in a condensed form as to the state of the works on the lines in course of construction, and also as to the estimated cost of their completion.

"The Committee regret that their work has not been so thoroughly done as they could have wished, in consequence of the very short time—three days only—allowed for the bringing-up of their report; and the near approach of the termination of the session has precluded them from asking for an extension. The evidence, also, for the same reason, has not been corrected as usual by the witnesses."

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—With the leave of the Council, I have now to move, That this Bill be committed presently. I do this with a view of advancing it a stage to-day, and it can be read a third time to-morrow. I do not think there can be any objection to the course I propose, as there has been no opposition to the Bill, and it is very important that it should be passed at the earliest possible time. The San Francisco mail leaves on Sunday, and it is desirable that the Government should be able to inform the Agent-General what has been done.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT LOANS TO LOCAL BODIES BILL (No. 2).

On the question, That the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill (No. 2) be read the third time,

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES said,—I move, That this Bill be read the third time this day three months. I think it contains a provision which is a most objectionable one. This Bill was warmly debated during its progress through the Council before. I say "this Bill," because it is substantially the same as that which has already been considered by the Council on a former occasion, and it was amended in its progress through the Council, the consequence of which was that you, Sir, directed that it should be laid aside. The records were subsequently examined by a Committee of the other House, by deputation, to ascertain what had been done with the Bill; and, upon discovery of the amendments which were made in the Bill, the House of Representatives passed another Bill in similar terms, and sent it up here; and that is the Bill now under consideration. It contains, however, as I have said, one very objectionable provision, and that is that it enables the Colonial Treasurer to appropriate money which has not been appropriated by Parliament. It is said that, inasmuch as the Bill which was laid aside here is the same as that now under consideration, and as the House of Representatives has adopted the amendments of the Legislative Council, therefore the Legislative Council is bound in honour to pass this Bill without hesitation. I

say, in answer to that—First of all, the Bill is not the same: it contains all, I believe, that the Bill which was laid aside contained, but it contains an additional clause. It is not the same Bill identically. And, in the second place, it contains the same objectionable provision which the Bill that was finally laid aside in the Council contained, and which was objected to by a large section of the Council. And I would point out that the Council was not fully attended on the occasion when that clause was debated, and on the division upon the clause a smaller number of members than usually attend voted; and the fact that the majority was only a majority of one should be sufficient to satisfy the Council that opinion was pretty equally divided on the question. I object to the Bill for that reason, and for that reason only. I move, That the Bill be read the third time this day three months.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I hope my honourable friend will withdraw his amendment, and allow this Bill to go through without division. I am sure every honourable member will bear me out in saying that, if there was no distinct and explicit understanding, yet there was an implied understanding that this Bill should be permitted to go through. My honourable friend said there was only a majority of one: but there was a majority, and it is the majority that must rule. I hope we shall keep good faith with the other branch of the Legislature, who have adopted every amendment that we made in the Bill, and I think we could not possibly interfere with the Bill now.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD.—Sir, it is quite clear that, if this had been a Bill of an ordinary character, whatever might have been the objection to it by a section of the Council, and although each of the clauses might have been carried by only a majority of one, it would not have been in our power to consider it; because the other House has adopted all the amendments we made. Even the suggestion of the rejection of the Bill would be taking advantage of our own weakness in the matter. The other House, it appears to me, has treated us in this matter in a gracious and kindly manner—a manner showing a desire to maintain perfectly friendly relations with this branch of the Legislature; and, by the amendment now moved, we are asked to reject all that we have already approved. The other House knows nothing of the majorities that pass any measure or any portion of a measure. The act of a majority is the act of the Council, and the other House only knows that a majority is in favour of a Bill or certain portions of it. As to the small number of members alleged to have been present on the occasion in question, there were, with the Chairman, thirty-six members present, and at that time there were only about forty members of the Council in Wellington. I do not think that was an insignificant number. I say it is an unfortunate thing that this amendment has been moved; and the Hon. Mr. McLean put the matter in the best possible form when he said that it would be better if the honourable the mover of the amendment could bring himself to withdraw it, and let the Bill pass without division.

Amendment negatived.

Bill read a third time.

MINING BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 80.—Miners' rights.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be a clause of the Bill."

AYES, 18.

Barnicoat	Kenny	Reynolds
Bathgate	Lahmann	Scotland
Bonar	McLean	Shrimski
Brett	Peacock	Taiaroa
Buckley	Peter	Walker
Campbell	Reeves	Wigley.

NOES, 12.

Dignan	Martin	Robinson
Fraser	Menzies	Whitaker
Johnson, G. R.	Miller	Williamson
Mantell	Pollen	Wilson.

Majority for, 6.

Clause agreed to.

JOINT LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

The Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON brought up the following report of the Joint Library Committee:—

"The Joint Library Committee, having reconsidered their report of the 30th July, which was referred back to them, together with a recommendation regarding the lending of books during the recess to members of the Legislature living at a distance from Wellington, have come to the following resolutions, which they recommend for adoption:—

"1. That the following members of both Houses be the Joint Library Committee for the recess: Hon. Sir William Fitzherbert, Hon. Mr. Randall Johnson, Hon. Mr. Mantell, Hon. Mr. Hart, Hon. Dr. Grace, Hon. Mr. Brandon, Hon. Mr. Waterhouse, Hon. Mr. Tole, Mr. C. J. Johnston, Mr. Fitzherbert, Mr. Wakefield, Dr. Newman, Hon. Sir Robert Stout, Mr. Menteath.

"2. That the list of persons to be admitted to the full privileges of the General Assembly Library during the recess be the same as for last year.

"3. That visitors may, on application to the Chairman, be admitted to the library for the purpose of reference.

"4. That literary workers or students of a special subject may, at the discretion of the Chairman, be permitted to take out specified works on that subject.

"5. That, having considered the reference to them regarding the lending of books to members of the Legislature living at a distance from Wellington during the recess, they find that there are so many difficulties in the way of giving effect to the recommendation that they do not see their way to carry it out at present. They consider that, if a particular work is required by a member in any special case, an application to the Chairman may enable such

member to procure it, and that the Chairman be authorized to lend books in such cases."

The Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON said that, seeing that the session was so far advanced, he wished to ask the leave of the Council to move the adoption of this report without notice. In doing so, he might mention that the first four resolutions of this report were the same as those which had been adopted a short time since, with this exception: that the names of the Hon. Mr. Waterhouse and Mr. Menteath had been added to the Recess Committee. The last resolution was that arrived at with reference to the suggestion of the House of Representatives, and set forth the conclusions arrived at by the Committee, after fully discussing the matter.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said it would be well before the question was put if the honourable gentleman would state whether the other branch of the Legislature had agreed to this report.

The Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON said those members of the House of Representatives who were present at the Committee had agreed to it. He might mention that the Committee was summoned for Friday last, in the hope that a resolution might be arrived at in time to prevent the necessity of asking permission to move a motion without notice, as he now had to do; but there was no quorum present, and the Committee only sat that morning. He believed there was only one dissentient—a member of the other branch of the Legislature—to the resolution in question.

Motion agreed to, and a message ordered to be transmitted to the House of Representatives accordingly.

DEEDS AND INSTRUMENTS REGISTRATION BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 3.—District Agents may be appointed for transmitting instruments for registration under Deeds Registration Act.

The Hon. Mr. BRANDON moved, That the clause be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 13.

Barnicoat	Peacock	Swanson
Bathgate	Pollen	Taiaroa
Bonar	Reynolds	Wigley
Lahmann	Shrimski	Williamson.
McLean		

NOES, 9.

Brandon	Kenny	Peter
Fraser	Menzies	Shephard
Johnson, G. R.	Miller	Whitaker.

Majority for, 4.

Clause agreed to.

Progress reported, and leave obtained to sit again.

PUBLIC BODIES' LEASEHOLDS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY moved, That the Public Bodies' Leaseholds Bill be read a third time.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I have no objection to this Bill. I shall not move any amendment to the motion just proposed, but I shall certainly vote against the Bill. It appears to me to be a Bill which the Council ought not to pass. I may call the attention of the Council, as I did before, to clauses 10 and 11. A division took place on clause 10, and the Council came to the conclusion that the latter part of it should remain—"and the rent to be payable in respect of such new lease shall in no case be less than that payable under the previous lease." Therefore it appears that the rent would remain precisely the same. Then a division took place on clause 11, and it was amended. As I have asked before, how is it possible for rent to become due after surrender has been accepted? After the surrender has been accepted there is an end to the lease. I object to the whole system on this ground: that it is altogether one-sided. There should not only be power to reduce the rent, but there should be some power to raise it also. Again, the clauses in the schedule are wonderful clauses, and contain five times as many words as are necessary for effecting what is intended to be done, and they make the interpretation very questionable indeed. Then, clause 13 says, "A leasing authority may, by resolution, adopt the provisions of Part IV. and Part VII. of 'The Land Act, 1885.'" Now, Part IV. of the Land Act relates to this perpetual-leasing system. Are we going to admit this system with all these public bodies? Is that to be the rule? It appears to me that, in a Bill of this character, we are about to introduce a very important change without any proper consideration of it. There is a great deal of difficulty in amending a Bill of this description; but, whatever that may be, it does appear to me that we should not adopt, by a side-wind, the perpetual-leasing clauses for all public bodies. If there was anything like a Court or tribunal established by which the rents might from time to time be adjusted, I do not know that there would be any great objection to it. But it is the one-sided character of the Bill that I consider so unreasonable and unfair. There is no provision for increasing the rent. We are called upon to pass this measure at a moment when the prices of wool and agricultural produce are very low. In the lobby, however, we see posted up a notice to the effect that wool has gone up, and therefore, as a matter of course, there will probably be no necessity for these reductions. There is another strong reason against the Bill. We introduce a new principle—that of the reduction of rents by these local bodies described in the Bill. The matter of the reduction of rent on Crown lands has been recently considered by a Committee of the House of Representatives, and they report against it, having gone fully into the matter. I recommend honourable members to consider the report, and the evidence taken by this Committee. I do not wish my name to appear on the records of this Council as not having opposed a Bill of this character. Hereafter, if the Bill is found to work badly, I shall

re the satisfaction of knowing that I warned Council at the time of what they were ng. I shall vote against the third reading, l call for a division.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—The honourable ntleman who has just spoken takes no posi- e action in this matter. But I think there some other points, to which he has not nded, regarding which the Bill is very objec- nable. I do not altogether concur with him the whole of the points on which he has llenged the Bill. I conceive that, where the gislature is satisfied that certain classes are fering from paying too much for the use of public lands, in order to retain indus- ous occupants it should modify the terms on ich those occupants hold the lands. It is desirable to refuse to give some relief when result of continued refusal will be to send mbers of them to the Insolvency Court. at such will be the case if no relief comes m any quarter, I have no doubt whatever; d it appears to me that the Government ould, under the circumstances, endeavour give some relief, independently altogether any relief that may come from other quar- s. Some relief may come from better prices produce, which the honourable member has licated will be a boon to many of them. t I fear that to a very considerable number at boon will come too late. The remission a portion of the prices that may be due on e deferred-payment sections might induce any industrious settlers to rub on, and en- le them to meet their liabilities ultimately. ose provisions of the Bill which I support, d on account of which I might accept the ll even in its present shape, are those which able the leasing authorities to give some lief. I admit that it is expedient to ex- nd the same power to Waste Lands Boards. think they can safely be trusted with that wer, and to dispose of lands in the way ost conducive to the interests which they present. For that reason I shall not vote ainst the third reading of the Bill; but I sh, Sir, to move an amendment—namely, recommit the Bill for the purpose of re- nsidering clauses 14 and 18. Clause 14 ovides that, in the event of the provisions of rts IV. and VII. of the Land Act being ought into operation by any of the leasing thorities, the Governor may, by Order in uncil, modify the provisions. I think that is extremely objectionable power to give. We ready give very large powers to the Governor Council in framing regulations, which, when amed, have the force of law. I consider that, a general rule, these regulations should only ntinue in force during the recess, and that tor the Legislature had been in session a ort time these regulations should come under view; but, while this was done, they should t continue equivalent to enactment by statute. nder clause 14 the Governor may modify the ovisions, especially of the perpetual-leasing ause. The other part of the Land Act re- rred to is one that deals with small areas of azing runs. I do not know that the Bill would be so objectionable in the latter case; but, seeing that the perpetual-leasing system is one that was not generally approved by the Legislature, and was brought about by the energetic perseverance of Ministers of Lands for years past, and has not been allowed to be brought into operation to any serious extent, I think it would be inexpedient, by a sort of side-wind, to take further steps to afford relief in this perpetual-leasing system. The powers, I hold, are not such as the Legislature should grant, and, in this particular instance, there is an additional reason why this should not be done. The 18th clause is the climax to this provision, because it sweepingly repeals all Acts that will be found repugnant to whatever provisions the Bill may contain and alterations the Governor may provide by Order in Council. No doubt honourable members have had an opportunity, since the Bill was in Committee, of carefully and coolly considering these clauses, and I think they can hardly fail to agree with the view which I maintain. That clause is establishing a principle which we should not allow. I move, That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering clauses 14 and 18; and I trust that my honourable friend the Colonial Secretary will not object to considering this amendment for the reconsideration of these clauses.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I think I should be trifling with the time of the Council if I did not point out my reasons for differing from the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker and for not agreeing to the amendment of my honourable friend Mr. Menzies. In the first place, the Bill under consideration, I can say, has been discussed in this Council with more earnestness than most Bills are discussed; and, being new matter, every clause of the Bill has been considered very carefully from almost every point of view. And I should here point out what appears to me to be the fallacy underlying the argument used in opposition to the Bill—namely, that this would not have occurred had it not been for something that has been heard outside about an attempt being made to reduce pastoral rents. If honourable members will look at the 2nd section they will see that the words "leasing authority" are as clearly defined as they possibly can be. There is nothing in the Bill to justify the element to which I have referred being imported into this discussion. In regard to clauses 10 and 11, the honourable gentleman contends that there is a great inconsistency between them. With all due deference to his opinion, as coming also from the leader of our profession, I must say I differ from him entirely. I maintain they are two distinct clauses. Clause 10 gives the leasing authority power to accept surrender of lease on condition, in the first place, that a new lease is taken, and, secondly, that the rent to be paid on the new lease shall not be less than that payable under the previous lease. Clause 11 gives power to the local body to accept surrender, but there is no option for the lessee to take a new lease [illegible] compete at auction for the lea[illegible]

that he would have to take the ordinary course prescribed by this Act. My honourable friend has also referred to the schedule. Clause 6 says,—

"Except where express provision is made to the contrary, every lease so granted shall contain the provisions set forth in the schedule to this Act, or provisions similar thereto; and the same, when so inserted, shall be binding on the leasing authority and on the tenant executing such lease."

There can be nothing fairer than that. There is no cast-iron rule about this. Then, the honourable gentleman calls my attention to the proviso, which is,—

"Provided that nothing in this section contained shall authorize a leasing authority to exercise the powers hereby conferred—

"(*a*.) In respect of any pastoral lands vested in or under the control of such leasing authority;

"(*b*.) In respect of any reserve for primary or secondary education subject to the provisions of 'The Education Reserves Act, 1877,' or 'The High School Reserves Act, 1880,' or any amendments of those Acts respectively;

unless the consent of the Governor in Council shall be first obtained."

I call attention to the fact that an attempt was made to lessen the rents of pastoral lands; but my honourable friend will see that this has nothing whatever to do with pastoral tenants of the Crown. The Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker also says that there are new principles of the reduction of rents. Now, there is not a word said about the reduction of rent in the Bill. The power given to accept a surrender, it is true, includes a power to reduce after accepting the surrender; but, looking at the price of produce at the present time, we hope things will get better, and that there will not be any necessity to reduce rents, but rather to increase them. With regard to what the Hon. Mr. Menzies has said, I do not agree with that maudlin notion that because a man makes a bad bargain to-day he may be released from it to-morrow. I have been given to understand that many men go to auction sales and bid to beyond their means, thereby preventing *boná fide* settlers from engaging in occupations which they understand; and after a time these men find they are unfitted to carry on the business, and have to give it up. I ask any business man whether he would for a moment recognize the claims of such a case as that. When it comes to trustees for the public, I say at once, no matter whether bankruptcy may stare parties in the face, they have no justification in accepting the surrender of any lease of this kind, unless warranted by law. The honourable gentleman also calls attention to clauses 14 and 18. With regard to the former, the Governor is intrusted already with far greater power than is here conferred. I may say that I have an objection to recommitting the Bill for the purposes mentioned. This Bill has been introduced at the request of several local bodies. It has been done in the public interest —for the purpose of preventing this cil being flooded by Bills from ea local body in the colony; and therefo the amendment will not be carried. I anxious as any one in this Council m Bill a perfect measure.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I shall vo the amendment, and I shall vote w honourable friend Sir Frederick Wh against the third reading. I vote ag amendment for the reason that, seeing ture of the divisions which took place i mittee last week, for the Committee to consider these clauses would be simply the result would be the same as before is a Government Bill, no doubt, but it is sible not to have observed that the view Government, as they are represented Council at least, differ entirely upon the of this Bill. The honourable gentleman in this Council, represents the advanced ions of his colleagues upon economic s carefully absented himself from all di which took place on this Bill last w Committee. The inference is that he h strongly disapproves of the measure: and he is quite right. My honourable frie Colonial Secretary has not advocated th with the heartiness with which he m advocates Bills in which he himself bel and I venture to say that, if my hono and learned friend were to tell us what his views really were, they would not differ those of his colleague to whom I have referred as having carefully absented hi from all divisions which took place on th in Committee. This is one of those Bi which we have seen so many, which have parently, a desirable object general in pe but which, in reality, have only a specific immediate object to accomplish; and is no one who, as I did, took note of occurred in Committee on this Bill who be for one moment in doubt as to what th purpose of this Bill is, and what, in the of its supporters, it is intended to accom In the fewest possible words, it is intend relieve certain persons who, if they are Crown tenants, are as nearly Crown te as they can possibly be, are occupants of land belonging to educational bodies. others who hold endowments of rural l These tenants are not in very flourishing cumstances. No one who counted the last week could have a single doubt as what it all means. It means that, and noth more. It was pleaded *ad misericordiam* since the time when these leases were and these engagements were entered into the public bodies, circumstances have against the tenant—that prices of pastoral agricultural produce have fallen; and the was that, in consequence of that fall, spe relief should be given, as is proposed to be by this Bill, to the special tenants who connected with these local bodies. What hold, and have expressed before, is this: if the causes which have been pleaded as a ing these tenants are to be considered s

o induce the General Assembly to ze a relief from their engagements, rcumstances which have affected them ieral throughout the colony, and they he tenants of the Crown as well as the of these particular institutions, and, if asure of the kind is introduced, it ought a general measure, and not a special e introduced under the guise of a general t the purposes I have mentioned. I am orry that these circumstances should risen; but what I do object to is that ief should be given in the way proposed Bill. The circumstances which cause s being general, the relief ought to be l. It is not fair that parties who are so ate as to obtain the assistance of some ers of this Legislature should receive re- this way, whilst others equally unfor-, who have not that assistance, have to To say that the interests of the Crown oy and the interests of the colony are nt, is to say that which is not correct. very true that many large endowments the hands of several collegiate institu- in this country. These lands, although are confided to the care of these particular s, are to all intents and purposes public . These bodies are trustees in respect to lands; and, though they have and are in- d to have a special right and power to deal them, yet, if concession is made in one demands will be made in others which ot be resisted. I have opposed, as far as I l, in this Council and in Committee, several ses of this Bill, and I shall record my vote ast the introduction of such a system of ing with the public lands; and also against system of introducing as general measures s of such a character as this, having a con- ed, or at least not declared, special purpose.

he Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—The honourable leman who has just sat down has said a l deal of what I wished to say, myself, on occasion; but I do not think he has clearly ted out the class of Crown tenants to which Bill refers. I am perfectly well aware, I give him every credit, that on no con- ration on a matter like this would he mis- d the Council, and it is only want of know- ge of the circumstances of the country which s led him to make the speech he has done. have given more anxious consideration to s Bill than to any other Bill that has been fore the Legislature this session, with every sire to deal liberally with these people, who e industrious. I know the difficulty of deal- g with the circumstances in which these ople are placed, and I would give every itude in my power to deal with them if I w a consistent way of doing it; but, when you me to the proposal to allow them to be dealt ith as under this Bill, we know that there are me men who have no shame in them, and ho press for their releases, and they come to et at the Government under these Orders in Council, and, with the political pressure they are able to exert, they get the Government into trouble, and obtain concessions they should not obtain. Compare these men with the case of a hard-working man, who would scorn to come forward and ask for anything except that to which he was fairly entitled. He knows none of these dodges which others take advantage of, and he is left out in the cold. It is these considerations that make me consider carefully how I should vote on this Bill, even at the last, although I have been supporting it to a fair extent so far. My honourable friend the Colonial Secretary said this Act did not apply to Crown lands. No doubt he conceived he was saying what was perfectly correct; but does not this Bill apply to the pastoral lands of the School Commissioners of Otago?

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Yes.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—Therefore, my honourable friend will see, he was taking up wrong ground there.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—What I pointed out was that the lands affected by this Bill are lands under the control of bodies described as "leasing authorities."

The Hon. Mr McLEAN.—My honourable friend does not seem to see the point. What are these runs leased by the School Commissioners but waste lands?

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—No.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—They are waste lands to all intents and purposes, and they are leased by the School Commissioners. The honourable gentleman does not appear to be able to see just now that these lands are exactly the same as those leased by the Waste Lands Boards. What I am endeavouring to show is that a large section of tenants holding lands the same as that leased by the Crown may get relief under this Bill, whereas another class will not. If they have no friends they will get no relief. I do not ask the Council to adopt either the motion or the amendment, as I have a great deal of difficulty in making up my own mind as to the way I should vote on this Bill. The Hon. Mr. Menzies has said that this Bill would not give relief to deferred-payment settlers; but I will show the way in which they can get relief. They may capitalize their purchase, and then they would come under the perpetual-lease system, and they would get relief under that system. By such a Bill as this you introduce the principle of personal government; you give certain powers to the Governor in Council, which means that the Minister of Lands will have these powers. This imports a personal element into the administration of Waste Lands Boards; and that is my difficulty in voting on the Bill. If you are to grant relief to suffering settlers it should be by a positive open Bill, so that every honourable member might know what relief is proposed to be granted—so that the Council should not be asked to pass anything by a side-wind, but should pass the Bill with their eyes open. It must not be understood from what I have been saying that I have no sympathy with these people. I have great sympathy with them. In Otago they were not fairly dealt with when their runs came put up to auction; but this was no fa

Government that might have been in power at the time—it was the fault of the circumstances of the time. When their runs were put up again they had to obtain them, or their sheep would be worth nothing if they lost the run. Some of them went on needlessly competing up to a point which landed them in the Insolvency Court, instead of abandoning their run and the sheep as well, as they ought to have done. It is only in such cases as these that I would hold they had any right to consideration. If a man makes a bargain, it is not right that he should treat that bargain lightly and be allowed to withdraw from it. I admit there is a great deal of good in this Bill, and that some of its provisions are such that they would prevent the necessity for passing many Bills at the instance of the local bodies; and, if it were not for this side-wind attempt to give relief to one class of Crown tenants and not to others, then I should not have any objection to the Bill myself.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I have not taken any part in this discussion, so far. As the Bill was introduced in the Council it did not at all please me, and I took no part in voting on any of the amendments that were proposed. I did not like to oppose my colleague on a Bill which was a Government Bill. At the same time, I said to my colleague that I would not be a party to passing the Bill as it then was. I should not have risen now had it not been for the remarks of the Hon. Mr. McLean and others about the School Commissioners, it being alleged that their lands are Crown lands. On the contrary, these are private lands that belong to these private bodies.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—What I said was that those lands are exactly the same class of land as those let to Crown pastoral tenants.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I understood the honourable member to say that they were Crown lands. I hold they are not Crown lands. Of course the honourable member, if he has lands to let, might let them upon the same terms as Crown lands of the colony, and yet they would not be Crown lands. I am satisfied that some measure is necessary to grant relief to those tenants. If we do not, these properties will be thrown on the hands of these private bodies, and, instead of having good tenants, they will have no tenants at all. In my private experience I have had to reduce my rents by as much as 33⅓ per cent. Although I do not quite approve the Bill as it passed the Committee, yet, rather than lose an opportunity of doing something to relieve the tenants, I would support the Bill as it is; but I had hopes that in Committee it would be amended to my satisfaction. I find it has not been so; but, rather than lose the Bill altogether, and deprive the sufferers of this relief, I shall vote for the third reading, and I trust the Council will not throw out the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—The honourable gentleman has not expressed himself with his usual lucidity.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—What I said was that I did not approve of the Bill. Neither do I now. I was in hopes that the Committee would amend it.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—What I find fault with in this Bill is this: that, on a large subject like this, Parliament has not been properly treated. This is a subject that ought to have been dealt with in a general measure on a satisfactory basis. According to the evidence given by the Crown tenants they were much more reasonable than this Bill. They asked for a reduction, no doubt, and they showed that they had made a bad bargain; but, when they were pressed as to whether it was a fair thing that in good times there should be no increase, they said there ought to be some mode of adjusting it on a basis fair to both sides. Another fault I find with this Bill is that I fail to see why these enormous powers should be given to the Government. It is a very unfortunate thing that the getting of relief under this Bill will depend on the Minister. Great pressure will be brought to bear on the Minister; and, altogether, I think the whole Bill is unsatisfactory, because it is a disturbing Bill, and will lead to trouble. There ought to be a Board or Court—not exactly a judicial Court, but a Court that could be put in motion at certain times, and could fix a reasonable rate from time to time. If in order, I will move that the Bill be recommitted generally.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—The honourable member cannot move an amendment upon an amendment.

The Hon. Mr. WILLIAMSON.—I would not have risen on this Bill had it not been for the assertion of the Government that the properties mentioned here are private properties. Sir, if they were so the intervention of the Council would not be required. The Hon. Mr. Reynolds has told us that he has made reductions in his own case. Did he require to come to this Council for authority to do so? I have always protested against the assumption that the properties in question belong exclusively to the localities in which such reserves have been made.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I ask the Council to consider what they will do if they reject this Bill. In adopting that course they would be inflicting a great deal of misery, ending in bankruptcy, on many people who are now seeking assistance. The Hon. Mr. Reynolds objected to the Bill because it was not wide enough for him. He wanted not only to give relief to small holders, but to pastoral tenants also. The Council objected to this; and I do not think my honourable friend should have made the display he did of his reasons: he should have accepted the decision of the Council. The leasing bodies have a duty to perform, and they have a trust reposed in them, and it is merely now, when hardship is pressing on the poor people, that they are seeking for temporary relief to enable them to carry on until such time as prosperity shall shine upon them again. I do not pretend to possess anything like the ability that some honourable gentlemen possess in this Council; but it seems to me that they do not want to see anything, even if it is forced

on their very eyes. I ask the Council to carefully consider what they will be doing to a number of poor people if they reject this measure, which is merely to give them temporary relief from year to year, till prosperity sets in and enables them to pay their rent.

Amendment negatived.

The Council divided on the question, "That the Bill be read the third time."

AYES, 16.

Baillie	Kenny	Scotland
Barnicoat	Menzies	Shephard
Bathgate	Miller	Shrimski
Bonar	Peacock	Swanson
Brett	Reynolds	Taiaroa.
Buckley		

NOES, 14.

Campbell	Mantell	Whitaker
Chamberlin	McLean	Williams
Dignan	Pollen	Williamson
Fraser	Reeves	Wilson.
Johnson, G. R.	Walker	

Majority for, 2.

Bill read the third time.

BEER DUTY BILL.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—I have been requested to state my opinion as to whether the Beer Duty Act 1880 Amendment Bill can be amended by the Council. The general rule will not be disputed—that the Council has not power to amend money Bills. But there are cases in which this general rule is relaxed. In 1849 the House of Commons adopted the following Standing Order:—

"That, with respect to any Bill brought to this House from the House of Lords, or returned by the House of Lords to this House, with amendments whereby any pecuniary penalty, forfeiture, or fee shall be authorized, imposed, appropriated, regulated, varied, or extinguished, this House will not insist on its ancient and undoubted privileges in the following case: When the object of such pecuniary penalty or forfeiture is to secure the execution of the Act, or the punishment or prevention of offences."

My opinion is that this Standing Rule of the House of Commons is applicable to the Beer Duty Bill now before the Council, and therefore that the Council can amend it, our first Standing Order being that, "In all cases not hereinafter specially provided for, any question arising shall be decided by the Hon. the Speaker, taking for his guide as far as possible the practice of the Imperial Parliament."

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—I wish to move, That this very important ruling be entered in the Journals of the House.

Motion agreed to.

OTAGO HARBOUR BOARD LEASING BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 4.—Board may apply to Court under Trustee Act.

The Hon. Captain FRASER moved, That this clause be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 8.

Barnicoat	Campbell	Reynolds
Bathgate	Kenny	Shephard.
Bonar	McLean	

NOES, 11.

Brett	Pollen	Whitaker
Buckley	Scotland	Williamson
Fraser	Swanson	Wilson.
Miller	Taiaroa	

Majority against, 3.

Clause struck out.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS moved, That progress be reported, and leave obtained to sit again.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 5.

Bathgate	Reynolds	Taiaroa.
Buckley	Swanson	

NOES, 16.

Acland	McLean	Shephard
Barnicoat	Menzies	Whitaker
Bonar	Miller	Williams
Brett	Pollen	Williamson
Fraser	Scotland	Wilson.
Kenny		

Majority against, 11.

Clause 5.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER moved to omit the first word, and all the words after "year," line 2, page 2, with a view to add these words: "and there are other leases granted by the said Board which are invalid on the same grounds, and it is desirable that all such leases should be validated: . . . The said leases so declared by the Supreme Court to be invalid, and all other leases granted by the said Board before the said decision of the Supreme Court which are invalid on the same ground, are hereby validated, and shall be deemed to have been, and hereafter to be, valid from the day on which they were intended to take effect: Provided that this validation shall not apply to any leases in respect of which any action or other proceeding was on the first day of August, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, pending in the Supreme Court."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 7.

Barnicoat	Buckley	Reynolds
Bathgate	McLean	Scotland.
Bonar		

NOES, 12.

Brett	Miller	Taiaroa
Fraser	Pollen	Whitaker
Kenny	Shephard	Williamson
Menzies	Swanson	Wilson.

Majority against, 5.

Words struck out.
Clause amended.
Bill reported.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes past five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Monday, 9th August, 1886.

First Reading—Third Reading—Civil Service Reform Bill—Privilege: Tax-remission Bills—Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Bill—Government Life Insurance Bill—Stamp Bill—Harbours Bill—Counties Bill—Municipal Corporations Bill—Representation Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Railways Authorization Bill.

THIRD READING.

Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Bill.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM BILL.

Sir R. STOUT.—In moving that the amendments made in this Bill by the Legislative Council be considered, I may say that I do not quite agree with the amendments which have been made by the Council, especially as to the nomination of cadets. The first amendment is a technical one, and is of no importance. The important matter is section 9. Instead of allowing the Civil Service cadets to be nominated by members of the House of Representatives, the Legislative Council has made it entirely rest upon competitive examination—those who get the most marks will get the appointments. I do not agree with that; but, at this time of the session, I think we had better accept the Bill even as it is; and I hope next session we shall be able to pass a Bill more in accordance with our desires, and a great improvement on this Bill as it now stands. The only other alteration of importance is the power given to a Civil servant to devise by will the funds which have accumulated in his behalf. I move, That the amendments made by the Council be agreed to.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—For my own part, I should prefer to see this Bill dropped. The whole scope of the Bill has been altered. Its main principle, as brought down, was that cadets for the Service should be nominated by members of this House. Now that is taken away, and in substitution for it there is what I think an altogether far from satisfactory solution of the question. I think these competitive examinations are liable to work very unfairly, and experience shows that competition does not supply the best officers. If you establish a system of appointment of cadets by nomination, you might take youths at an age when, as shown by their passing the Sixth Standard or the Civil Service examination, they might be made good officers, such as you cannot get under a system of merely competitive examinations. The Bill has been so much altered that I should be sorry if the House accepted it as it now stands. I think it would be better to withdraw it, and to bring down a Bill next session dealing with the subject more comprehensively. As the Bill is now, it is in a form which the Government does not approve, which this House does not approve, and which, I believe, the Council does not approve; so that it would be better to leave it over till next session.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—It seems to me that this is now a new Bill. Its principle is entirely new, and so is its machinery. I cannot discover anything old in it. The Premier may laugh; but the Bill has been recast in every shape and form. I do not wish, however, to oppose the acceptance of those amendments if the Government are willing to accept them. I cannot help saying, however, that this is not the Bill which was first introduced, and over which there was so much "gush."

Mr. TURNBULL.—I should be sorry to see the Bill rejected even as it is now, for I believe even in its present shape it is calculated to save the country a very large sum on account of its Civil Service. The number of claims made on the colony in the past in respect of officers who have died in the Service shows that the provisions of this Bill are calculated to effect economy. I think it is far better to accept the Bill in its present shape, and amend it next session, than leave over the whole thing altogether. The Bill is certainly calculated to lessen the burden of the country.

Mr. BRYCE.—The usefulness or otherwise of this measure will entirely depend on what are to be the regulations under the competitive system. I understand that system in America now works very well indeed, because the examinations are not what are usually understood by competitive examinations, but are special examinations in the classes of work the successful candidates have to do. I conceive that that kind of examination would be of great value, whereas an examination in general subjects, no matter for what department the cadets are wanted, might rather do harm. However, I understand the Premier does not think the Bill has been so considerably altered that it should be withdrawn, and I suppose the portion of it which has not been altered is that portion of it which will enable the honourable gentleman to make reductions to the extent of £30,000 or £40,000 a year, as stated when the Bill was introduced. If that has been kept in—and I imagine the Premier thinks it has been—I shall be willing to assist him in passing the Bill.

Mr. BRUCE.—I entirely agree that it would be better to withdraw the Bill for the present year, because it is now a perfectly different measure from that which was adopted by this House. I speak as one who has supported the Bill; but the Premier must admit that a principle on which this House expressed itself strongly has been materially altered. As has been pointed out already, the system of com-

petitive examinations would not operate fairly towards candidates "raised" — to use an Americanism — in the country districts: it would altogether give the advantage to those brought up in the large centres, where greater advantages of education are enjoyed. The Bill has also been altered in other respects, and, altogether, I should much prefer that the Government should drop it for the present session.

Major ATKINSON.—I, too, should like to see the Government give the Bill up. I disliked it as it was brought in, and I dislike it still more now. I feel certain that, with the competitive system, as ordinarily understood, we shall get into very great difficulties, and shall not get the class of men we want in our Service. No doubt if the examination were a special one for the duties of any particular office it would be entirely different; and that I should entirely approve of. My honourable friend the member for Waitotara did the Premier some wrong just now; for, as I understood, the Premier did not promise to save £40,000 a year by this Bill alone, but said that this measure would help to do it with other things he had in view. I hope the Premier will tell us whether the Bill in its present shape will still enable him to carry out that promise.

Sir R. STOUT.—I hope the amendments will be agreed to. The only amendments, in substance, are those in reference to appointments and devising of funds; all the others are verbal improvements. I quite agree that competitive examination is not a proper system on which to base appointments. I think the appointments should be by nomination. But I think we had better accept the Bill in its present form this year, and I promise that, if I am in a position to do so, I will bring down an amending Bill next year. As to saving, I may say that one important clause which I relied on in that respect was rejected by this House—that for the appointment of a Commission to inquire into salaries. I believe the House rejected that clause deliberately to prevent me from effecting savings. In fact, all through the session I have found that those who cry out loudest about economy outside the House do the least for it inside. I do not agree with competitive examination; but, if I have to do with drawing up the syllabus for the examinations, I shall take care that it is so drawn that the pupils of the town secondary schools shall not have all the advantage, but that competitors in the country districts shall have an equal chance with them.

Motion agreed to.

PRIVILEGE: TAX-REMISSION BILLS.

Mr. LARNACH brought up the report of the Committee on Privilege, as follows:—

"Your Committee, having diligently searched for precedents and inquired into the usages and practice of the Imperial Parliament, to which the General Assembly of New Zealand is an analogous body, possessing and exercising the same rights and privileges, have the honour to report as follows:—

"1. That the right of granting aids and supplies to the Crown is in the House of Representatives alone, as an essential part of its constitution; and the limitation of all such grants as to matter, manner, measure, and time is in it only.

"2. That, although the Legislative Council has exercised the power of rejecting Bills of several descriptions relating to taxation by negativing the whole, yet the exercise of that power by the Council has not been frequent, and is justly regarded by the House with peculiar jealousy, as affecting the right of the House of Representatives to grant the supplies and to provide the ways and means for the service of the year.

"3. That, to guard for the future against an undue exercise of that power by the Legislative Council, and to secure to the House of Representatives its rightful control over taxation and supply, the House has in its own hands the power so to impose and remit taxes and to frame Bills of supply that the right of the House as to the matter, manner, measure, and time may be maintained inviolate.

"4. That this power may be exercised in accordance with the practice of the House of Commons, initiated in 1861, and since continued, by embodying in one Bill the whole or any part of the financial arrangements of the year."

On the motion, That the report do lie on the table and be printed,

Mr. MOSS said,—I hope we shall have an opportunity of considering this report. It is difficult to form any opinion on a paper which has just been read out by the Clerk; but it seems to me that a very important subject is dealt with, and we ought to have some opportunity of considering it. I am one of those who hold that the Council has not sufficiently exercised its powers, and that it would be an excellent thing if the Council had more efficient power over the policy of measures called "financial measures." We will take the case of the large amount of money borrowed annually. We find that the Bills which authorize expenditure of that money cannot be amended by the other branch of the Legislature. It seems to me that there are very good reasons why those Bills should be treated in the first instance as policy Bills, and why the Council should have an opportunity of expressing its opinion upon them as matters of policy. To my mind, it is necessary that the Council should have every opportunity of expressing a deliberate opinion on the purposes for which we borrow money from time to time. I believe that if they had had that power and had exercised it in the past great good would have been done. Under the present system we know that they are prevented from expressing a deliberate opinion on measures such as those I have referred to. When such Bills come before them they cannot amend them; they can only reject them. When we send up to them a Bill authorizing the construction of certain works—a Railway Authorization Bill, for instance—they have an opportunity of amending that Bill; but when other works are autho-

rized, in what are called money Bills, they have no opportunity of expressing an opinion. I appeal to the Premier to support me in this view: that it is absolutely necessary, in a Legislature like this—a democratic Legislature—to have the co-operation of a second Chamber. We know that in all democratic countries a second Chamber is regarded as a most important feature of the Constitution. For example, in that great democratic country, the United States, they have a second Chamber not only in the Federal Legislature, but every single State has its second Chamber. We ought not in any way to cripple the powers of the second Chamber of this colony. If that Chamber were properly constituted, which it is not at present, it should be intrusted with powers and privileges which might have been exercised most beneficially in the past and might be largely so exercised in the future. The proper way to enable that Chamber to exercise those powers would be to submit all Bills to them in the shape of policy Bills, in the first instance. Take the case of the Railway Authorization Bills, which I have already mentioned. When it is proposed to make certain railways we include them in the schedule of a Railway Authorization Bill. That is not a money Bill, and therefore the Council have an opportunity of saying of each railway whether they approve of its construction. But as to other works, we may propose to spend a million on them, but they are all put into what is called "a money Bill," and the Council have no power of expressing an opinion on particular works included in its schedule. They have no opportunity of saying whether this or that is a good work and necessary to be carried out in the interests of the country. That seems to me a bad system; and in adopting that system this House aims at the exercise of a power which it is not wholesome for it to possess. We know the haste with which things are done in this House at the end of the session. There is then very little opportunity of giving matters fair consideration: and, instead of restraining or crippling the powers of the Council, we ought to give them every facility for exercising the fullest revision. There are many of us—I am one of these—who do not think that the Council is properly constituted at present; but, so long as it exists, so long, I believe, we ought to give it every opportunity of performing the functions which, under every Constitution—particularly every democratic Constitution—can be by it performed with advantage to the country. I hope, therefore, that the report will be printed, and that some opportunity will be given us for considering it.

Mr. FERGUS.—Are we to understand that there will be an opportunity given us of discussing this report? It is exceedingly desirable that there should be; and I beg to move, That the report be taken into consideration on Wednesday. In the meantime members will have an opportunity of reading up on the matter, and looking into the precedents for themselves.

Motion agreed to, and report ordered to be considered on Wednesday.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS BILL.

Sir R. STOUT.—I move, That the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Bill be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering clauses 3 and [illegible].

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I beg to move, as an addition to that motion, "and subsection [illegible] of clause 34." The object which I have in view in doing that I need scarcely explain to the House. It is to do justice to the district that I represent. I have had the honour of addressing the House on this subject before now at considerable length, and I shall therefore simply confine myself to stating this: When the Government introduced the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Bill they professed to do so with the view of encouraging voluntary contributions; but the refusal to separate Wairarapa from Wellington will simply kill voluntary contributions in that district altogether. I therefore move this amendment.

Mr. WHYTE.—I also have an addition to the motion to move. I shall follow the example of the honourable member who has just sat down, and shall not weary the House by going into full particulars; but I wish to say one thing. I do not propose to take up the line which I took when I last brought this matter before the House. I do not now propose to make the Piako District a separate district. I find that there is great objection on the part of many honourable members to increasing the number of districts. Therefore what I intend to propose on this occasion is to separate the County of Piako from the Thames District and attach it to the District of Waikato. I do that simply on the ground of the injustice of the present system of contribution, and of the fact that, owing to its being now connected with a district to which it is totally dissimilar, the contributions are most unequal. I wish to repeat, again, that I do not say this inequality of contribution is owing at all to any reluctance on the part of diggers and miners to contribute for purposes of a charitable kind; but the law lays it down that the contributions must be on rateable value, and therefore they have no option: and the consequence is that they now contribute very little in proportion to what they ought to contribute, or approaching to what I believe they would be willing to contribute. I also wish to say that Piako is connected with the Waikato by rail, whereas it is only connected with the Thames by the river, and by a very bad road thirty-five miles long. Therefore the addition I wish to make to the motion is this: "and also for the purpose of altering the schedule of the said Act of 1885, and the amending Bill of this session, for the purpose of separating the County of Piako from the Thames District, and adding it to the Waikato."

Mr. WALKER.—I am sorry to observe that my getting up to speak on this question should be the occasion of any hilarity on the part of honourable members. I can assure the House that the subject of the measure under consideration is no laughing matter to the part of the country from which I come; and that

on behalf of my constituents, I shall stand up whenever I think it my duty to do so, to support their interests. And I also may say that in supporting their interests I believe I am consulting the true interests with which this measure is intended to deal. Therefore, while in thorough accord with the views of the Premier, and with those who supported the Act of last year, I feel it my duty to move as I am doing to-day. I do not think it necessary to say more, as I urged my case the other day in Committee. I therefore move, That the Bill be recommitted, for the purpose of amending subsection (7) of clause 34 of the said Act.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I have wished always to have pretty large districts, because I feel convinced that if we do not have large districts there will be an injury done to those parts of the country to which the poor gravitate. If we are going to make these divisions, if we are going to make these alterations, I shall also want separation. The County Council of the district I represent have unanimously resolved that it ought to be separated from the rest of North Canterbury; and, though I do not agree with that, provided no separation takes place with regard to other districts, yet if Ashburton is separated I shall certainly move also that the County of Akaroa be separated from the North Canterbury Hospital and Charitable Aid District. I shall move that in justice to my constituency; and I trust that, if the House decides to split up these districts piecemeal, it will do justice to the district I represent.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I think it would save a deal of trouble, as every honourable member is moving for alterations in the boundaries of his district, if we were to move that the Bill be recommitted to consider all the amendments that were previously proposed. I hope that the House, having spent a long time over the Bill, will not recommit it; but, if we recommit it, let us recommit it all.

Sir R. STOUT.—I need hardly state that I do not accept the amendments. If the Bill is going to be split up in this fashion I shall be bound to drop it.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I also was going to ask that the Bill be recommitted, for the purpose of inserting a new clause to reinstate the division of the Hospital District of Nelson, the Buller and Inangahua District.

The House divided on the question, "That the words 'and subsection (5) of clause 34' be added."

AYES, 32.

Atkinson	Hakuene	Steward, W. J.
Bruce	Harper	Te Ao
Bryce	Hatch	Thomson, J. W.
Buckland, J. C.	Hirst, H.	Trimble
Buckland, W. F.	Hislop	Wakefield
Dargaville	Hobbs	Walker
Dodson	Hursthouse	Whyte
Fitzherbert	Lake	Wilson.
Grace	Mitchelson	*Tellers.*
Grey	Pearson	Beetham
Guinness	Russell	Buchanan.

NOES, 30.

Allwright	McKenzie, J.	Stout
Ballance	McMillan	Sutter
Bevan	Moat	Taylor
B.-Bradshaw	Montgomery	Thompson, T.
Brown	O'Callaghan	Tole
Cadman	O'Conor	Turnbull
Conolly	Reese	Vogel.
Fraser	Reid	*Tellers.*
Ivess	Richardson, E.	Newman
Johnston	Smith	Stewart, W. D.
Larnach		

Majority for, 2.

Amendment agreed to.

Sir R. STOUT.—I shall move, That this debate be adjourned till to-morrow. It is better to do that than to have the Bill destroyed, or to waste a whole day again.

Mr. WHYTE.—On the contrary, our desire is that the Bill should not be destroyed; and I think this is the only way of making it work well in the country. If this gross injustice is allowed to continue it must inevitably end in the Bill's destruction, and it is our object not to have it destroyed. We think this must be done in order to make the measure work effectively and with justice to the different parts of the colony, and if this gross injustice is allowed to continue such will not be the effect of the Bill. As it happens, at present the protests from the country are not nearly as strong as they must ultimately become, because just now, however unjust the contributions may be, they are stopped out of local finance funds for the construction of roads and bridges, and therefore the local bodies are not in a position to protest with any effect; but when these subsidies are done away with, and it becomes a necessity for the money to be raised by direct rate, I am sure resort will be had by the country districts to every extreme to avoid payment of these outrageous contributions. In my particular case it means £1,400 a year contributed to hospitals and other institutions which are not reasonably accessible. What is proposed to be done now is that, in my case, at all events, the district should be joined to a district which it is connected with by two railways opening up every part of it. I heard the Premier, in a previous debate, say that he approved of districts connected by railway being hospital districts. In this particular case they are connected by railway, and are kindred districts. Therefore I say that in making the proposal we are making we are doing good; because it is all in the direction of making the Act a just measure.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I am quite astonished at the turn this question has taken to-day. We have fairly discussed this matter on what I call the fair and just principles of the Bill. I have nothing to do with what individuals hold to be the principle of the thing. I say we have dealt with the general principle. Individual members must give way to the will of the many. I hope the Government will stick to their principle, and not be led away by these side-wind catches emanating from honourable

gentlemen representing country districts, influenced by motives—well, I will not say what their motives are, or I should be out of order. The honourable member for Auckland East went into the "Aves" lobby. I cannot understand how a gentleman of his vast experience, and a gentleman who is everlastingly getting on the public platforms of this country and saying that he is advocating the interests of the many against the selfishness of the few, can be found voting in this direction. He must know that there is only one principle that will effect the objects of this Bill, and that is simply this: that the few must give way to the interests of the many. I will say this, moreover: I represent a large constituency, and a constituency which, as I have said before, has very large accessions to the number of its destitute persons from those districts which wish to avoid paying anything at all. It is not only on these grounds that I advocate what I do, but I say there is only one principle that will carry out this law, if it is to be carried out, and that is, that the people must be rated on a fair system, and that taxation should be imposed so that one portion of the country should not grow in wealth and another portion remain always impoverished. I hope the Government, if these clauses are put in the Bill, will drop it altogether.

Mr. PEARSON.—The honourable member for Sydenham seems to have worked himself up into an extraordinary state of excitement. If the honourable member for Auckland East likes to go into any lobby, what has that to do with the honourable member for Sydenham? It ill becomes the honourable member to get up and lecture the honourable member for Auckland East. It is ill becoming and shows bad taste that the Premier should, whenever he gets defeated, retire in the way he now proposes. When I defeated the honourable gentleman's Ministry the other night on the question of placing the taxation for charitable aid on the property-tax basis, the honourable gentleman met me by saying that he would take no notice of my motion. Now the honourable gentleman is petulant, and says that he will drop the Bill.

Sir R. STOUT.—I said that before.

Mr. PEARSON.—Well, I know that he will drop the Bill. The first amendment was bad, but this one is much worse, and the sooner the honourable member drops the Bill the better.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I move my amendment with the stated intention of not taxing, and I am not going to talk now, for I have no wish to waste the time of the House at this late period of the session. I think the Premier should have accepted the position, as the House decided against him. I will accept the adjournment, as far as I am concerned, without any further remarks. I never were word to say as to what I think of the honourable member for Sydenham. So far from attempting to advocate the interests of the few as compared with those of the many, I have no part in such a course as that, and I was so far fair with the views of the Premier with regard to the four large centres of the colony as to vote for a differential subsidy, so as to leave the country districts to themselves, and not tie them to the large centres, or destroy their local autonomy.

Mr. BEETHAM.—I am not going to say much at this period of the session, but I do deprecate very much the attitude of the Premier in this discussion. He professes himself to be an advocate of local autonomy and local self-government, and he professes to assist as far as possible in developing the charitable instincts of the people. The amendment of the honourable member for Wairarapa South went in the direction of assisting the charitable instincts of the people, and fostering them; and now we are forced, by an unnatural junction, to fall back again on the Bill of the honourable gentleman, and by this Bill we shall have to depend entirely on rates in the future, and on what we have always deprecated in this House, a poor-rate. In our district we have always voluntarily supported hospitals and dispensed charitable aid for years past; and we do not wish to be tied to any other district. We are quite willing to take our due liabilities. If any persons from our district are sent to Wellington for charitable-aid or hospital purposes we are quite willing to pay for their treatment. The Premier is taking a short-sighted view of the matter. Where districts are working and have worked for years past earnestly in one direction, with an earnest wish to avoid a poor-rate, and to provide for their necessities by voluntary contributions, I say they should be permitted to carry out their laudable purpose. I regret very much that the honourable gentleman has taken the course he has taken.

Major ATKINSON.—The adjournment of the debate having been asked for, it is only reasonable that we should agree to it.

Sir R. STOUT.—I mean to drop the Bill.

Major ATKINSON.—I hope the honourable gentleman will not do that, on thinking over it. I disagree with these Bills; but the honourable gentleman will see that the action which has been taken in this matter comes from persons who are thoroughly in earnest in doing their duty.

Sir R. STOUT.—Oh, oh!

Major ATKINSON.—Yes, it does. The movement is due to a desire on the part of those members to do their duty locally. I submit that when the Premier considers that he will see that he must go on with the Bill; and I hope he will give his opponents in this matter credit for desiring to do what they conceive to be their duty. Had the honourable gentleman not been rather unwell to-day I think he would not have taken the course he has. I hope we shall grant the adjournment; and, then, that the honourable gentleman will come to the House in a better frame of mind to meet the country representatives, who really desire what is fair and right as far as the Bill is concerned.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—It is quite true that the country districts wish to split off from the large towns. There is no doubt about that.

There are two districts in Canterbury, for instance, which desire to do so. I wish the County of Akaroa cut off. But where is this thing going to stop? We are going to throw the maintenance of the poor on the town districts, and that is entirely contrary to what was the object when the Charitable Aid Boards were appointed. The object, then, was to create large districts, so that the outlying districts might contribute. If you do not pass this measure, Amuri and Cheviot will not contribute a farthing. At the same time, I agree that the nominal owners of the land should not pay all this rate, and the mortgagee get clear. I had framed the following resolution on this point: The mortgager and mortgagee shall contribute to the charitable-aid rate, levied annually on property, in proportion to the interest each holds in the property; the mortgager to pay the tax to the local body, with power to deduct the amount which should be charged to the mortgagee from the annual interest payable to him, so that, in the case of property of the nominal value of £5,000, on which has been advanced money to the amount of, say, £4,000, the landowner shall not be rated as if his interest was £5,000, and the mortgagee escape altogether. I do not see any chance of carrying that, but I think it offers a large remedy. If the House agrees to split off any districts, I hope it will agree to split off mine, and I shall move to that effect.

Mr. DARGAVILLE.—As I understand it, the House has not agreed to split off any districts. It has only agreed that subsection (5) of clause 34 shall be reconsidered. That does not commit the House to the proposals of the honourable member for Wairarapa South, and, in fact, it is by no means clear that the amendment will be carried. As to the other amendments which are to be moved, as far as I can gather they are not likely to be carried. Therefore I think the conduct of the Premier in proposing to drop the Bill is unwise. I hope, even if the adjournment be not carried, he will reconsider his decision, and not drop the Bill. I think it would be a great pity to do so.

Mr. CADMAN.—I hope, if these amendments are carried, the Premier will drop the Bill. I think this is an underhand attempt to get what the House refused to give a few days ago, when the whole question was fairly considered. I would like to tell the honourable member for Waikato this: that I made certain offers to assist him, and that I consider that he has not kept faith with me in the matter. I now withdraw the offers I made in the way of assisting him with respect to this question. Another thing which I noticed on the last division was, that all those members who voted with the Premier to put in one or two matters in their districts voted against the Bill. If the amendments are carried I think it would be better to drop the Bill, so that those who have already got concessions may be in the same position as the people they are now voting against; and perhaps next session a Bill may be brought in to meet the wants of all the various districts.

Sir R. STOUT.—I find from the amendment as put by Mr. Speaker that there is no such section in the Bill as that the honourable member for Wairarapa South proposes to alter, and therefore the motion which has been carried by the House is valueless. Under those circumstances, I ask leave to withdraw my motion for the adjournment of the debate.

Motion for adjournment of the debate withdrawn.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I now beg to move, That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of considering the following new clause, of which I have given notice: "Subsection five of section thirty-four of the said Act is hereby repealed, and the Wairarapa District and the Wellington District are hereby constituted charitable-aid districts under the said Act as if they had never formed part of any united district. The Board of the United Board of the Wairarapa District and the Wellington District is hereby dissolved, and all the assets and liabilities of such united district at the time of its dissolution shall be apportioned among the Boards of the two districts forming part of such united district in manner as shall be allocated by such person as the Governor may appoint for this purpose. This section shall not come into force before the first day of April next after the passing hereof."

The House divided on the question, "That the words 'and for the consideration of a new clause' be added to the motion."

AYES, 27.

Atkinson	Hamlin	Steward, W. J.
Bruce	Hatch	Thomson, J. W.
Bryce	Hislop	Trimble
Buckland, J. C.	Hobbs	Wakefield
Dodson	Kerr	Walker
Fitzherbert	Locke	Whyte.
Fulton	Pearson	*Tellers.*
Grace	Pere	Beetham
Grey	Russell	Buchanan.
Guinness		

NOES, 29.

Ballance	McMillan	Stewart, W. D.
Bevan	Moat	Stout
B.-Bradshaw	Montgomery	Sutter
Brown	Newman	Taylor
Cadman	O'Conor	Thompson, T.
Conolly	Reese	Tole
Dargaville	Reid	Vogel.
Ivess	Richardson, E.	*Tellers.*
Larnach	Samuel	Fraser
McKenzie, J.	Smith	Turnbull.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Harper	O'Callaghan
Locke	Johnston
Macarthur	Lance
Menteath.	Joyce.

Majority against, 2.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. WHYTE and Mr. WALKER withdrew their amendments.

Bill recommitted to consider clauses 3 and 4.

Bill reported with amendments.

On the question, That the Bill be read a third time,

Mr. WHYTE said,—I wish to refer to a few words which fell from the honourable member for Coromandel in reference to myself. He said something to the general effect that I had broken faith with him. I did not break faith with him at all; and, in fact, it was utterly impossible for me to do so, as I had entered into no compact or agreement with him. It is true that, in the lobbies, we had some conversation about endeavouring, to the best of our abilities, by joining our forces on the Hospital Board, to reduce and keep down the reckless expenditure which goes on at the Thames at present. I think that, knowing what I do of the honourable member for Coromandel, he is too fair and reasonable a man to back out, or, rather, not to continue his efforts to reduce expenditure. I have not in any way broken faith with him, inasmuch as there was no compact to break.

Mr. CADMAN.—There might have been no compact between us, but what I understood certainly was, in reference to the working of these institutions, that hereafter nothing further was to be done in the direction of his district getting separated from the Thames District. I certainly thought that was so.

Mr. WHYTE.—I in no way agreed to cease my agitation to obtain separation from the Thames District, because I thought that must come sooner or later; and the justice of the desire for separation must become apparent to everybody, the honourable member for Coromandel included, before long.

Mr. CADMAN.—As far as justice is concerned, we fought that out in this House. We said that if the Piako County would erect a hospital we would offer no further opposition to their having an institution of their own. At present they have no hospital, and they are not likely to build one.

Mr. WHYTE.—I think it is wrong that these conversations in the lobbies should be brought in, and I am sorry the honourable member for Coromandel should have brought them in. However, I have nothing further to add, except that I did not in any way, even by implication, lead him to infer that I would abstain from endeavouring, to the utmost of my ability, to obtain separation from the Thames District.

Mr. CADMAN.—I must say a word in reply to the honourable member for Waikato. I fully agree with him that lobby talk should not be brought into this House—that is, talk, in respect to matters before the House, or which are likely to come before it, that may be considered of a private nature. The conversation we had was certainly in the lobbies; but it was not in reference to anything then before the House, nor could it fairly be termed what is known as "lobby gossip."

Bill read a third time.

On the question, That the Bill do pass,

Mr. PEARSON said,—As this will probably be the last time this session that we shall have an opportunity of speaking on this subject, I want to tell the Premier that I shall not cease agitating to get fair-play for the country districts in regard to this matter. The honourable gentleman does not understand the feeling in the country districts about it; but when the next election takes place he will understand it in a very practical manner, for, unless the honourable gentleman previously consents to fair-play to the country districts in regard to this question, he will see very few supporters of his returned from the country districts. Next session I shall take another opportunity of trying to get justice done to the country districts—not only my own, but throughout the colony.

Bill passed.

GOVERNMENT LIFE INSURANCE BILL.

Sir R. STOUT.—I beg to move the third reading of the Government Life Insurance Bill.

Mr. HATCH.—I beg to move, as an amendment, That the Bill be recommitted for the purpose of considering new clauses, which I will presently read, and which are printed on a Supplementary Order Paper. Great anxiety seems to be shown by a number of honourable gentlemen to get away, for they keep calling out "Time" and "Question," with a view of postponing important business. This is probably the last opportunity we shall have this session of referring to a most important matter—a question of really the first importance to the country in the present condition of things, and a question on which, I hold, it is imperative for this Legislature to take action, with a view to putting things in the country in a better position than they are in at present. There are three things tending to that end on which I hold it to be imperative for the Legislature to take action, and they are these: Protection; a more thrifty and economical working of the public service; and some legislative or governmental action towards assisting the agriculturists generally, so that they may be able to gain a sound position, and not succumb to heavy incumbrances and adverse circumstances, as so many have already done. In framing these clauses, there is no wish on my part that any of the funds at present at the disposal of the Government should be used to lend to small farmers at a low rate of interest—to do anything which would reduce the income of the policy-holders; but, at the same time, there is an intention to take a course which, I think, might tend considerably to the relief of the smaller struggling farmers. I am a policy-holder in the institution, and I am very anxious that it should be managed in the best possible way, and that its funds should be so dealt with as to secure the largest return; but, after careful examination, I am convinced that the funds could be materially strengthened under the operation of the clauses I propose. My object is that the institution should obtain funds at Home, by the sale of annuities, which would increase to a large extent the funds available in the colony for investment in all classes of

securities. Very large sums are now sent from Great Britain to other countries, and particularly to the United States, for investment in the annuity branch. The business is found to be so profitable that a large sum can be imported into the United States in that way. I have previously explained the style of business, and the opportunities which are given in this colony to accept that class of business, because we rest our calculations, in computing annuities, on a basis of 4 per cent.; whereas at Home the annuity-selling offices are compelled to rest their calculations on a basis of 3 or, at most, 3½ per cent. I will read the clauses, and, if honourable gentlemen are disinclined to go into the matter this session, I shall be satisfied to take the decision on the voices. When this question was before the House in 1884 it was held that a proposal then made on the subject was not a desirable one; but the clauses I propose are very different from those then submitted, because it was then proposed that the department should do general life-insurance business not only in England but in the Australian Colonies; and I thoroughly deprecate this colony going into general insurance business all over the world. My clauses are these:—

"*Agencies in United Kingdom.*

"13A. If the Governor shall be of opinion that it would be advisable at any time to extend so much of the business conducted under this Act as relates to the entering into contracts for the sale of annuities for life by the establishment of branches in any part of the United Kingdom, he may, with the consent of the Executive Council, direct the Commissioner to take all such necessary steps and do all things requisite for the establishment of branches for the exclusive purpose aforesaid at such places in the United Kingdom aforesaid as shall be prescribed by the Governor.

"13B. The Governor may appoint a Manager and Agents to commence business under this Act for the purpose above mentioned at any such places aforesaid, and may prescribe their respective functions and duties, and may apply any moneys to the credit of the Government Insurance Account in and towards the cost of establishing such branches, and the payment of the salaries of all persons employed thereat or concerned in the establishment thereof.

"13C. The Governor in Council and the Governor shall have the same authority and control over and the same power to make regulations for the conduct of such business at any of the aforesaid agencies, and the receipt, custody, payment, transmission, or investment of moneys thereat, in all particulars and in respect of all matters in the same manner as he has under this Act within the colony."

I shall make no further remarks, but shall leave the clauses to the House, hoping, however, that they will, at any rate, elicit sufficient expression of opinion to induce the authorities in the matter to take action next session. I believe these clauses are quite concurred in by the Treasurer, who has given the question careful and mature consideration.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I second the amendment *pro formâ*. The honourable gentleman must know that this matter was fully discussed the other night. I am certain that, if the honourable member knows anything about this matter, he must know that the proposal he has made means our lending money not for the 7 per cent. we can get for it here, but for the very low rates they get at Home. Money cannot be lent at Home, on anything like satisfactory security, at more than 3 or 3½ per cent. I suggested the other night that this institution should lend sums of £200. That was objected to on the ground that its doing so would have a tendency to reduce the rate of interest now ruling, and so affect the large money-lending concerns in the colony: and I am not quite certain that the honourable member for Invercargill himself did not object. Yet he brings in these clauses, the effect of which would be to lend our money at the same rates as at Home.

Mr. HATCH.—No.

Mr. TAYLOR.—If the honourable gentleman will come to my residence I will show him what annuities are worth. I am not a Treasurer, but I have letters from friends at Home who deal with things of this sort.

Mr. HATCH.—What are they worth?

Mr. TAYLOR.—Your clauses? I shall simply say, Nil; because I am quite sure the insurance funds cannot be lent at Home with results satisfactory to the policy-holders. Though I advocate the lending of sums of £200 to small men, I have no sympathy with those who want to lend or borrow money for nothing. I think these clauses are very indefinite, and there is nothing to show how they should be carried out. I think the honourable gentleman should have drawn them and submitted them to the Treasurer, so that a general consensus of opinion might be arrived at about them, and then something worth arriving at might be arrived at. But I am sure the Treasurer will bear me out in saying that under these clauses you could not realize more than 3½ per cent. for your money. I cannot understand the honourable gentleman's sentiment at all. He objects to lending money in sums of £200, on sound security, to small, struggling men; and yet he proposes to lend money in this way. Sir, I have never heard you speak yet but what you spoke with authority, and, moreover, I have never heard your decisions overruled or objected to; but when we find a gentleman from Invercargill assuming almost the functions of the Chair—well, I must say I do not think that he is an authority on these matters, and I will not take up more time in discussing the matter.

Sir J. VOGEL.—If I understand the clauses rightly they propose to authorize the Government to sell annuities in England, and, inasmuch as the English Government sell them based on the calculation that the money will fructify at 3 or, I think, 3¼ per cent., and as we look for at least 4½ per cent., the operation is a very profitable one; and therefore I am not at one with the honourable member for Sydenham

This is not a new proposal; it is one which has already been before the House and several previous Governments. When I was Agent-General, at the instance of the solicitors of the Government in England I pointed out that it would be a profitable business to sell annuities at Home on better terms than the English Government could offer, and I make no doubt that this business would be a good one for the department. It was proposed when we transferred the business from the Government to the Board; but it was not agreed to, not because the House disapproved of the proposal, but because they did not wish to go into such a business without due consideration. The honourable member for Invercargill has been good enough to consult me, and I have told him that, though it was desirable to ventilate this question, I did not think it was desirable to take steps in this direction, or that the House would be prepared—at this period of the session, and seeing the circumstances under which we are making a change in the constitution of the department—to accept such proposals now. We are taking back the control of this department, and the House has not yet had much time to discuss it. I take it that the House looks to the Government to put the department into a satisfactory position and to scrutinize its finances, and then to see how far the present constitution answers; and before it has some information on that point it will not think it desirable to put on us this new responsibility. I may point out, too, that the feeling is that the expenditure of all money beyond that necessary to meet business contracts ought to be expressly voted by Parliament, and the House would not agree to give a power of general expenditure such as is proposed by the second clause now under consideration. I have no doubt that this business would be a profitable one, and I have no doubt that on some future occasion the House will see fit to allow it; but I do not think that it is desirable that we should push these clauses through now.

Mr. SUTTER.—When this matter was before the House last session the discussion showed that there was a very strong feeling against it. We have been told that this would be a very profitable business, and give us cheap money to lend out to farmers. If the House wants cheap money for farmers let them go into the market and borrow for this purpose, but do not use the funds of the policy-holders in such a wild scheme as this. But, as far as I can see, it would not result in profit. There is no doubt that at Home annuities can be purchased on the basis of 5 per cent., while here we can purchase them on the basis of 8 per cent.; but, then, there is a great deal of expense to be gone through. I will not take up the time of the House by going into the matter further, but I will say that the experience of all Australian insurance offices has been in the direction of showing that it has been a mistake to go beyond Australia to do business; and, if it has been a fatal mistake in their case, there is no reason for supposing that it would not be equally so in our case. I should oppose any attempt to extend our life-insurance business to England.

Major ATKINSON.—I do not know whether the honourable gentleman is going to a division upon this subject; but, if so, I should like to say a few words in order to explain my position. I shall vote against the amendment, not because I think it would be an unprofitable business to sell annuities in England, for I do not think it would be, and I have very little doubt that the House will ultimately see its way to extend its business in that direction. So far as life-insurance business is concerned, I do not think we shall ever go into that. It would be a very unsafe business. But I think, as regards the annuity business, that it is perfectly safe, and that it would undoubtedly lead to a very large amount of money being brought to the colony, and to a reduction in the rate of interest; but such a proposal must come from the Government, and it must be brought down after it has been considered in every respect. Until it is so brought down I do not think the House will enter into any arrangement of that kind. I wish to say that I cannot support the motion, although I am in favour of the proposal embodied in it.

Mr. PEARSON.—I entirely agree with the clauses of the honourable member for Invercargill, because I look upon them as the most practical step in the direction of giving the farmers cheap money that has come before the House this session. This House, I believe, is willing to assist the farmers in that way. I do not agree with the criticism which has come from the honourable member for Sydenham; but I have to thank the honourable member for Egmont and the Colonial Treasurer for having expressed themselves in favour of this proposal. I hope that when it comes before the House next session they will endeavour to give the matter shape, so that it really may come into operation.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I do not wish it to be supposed that a large majority of this House is in favour of any steps of this kind simply because honourable gentlemen who have spoken are in favour of the proposition. I do not agree with the proposition, no matter in what form it can be put, because I am convinced that the moment you attempt to carry your business on in other parts of the world you will get into difficulty. Experience of other associations has shown that. Suppose we should decide to carry on this business in England, we should require, in the first place, a Board of Directors to look after our interests, to whom would have to be paid large salaries. We should also need trustworthy agents, well paid, to look after our interests. Then, the central authority would be very far removed from these Boards and agencies; and I have no doubt the result would be disaster to this institution and to the policy-holders. In fact, I go beyond that, and I say it is almost certain that it would be adverse to the interests of the policy-holders. I am not going to argue the question, but I simply wished to enter my protest against the sentiments given expression to on the other

side, because I thought it better to enter a protest at once, lest silence might be misunderstood and misconstrued on some future occasion.

Amendment negatived, and Bill read a third time.

On the question, That the Bill do now pass,

Mr. HATCH.—I wish to make one or two remarks in reference to what has fallen from the previous speakers. I have, in the first place, to complain of the facetious remarks made by the honourable member for Sydenham in connection with these resolutions, and to thank the Colonial Treasurer for placing the matter in a more sensible light before the House. The remarks made by the honourable member for Sydenham showed that he had not in any way grasped the intention or spirit of these clauses. When asked to give us information as to what he meant and offered to do, he showed at once that he knew nothing about the matter. He said something about the value of the piece of paper on which these clauses are printed, but what that had to do with the subject of them I am sure I do not know. What I want is to get these clauses taken into consideration. I am quite aware that such a proposal should come from the Government; but it was understood that there would be action taken in this direction before now. An honourable member said the matter was before the House last session: that was a remark made by the honourable member for Gladstone; but he was in error: it was before the House the previous year. It was then understood that it would be brought before the House in the next year; but nothing of the kind was done; and it seemed to me that it had been lost sight of entirely, just as the Government have lost sight of the necessity of doing something in connection with giving cheap money to the farming interest. My idea is that this proposal should form part of a new insurance Bill, which will have to be brought forward next year. I think also that other clauses will require special consideration. In the Insurance Act of 1884 there was a clause providing for taking a certain amount of profits—I think 10 per cent.—out of insurance funds to provide against various losses; but I maintain that if this business were done at Home there would be no reason for taking this amount of money off the ordinary profits of the policy-holders, and that it would be a means of largely increasing the bonuses which will be available for policy-holders in the future. Although I am only a junior member of this House, I may be allowed to say that I regret to see the House carried away by any facetious remarks that may fall from the honourable member for Sydenham when he endeavours to make a general laugh and to raise a kind of fool's evidence. I do not see what reason there is for laughing when that honourable gentleman attempts to turn everything into ridicule. I can stand a laugh as well as anybody, and perhaps I am as thick-skinned as any person in this House; but I think we might conduct our proceedings with ordinary decorum, and I hope this House, in future, will not encourage the honourable gentleman to make facetious remarks when questions are brought up which demand our serious consideration.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I have never been more astonished since I have had the honour of a seat in this House than by what the honourable member for Invercargill has said. He has told us that he is a new member. I believe he has been a member of the House for about two years. I have been a member of this House for only three months, and we are told it takes about five years to learn what I may call the "rigmarole" of this House. Some of the gentlemen who write for the Press ask, when a man who may be called "a new chum" opposes a man who knows "the run of the ropes," "Why do you oppose such a man? It will take you so-long to get the run of the ropes"—something like five years, I believe, they say. If the honourable member for Invercargill has not made better use of his time than to comment upon the few words I may say, his labour has been in vain. I never made remarks of a facetious character at all. I dealt with the matter from a practical point of view, and I was prepared to ask the honourable gentleman this: "Are you going to borrow money by debentures, and then lend that money at Home?" I understood the honourable gentleman's argument to be that it would not affect the funds in the colony; but how are you going to purchase these annuities unless you are going to borrow money by means of debentures for that purpose? The honourable member for Invercargill, I recognize, may in future become a very prominent member of the House, and I did not laugh at him. If I have made a mistake I admit it with pleasure, and hope to do better in future; but my honourable friend turned on me as though I had been saying something that was quite unjustifiable. He talks of creating a laugh. Well, some people tell us that a laugh sometimes does a great deal of good; and I am sure if, when he gets up in his place to address us for an hour or an hour and a half at a stretch, he would kindly shove in a laugh here and there, he would be more popular than he is. There is another phase of this question which I wish to bring under the notice of the honourable member for Invercargill. I have made calculations, and I find, by reckoning up very carefully the time that the honourable gentleman takes up in this House, that he has cost the country no less a sum than £735 this session; and yet the honourable member talks about the small farmers and the relief they ought to get! I say it is time that honourable gentleman should be dealt with, because I do not believe in that sham patriotism which some honourable members possess.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Language like that is out of order. The honourable member must not impute a want of patriotism or sham patriotism to members of this House.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I will withdraw the expression. I hope the next time I have the honour to address the House I shall not be taken up

so shortly as I have been taken up this afternoon, because I do not speak with any intention of being facetious, but merely to do my best according to my lights.

Mr. CONOLLY.—I wish to add my expression of opinion to those of some others against these clauses. I do not desire to treat them at all as a matter of levity. I have no doubt the honourable member for Invercargill brings them forth in entire good-faith; and I think he was a little wrong in taking exception just now to the House laughing so much at the honourable member for Sydenham, as though the laugh had been at all addressed to the clauses of the honourable member for Invercargill; for I think it was simply caused by the fact that the honourable member for Sydenham did not at all understand the clausess, which, I admit, are quite worthy of the discussion of the House. When the Bill of 1884 was before the House it was proposed that the business of life insurance and annuities should be carried into other countries, and if there was one thing more than another in that measure to which the House was absolutely averse it was those propositions, and if my memory serves me rightly they were thrown out without a division. I cannot agree that those clauses could possibly be of any benefit to those insured; because I fully believe that any small benefit that might be derived in the shape of an increased rate of interest would be far overbalanced by the expense of carrying on agencies in England. There would be a central office there, and a number of branches—because it would be absurd to suppose for a moment that every one of those agents should be in direct correspondence with the office here. The office here could only correspond with one big office in England. I cannot see any possible benefit to arise from it. If the Government should think fit next year, or at any other time, to bring up these propositions to the House I should certainly give my strongest opposition to them.

Motion agreed to.

STAMP BILL.

Sir J. VOGEL, in moving the second reading of the Stamp Bill, said that the object of the 2nd section was to remedy a mistake which was pointed out in the earlier part of the session by the honourable member for Greymouth and the honourable member for Kumara in respect to the charge made for property transferred under a miner's right. The 3rd clause was to remedy a defect in the legislation of last session by which property which passed for consideration was to be subjected to certain stamp duty. The provision was inoperative through an informality or mistake in the wording of the clause, and they were now simply trying to give effect to the legislation which it had been intended to pass last session. He believed some amendment would be moved by which it would be clear that this clause would not apply to the transfer of property from trustee to trustee, and also that it would not apply to the transfer of property from an executor or trustee to a devisee. He would accept those amendments, and hoped that the clause would therefore be satisfactory to the House. Clause 4 was of a technical character, and clause 5 was to give relief to those who had to pay duty on the acquirement either by fee-simple or leasehold, of Native lands. Honourable members would have observed, probably, that he had given notice of an addition to this clause, by which land which was to be acquired under the Native Land Administration Bill of the present session would be absolved from penalty, so long as the land was acquired under certain clauses of the measure which gave power to complete titles on the certificate of the Judge that the acquirement of the title had been commenced. That was to say, in certain cases where signatures had been obtained towards the acquirement of the property, the Bill in question gave power up to a certain date to complete the title, and with regard to documents of that kind there was a postponement of the penalty so long as the conditions of the Act were fulfilled.

Mr. PERE would like to read a new clause which he proposed to add to the Bill: "Provided that, after the coming into operation of this Act, all duties payable on leases of land brought under the Native Land Administration Act shall be payable annually, instead of in one sum as at present."

Mr. W. D. STEWART wished to point out that some of these matters were discussed only incidentally last year, and not much attention was paid to what was said. He feared that the general provisions which it was intended to incorporate in the Bill would work an injustice which was not foreseen and which could not be foreseen by the House. The Bill had been distributed so recently that he doubted very much whether correct opinions had been formed respecting it. His own opinion was that there were cases in which it would operate unfairly; and the result would be that a further amendment would be required next session. He was not aware whether it was a copy of an English Act, or whether there was any provision of a kind similar to this anywhere else. He was afraid that the Government were having in view particular cases too much; and the result would be that those cases would be got at, but a large number of others would escape. It was very difficult to see what would be the effect of the amendments proposed in the Bill; but he ventured to say that the Bill would not work satisfactorily.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—Amendment of section 20 of "The Stamp Act 1882 Amendment Act, 1885."

Mr. GUINNESS moved the insertion, after the word "held," of the words "under a gold-mining lease or license or."

The Committee divided.

AYES, 17.

Beetham	Fergus	Grey
Bevan	Fraser	Hakuene

sh	O'Conor	Stewart, W. D.
s	Parata	*Tellers.*
nach	Pearson	Brown
kenzie, M.	Pere	Guinness.

NOES, 51.

nson	Kerr	Samuel
ance	Lake	Smith
on	Lance	Stout
tradahaw	Levestam	Sutter
ce	Locke	Taylor
se	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, T.
kland, J. C.	McMillan	Thomson, J. W.
man	Moat	Tole
olly	Montgomery	Trimble
an	Moss	Turnbull
son	Newman	Vogel
on	O'Callaghan	Walker
rick	Peacock	Whyte
s	Richardson, E.	Wilson.
lop	Richardson, G.	*Tellers.*
bs	Rolleston	Duncan
nston	Ross	Steward, W. J.
se		

Majority against, 36.

mendment negatived.
ill reported.

HARBOURS BILL.

he following reasons, prepared by the Comtee appointed for the purpose, for the House ising to agree to the amendments of the islative Council in the Harbours Bill, were ught up:—

'1. In respect to clause 16: It is necesy that the amendment made therein should nd, or the convenience of the inhabitants of eral parts of the colony will be injured, as the case of Bluff Harbour tug, which carries r Majesty's mails weekly to Stewart Island, l also in the case of ferrying across the ikato and certain estuaries of the sea where other regular ferry-boats are established or ning; and, if this is not provided for, it l be impossible to keep a tug in the localities erred to, as it would cost more than the alities could afford to pay to be compelled keep up a ferry-boat service as well as a tug.

'2. To meet the disagreement of the Legislae Council, there would be no objection to d, after the word 'Board,' in the 17th line clause 16, the following words: 'when not tually employed in towing a vessel.'

"3. Regarding clause 23: It was considered ident, in the interests of Harbour Boards, to e the local bodies power to increase the port es up to 2s. per ton, as these dues have only be paid every six months, and it is believed at the local bodies will be fair judges in imsing the dues, and that they will only impose es for revenue purposes, having regard at the me time to the interests of and trade of their rts. The amendment proposed by the Legislive Council in the new clause No. 23 is an fringement of the privileges of this House, d this House trusts this will be a sufficient ason to induce the Legislative Council to ive their objection to the clause.

"4. Clause 24: It must be borne in mind that not only have the wharves within the control of the several Harbour Boards been built chiefly at the expense of the colony, but that those Boards have received endowments either in the shape of money or land, and the conditions of the Acts under which such endowments were made exempt all goods belonging to the Crown; and the Government is committed to the promoters of the Midland Railway Company to admit their rolling-stock and material on the same terms as now exist, and as if they belonged to the colony.

"5. Clauses 26, 27, 28, and 29 only provide for giving a portion of the money now remaining and belonging to the district, originally given by the Provincial Government of Otago; and the Colonial Government was induced to agree to this partly because evidence was shown that the people of the district favoured such an arrangement, and partly because public baths at Moeraki would be a benefit to the southern portion of the colony, as it is well known that already numbers of people go to Moeraki every year during the summer months, with their families, to enjoy the mild climate of Moeraki and sea-bathing there.

"If the Legislative Council will not waive its objection under the circumstances set forth here, there would be no objection to adding words to the effect that the clauses above referred to should not come into force until a meeting had been held at Moeraki to decide the question by a majority of the ratepayers."

Mr. LARNACH.—I move, That the reasons be agreed to.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Am I right in understanding that the Midland Railway Company will be allowed to import all their material on the same terms in respect to harbour charges as the Government?

Mr. LARNACH.—That arrangement has been admitted, I have been led to believe, by the Government—that material for the railway company shall come in on the same terms as material for Government railways. The Government are never charged anything, because the colony has given endowments to many of those Harbour Boards; and it is considered advantageous that the same terms should be extended to the importations of any railway company working in the interests of the colony.

Mr. TAYLOR.—The honourable member for Geraldine has anticipated what I intended to say. I should like to know, however, if the opinion of the honourable member for Dunedin West, a lawyer of eminence, has been taken on this question. I take it that, if he has not been consulted, the whole thing will come to an end. I agree with the honourable member for Geraldine that it is necessary to take legal advice upon the subject, and I think it my duty to protest against the Legislature proceeding in these matters unless we have the benefit of legal advice.

Mr. SUTTER.—I should like to know if it is included in the contract that the Midland Railway Company are to have their railway material landed free of harbour dues.

Mr. LARNACH.—No; it is in the Harbour

Endowment Acts. I think the district railways come under the same provision.

Mr. SUTTER.—This is really a very serious matter. Suppose that at some time or another the House should say that the Government must pay dues on its material imported, then we are to have this company coming to the House and claiming compensation because their material as well as the Government's was no longer admitted duty-free. I entirely object to this, and I hope that the House will pause before it gives its consent to a provision of this sort. It simply means granting a large monopoly to this company at the expense of the harbours.

Mr. LARNACH.—It is the law now.

Mr. SUTTER.—Then, why bring it in here? I put the question, and the honourable gentleman said it was not the law.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—It seems to me very unreasonable that the projectors of what is to all intents and purposes a private enterprise should have the same privilege that the Government has assumed to itself of landing its goods at different wharves free of all cost. It is, no doubt, true that the Government has given some compensation for the services by transferring endowments to various harbours; but, surely, if the Government are to be exempted from dues, that is no reason why all people who deal with the Government should be exempted also. If so the House might as well abolish all harbour dues. It has always been found a grievance that the Government should be able to land their stores and material free of charge; but, whatever reason for complaint there might be in the case of the Government, that is duplicated and triplicated when the same privilege is given to private enterprises. I can see no justification for that whatever.

Mr. GUINNESS.—The honourable gentleman does not seem to have thought of this one point: that this Midland Railway Company has contracted with the Government to make this line on certain conditions, and one of these conditions is that the Government may purchase the line at cost price. If we say they must pay harbour dues and charges, that will materially add to the cost of the railway, and that additional cost this colony will have to pay.

An Hon. MEMBER. — The Government will never purchase the line.

Mr. GUINNESS.—I do not know what right the honourable gentleman has to say that. I do not think he has any more right to say the Government will never purchase than I have to say that the Government will purchase it. I understand that in this case the same principle is being carried out as was followed in regard to the district railways. The two cases seem to me precisely analogous.

Mr. MOSS. — We must remember that the Harbour Boards have to raise revenue with which to pay interest on their debts; and how are they to raise revenue if large amounts of goods are to be landed free? Then, also, this is a bad precedent; for if we allow the company to land its goods free of charge we must also grant it the privilege of exemption from the property-tax. Having exempted it from one form of taxation I do not see how we are to insist on its paying taxation in another form. Certainly we cannot insist on it if the company is placed in the same position as the Government.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Would the Minister for Public Works point out the section in the contract or in the Harbours Act under which this is allowed?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Subsection (5) of section 132 of "The Harbours Act, 1878."

Mr. ROSS.—That has been amended by the addition of the words "goods consigned to the Colonial Government;" making it clear that goods consigned to contractors are not admitted free.

Major ATKINSON. — Has the Government made any special agreement with the company?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—No.

Sir R. STOUT.—I move, That the words of the reasons referring to this point be omitted—namely, the words in the paragraph relating to clause 24, from "and the Government" to the end of the paragraph.

Agreed to.

Sir R. STOUT.—Referring to clause 23, a question of privilege has been raised. When that is done it is not usual to say anything more in objection beyond that the amendment is an interference with the privileges of the House. I therefore move, That those words be struck out—namely, from the beginning of the paragraph down to "trade of their ports."

Major ATKINSON.—But I should like to know whether there is a question of privilege. We have never previously claimed that the alteration of local rates by the Legislative Council is an infringement of our privileges. I should like to hear Mr. Speaker's ruling on that point.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is very clearly laid down in May:—

"In Bills not confined to matters of aid or taxation in which pecuniary burdens are imposed upon the people, the Lords may make any amendments provided they do not alter the intention of the Commons with regard to the amount of the rate or charge, whether by increase or reduction, its duration, its mode of assessment, levy, collection, appropriation, or management; or the persons who shall pay, receive, manage, or control it; or the limits within which it is proposed to levy it. . . . Neither will they permit the Lords to insert any provisions of that nature in Bills sent up from the Commons, but will disagree to the amendments and insist on their disagreement."

Were this a money Bill the proper course would be to lay the Bill aside; but, being a measure referring to other matters besides money—namely, generally to harbours—it comes within the ruling laid down by Mr. Shaw-Lefevre in Bourke's edition of his decisions, page 63:—

"If I correctly understand the question, it has reference to those clauses in the Bill which

sfer certain powers of taxation held under existing law by the Grand Juries of the ral counties in Ireland to the newly-ted Councils in the proposed municipal oughs. I do not think the House can agree the Lords' amendments. It has always a most jealous of any interference on the of the other House in cases of this de-ption. It does not even allow the House ords to change the name of a single trustee turnpike Bill. If a Bill passes the Com-ns for the collection of rates it never con-s to any alteration being made by the other se respecting the body which is to have control of these matters."

nd again, at page 70, he lays down the rule s:—

The Lords may amend Bills for the relief he poor if the amendment does not in any amount to an interference with the amount, osition, or collection of the rate to be ed, or with the persons who have the con-or management of the rate. With regard local rates, to which reference has been de, the rule is that they are not required to voted first in a Committee of the Whole; l local rates in private Bills may be altered the Lords."

am perfectly clear that the other branch of Legislature has no power to interfere with rating clauses inserted in this Bill. It is the House, if it does not think the matter ficiently serious to enforce their privileges, waive them on this occasion. It is optional h the House. But in my opinion we should intain our privileges.

Amendment agreed to.

Mr. LAKE.—It appears to me that in the ection to the amendments of the Council in tion 16 two distinct questions have been ifused. What was intended by the addition the original section giving powers to own d work a ferry-boat, which was made in this use at my suggestion, was that Harbour ards, and local bodies working as Harbour ards under the Counties Act, should have wer to own and work either ferry-boats or nts acting as floating swing-bridges over es-aries or arms of the harbour where a perma-nt bridge might either interfere with navi-tion or be beyond the means of the bodies ncerned. By the way the objections are ted, it seems that tug-boats are supposed to the vessels used as ferry-boats; which, nile, no doubt, applicable to the case of the uff tug-boat, is quite out of the scope of the iginal proposal. The two things should be pt quite distinct.

Mr. LARNACH.—I think the honourable ntleman will find the amendment meets his ews if he reads it in conjunction with the use of the Bill to which he refers. The gislative Council agreed to have these words ded, and to make the clause exactly in the rection he wants it, as I understand it.

Motion agreed to.

COUNTIES BILL.

On the motion, That the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Counties Bill be agreed to,

Sir R. STOUT wished to state very shortly what the amendments were that had been made in the Counties Bill. Clause 6 was not of any importance: it was simply a matter of transposition. Clause 19 had a new sub-section about calling a meeting in the case of a county that had not brought the Act into operation. The reason of that was that a Chairman of a county declined to call a meeting to consider whether the Act should be brought into operation. This compels the Clerk of the county to call a meeting; and if he did not do so he was fined. He (Sir R. Stout) did not object to that. The alteration in clause 32 was of little importance, the amendment being merely technical. The next alteration was in clause 36, subsection (3) being struck out, and "a majority" being substituted for "one-third;" the condition having previously been that no counter-petition signed by one-third was presented. He also agreed to clause 34, to the paragraph inserted after clause 46, and to the amendments in clauses 47, 53, 74A, 67, and 69. Clause 86, instead of allowing the retiring Chairman to be Chairman for the election of the new Chairman, provided that the Clerk should preside, and that, if the votes were equal, the election should be determined by lot. He did not propose that the House should object to that, as he thought objection should only be taken as to matters of substance or importance. Clause 83 was necessary to carry out what was the intention of the House as to Councillors being liable to penalties for having contracts with Corporations; and clause 84 he considered only carried out what the House affirmed in different language. Clause 109 fixed the notice to be given of extraordinary business at ten days; and to that he did not see much objection. The amendment in clause 144 was only carrying out the wish of the House; and clause 147, to deduct from the general rates the cost of collecting the same, seemed fair. He objected to the alteration in clause 157, that the special rate should not exceed ¼d. in the pound. It seemed to him that that came within the passage read from May by Mr. Speaker in reference to the power of the Council to interfere with rating clauses passed by the House of Representatives. The examples cited showed that the Lords in England had no power to do what the Council had done here; and he proposed to object to that clause on the ground that it was invading the privileges of the House of Representatives. He saw no objection to clauses 179, 181, or 188.

Major ATKINSON thought that ten rate-payers was too small a number to insist upon a special audit.

Sir R. STOUT considered that the number was not too small to ask for an audit. He did not intend to move that that amendment be disagreed with, but it would be open to any member to move disagreement with any of the amendments of the Council. The next amendment was of importance. Section 195 provided that in the voting for a loan there

must be a majority of the whole of the ratepayers, thus taking in absentees and others. He intended to ask the House to disagree with that amendment. As to section 205, he did not see any objection to lowering the rate of interest from 7 to 6 per cent. He thought these bodies ought to get loans now at 6 per cent. Section 289, with reference to agricultural schools, had been struck out. He would ask the House to insist upon the retention of that section. In section 291 the provision about public libraries was struck out. He thought the House should disagree with that excision. A provision as to "rifle-ranges" had been inserted, and apparently the Council thought rifle-ranges of more importance than public libraries. He begged to move, That this House agrees with the amendments made in the Counties Bill by the Legislative Council, save those in sections 157, 195, 289, and 291, which amendments it disagrees with.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the amendment made in section 185 be disagreed with. The Council altered that section so as to give ten ratepayers the power of throwing upon the county the cost of a special audit.

Mr. WALKER was certain that clause 46, as it now appeared in the Bill, would never work at all; therefore he thought this clause ought to be objected to, or else that some proviso should be added.

Mr. MACARTHUR quite agreed that this clause would not work at all. To make it work at all the boundaries of ridings must be altered; and that would throw the whole thing into confusion. In the majority of cases, unless they increased the number of members, this plan of readjustment would not work.

Amendment in clause 46 disagreed with.

Mr. BUCHANAN said that in subsection (2) of clause 47 the words "three months" had been altered to "one month." He questioned whether that would be in all cases sufficient time for the purpose required. He moved, That the amendment in clause 47 be objected to.

Mr. McMILLAN did not think one month was sufficient time to get a special order.

Amendment in clause 47 disagreed with.

Mr. LAKE moved, That the amendments made in clause 181 be disagreed with.

Mr. SMITH pointed out that in this clause it was proposed to impose a penalty on the Chairman if the accounts were not got out within a certain time, when probably it might be impossible to get the work done in that time. The accounts up to the 31st March had only just been audited. It would be impossible to carry out that provision, which imposed such a penalty.

Mr. PEACOCK said it would be necessary to make an amendment in the preceding clause, so that there should be a penalty on the Auditor if he did not place the accounts in the hands of the Chairman by the 31st March; otherwise the Chairman ought not to be subjected to a penalty.

Mr. TAYLOR said his experience of local bodies was that the moment the Town Clerk called upon the Auditor the Auditor was only too glad to come down and take his th guineas for spending an hour and a half looking into the accounts.

Mr. GUINNESS said the honourable gen man derived his information from the Bor of Sydenham. It was very difficult sometim to get the Auditors to attend at the proper ti in the case of counties. On the West Co the Auditor had to come down from Nels and that involved considerable time.

Sir R. STOUT would not object to clause being included, as it would need a few words make it clear that the penalty would only ap if the Chairman had received the accou from the Auditor.

Amendment in clause 181 disagreed with.

Amendment in clause 185 disagreed with.

Colonel TRIMBLE called attention to cla 298, which gave liberty to County Council pass by-laws enforcing eradication of noxi weeds, and imposing penalties for negle This was a matter which had been very fully d bated by the House, and it was determined n to put in the words which the Council afte wards inserted. He thought they might ha a mischievous effect if brought into operation.

Sir R. STOUT pointed out that this clau was only carrying out the provisions of clau 289.

Colonel TRIMBLE said that clause 289 only provided that the County Council could app the funds to certain purposes; but this clau empowered them to impose penalties on own of land, which might ruin a district. He moved, That the amendment in clause be disagreed with.

Sir R. STOUT pointed out again that th clause was only carrying out clause 289. Th clause provided that the County Council cou devote funds to this purpose until the by-la was passed, and clause 298 provided for th passing of the by-law.

Motion for disagreeing with the amendment in clause 298 negatived.

Mr. LAKE moved, That the amendment in clause 313 be disagreed with. The difficulty was that, although the County Councils had an extension of time till the 30th June for sending in their accounts, the same extension was give to Road Boards, who would hang on till th last day before sending in their accounts, an it would not be right to hold the Coun Council responsible for any delay that migh take place through that.

Amendment disagreed with.

Motion agreed to, and a Committee appointed to draw up reasons.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS BILL.

Sir R. STOUT said he would move, That th amendments made by the Legislative Coun in the Municipal Corporations Bill, save in sec tions 135, 137, 182, 239, and 407, be agreed to The amendment in section 135 altered the rati clauses by reducing the maximum of rate; an after what had been laid down by Mr. Speaker he proposed to object to that amendment, be cause it was an invasion of the privileges of th House of Representatives. Section 182 was a

rtance, because it altered the mode of bor-
ng. He objected to that. Section 239 was
nse much fought over. It was moved by
honourable member for Caversham. He
object to the amendment in it.
r. T. THOMPSON moved, That the amend-
s made in clause 219 be disagreed with.
r R. STOUT said the object of this amend-
was to give power to Auckland City to levy
rate rates in different parts of the town for
might be called separate works, and also,
cessary, to levy rates under the Hospitals
Charitable Institutions Act and the Public
aries Act. He did not know that that was
tionable.
r. PEACOCK did not think any objection
d be taken to the hospitals and charitable-
ate, or the libraries rate, but objection was
n to the words "separate rates or." It was
nt that, if 2s. in the pound was the maxi-
limit of rating in the City of Auckland,
would give power in some parts of the
ugh to rate to an additional amount.
r. T. THOMPSON said that at the time
Auckland Additional Loans Act was passed
e would have been very strong objection
had not the law in this respect been what
s now.
nendment in clause 219 disagreed with.
r. GUINNESS said the Town Districts Acts
been struck out of the list of repealed
.
r. LAKE said the Town Districts Acts
kept in force. Town districts only had
effect of weakening the counties. He un-
tood the Premier objected to them.
r. J. C. BUCKLAND moved, That clause
be omitted from the clause named in the
ion. He objected on principle to small
l matters being dealt with in general Acts.
present law served every purpose in that
ect. It was perfectly fair and just that
re two local bodies could not agree as to
r respective shares in maintaining a road
een them the Resident Magistrate should
power to decide. That arrangement com-
ded itself to the common-sense of those
understood the question.
r. W. D. STEWART said this was known
the honourable member for Caversham's
se. The House had never agreed to the
sion in the present law except as an
ndment made by the Council. Boundary-
s had been made and kept in repair
re that provision was passed, but ever since
e had been continual irritation about it,
there was a feeling that a very serious
stice was caused by it. Every possible
mpt had been made to get it altered, and
House had altered it; but apparently the
ourable member for Caversham had used
uence elsewhere to get undone what the
se had done. He hoped the House would
se to agree to the amendment in that
se.
r. BARRON said he was astonished that
Premier and the honourable member for
nedin West should have ventured to make
statement that clause 239 was his clause, in the face of the fact that the only part of the clause that was objected to had been inserted by these honourable gentlemen, at the instigation of the City Council of Dunedin. Dunedin was represented in that House by four members, certainly not the least influential, and through them Dunedin had frequently tried to get rid of its responsibilities in regard to roads. Dunedin persistently refused to contribute a shilling towards the cost of boundary-roads until compelled to pay its fair share under the Public Works Act by a judgment of the Resident Magistrate. Clause 239, as amended, was a fair and just provision, directing that, where two contiguous local bodies could not agree as to their shares of the cost of maintaining a boundary-road, the Magistrate should decide. Far from the provision having been introduced for the first time in this Bill at his instance, all but the last four lines of the clause which, as an unfair addition, the Legislative Council had very properly struck out, was in reality copied from the Public Works Act. A consolidating Act should embody all the existing law on the subject, but in this instance the House had altered the present law most unjustly. The clause was passed in the form in which it had been passed by the House simply owing to Dunedin's specially powerful representation in the House. The Council had taken a fair and just course in deciding that the law as it now stood should remain; for the clause as it passed the House would have altered the law and exempted Dunedin altogether from contributing to the maintenance of roads between it and adjoining boroughs.

Sir R. STOUT said he represented a large part of the suburbs of Dunedin, as well as part of the city. As Dunedin was keeping up at its own cost the Town Belt as a common recreation-ground for the city and suburbs, it was very hard that it should have to make roads not for its own use in the boroughs beyond the Town Belt.

The House divided on the question, "That the figures proposed to be omitted be retained."

AYES, 26.

Ballance	Kerr	Smith
Cadman	Levestam	Steward, W. J.
Dargaville	McKenzie, J.	Stout
Duncan	Menteath	Sutter
Fitzherbert	Newman	Taylor
Guinness	O'Conor	Walker.
Hatch	Parata	*Tellers.*
Ivess	Richardson, E.	Hislop
Joyce	Seddon	Stewart, W. D.

NOES, 38.

Allwright	Hamlin	Mitchelson
Atkinson	Hirst, H.	Moat
Bruce	Hobbs	Montgomery
Bryce	Hursthouse	Moss
Buchanan	Lake	Peacock
Buckland, W. F.	Lance	Reid
Cowan	Larnach	Richardson, G.
Fulton	Macarthur	Rolleston
Grace	Mackenzie, M.	Ross
Grey	McMillan	Russell

Thompson, T.	Turnbull	*Tellers.*
Thomson, J. W.	Wakefield	Barron
Trimble	Whyte.	Buckland, J. C.

Majority against, 12.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendment in clause 239 agreed to.

Mr. PEACOCK moved, That the amendment made by striking out clause 407 be agreed to. This clause had reference to making it optional for Borough Councils to devote money to the erection and maintenance of school-buildings. The House had already expressed its opinion against this option being given to local bodies in two cases, and he saw no reason why the clause should remain in this Act in that form.

Mr. TAYLOR entirely agreed with the honourable member for Newton in objecting to the cost of school-buildings being put upon local bodies in this indirect way.

Dr. NEWMAN also hoped this clause would be struck out. When the matter came before Committee, as the Bill was passing through the House, the clause was retained on a division; but since then the House had become possessed of further facts in regard to the intention of the Government to place the cost of constructing school-buildings upon local bodies, and, in the case of one of the local-government Bills, and also in the Counties Bill, had struck out that provision, the county members having become alarmed at what the Government proposed to do. Having helped the county members in that matter, he trusted that they would have the generosity to vote with the borough members on this occasion. The rates in the boroughs were already as high as could be borne, and there would be no chance of their being decreased—in fact, they must be increased—if the Government were going to throw upon them the duty of making provision for the erection and maintenance of school-buildings. They must recollect that the Treasurer had said that what was optional to-day might become mandatory to-morrow; and he had no doubt that, if this clause were passed, the Government would try to throw upon the boroughs a portion of the cost in connection with school-buildings. The boroughs were not strong enough to bear it. He hoped, therefore, the clause would be struck out.

Mr. SUTTER hoped that the Premier would give way. The House had twice expressed an adverse opinion to this proposal, and it would be only consistent if this clause were struck out. If the Premier wanted to throw the cost upon the local bodies, let him bring down an amendment of the Education Act, and do it directly, and in such a way that the country and the members would know what was being done. The Education Act was the proper place for this proposal, and it was not right to put it into this Bill in an insidious way.

Sir R. STOUT said he would accept the motion on the voices; but he might point out that when honourable members spoke of bringing down amendments to the Education Act they should point out what clause of the Education Act it was which compelled the General Government to provide for schools out of loan. There was no such duty cast upon the Government by the Act. All they had to do under that Act was to pay the Education Boards so much for each child in attendance in the schools. He might add that he had been looking into the expenditure on school-buildings in other colonies, and he found that, comparing population and wealth, New Zealand was spending more in this direction than any other colony.

Amendments agreed with.

Mr. CONOLLY moved, That the amendments in section 244 be disagreed with; because he thought that the Legislative Council had gone further than they ought to have gone. Hitherto, where the levels of a street had not been permanently fixed, and the local body thought it desirable to alter the level, they could do so without paying compensation. It was now provided, "Where the level of any street has been in any manner fixed under this Act or under any Act or ordinance heretofore in force, or any street has been constructed by any authority having the power to do so, such level so fixed, or the level of the street so constructed, shall not be altered," except on payment of compensation. He thought that was likely to lead to great trouble. It was the word "constructed" that he objected to, because there might be immense difference of opinion as to the meaning of that word. A Corporation might possibly be held to have "constructed" if they recognized the level in any way, such, for instance, as by putting gravel upon a street. If they formed a street or paths, or put gravel upon them, it might be said that they had "constructed" that street or path, and thereafter the level of the street could not be altered without compensation being paid. In that way the clause would operate very disadvantageously to Corporations. In the early stages of the history of towns the levels were often more or less irregular, and they were left so because the funds of the Corporation were spent with greater advantage upon the streets which were most used by the population; but these streets having irregular levels were sometimes improved to a certain extent, and then, when permanent improvements came to be made, the levels were permanently fixed: but, if this clause were passed, then, if any money were expended in the making of temporary improvements, levels could not be fixed afterwards without the payment of compensation. This was a case in which the many must be benefited at the expense of the few. It appeared to him that if the word "construction" were struck out there could be no objection to the clause, but that otherwise it would lead to great trouble and expense, and perhaps litigation.

Mr. PEACOCK hoped that the objections raised by the honourable member to this clause would lead to its being amended as he desired. He knew of cases where levels had been fixed for particular streets, and the levels at which the streets were constructed, either owing to the obstinacy or the want of know-

ledge of residents, were higher than the fixed level; and this clause as here printed would prevent the level being afterwards altered.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Mr. PEACOCK thought so. For instance, in the City of Auckland a level had been fixed; but, owing to a common mistake by the ratepayers, because they ignored the fact that the vertical section was on a larger scale than the horizontal, they thought that the cutting was greater than it really was, and they objected to its being cut down, and the street was constructed at a higher level. If it were now desired to cut the street down lower, the Corporation would be liable to pay compensation for alteration of the level.

Sir R. STOUT hoped the House would not agree to include this clause. He would give a case that actually occurred. In one case the street was fully formed, the kerbing and channelling was done and actually charged against the owners of property; and then the Corporation wished to lower the level on the plea that there had been no map deposited. The result was that one man was utterly ruined. He thought that was very unfair. If a Corporation kerbed and channelled a street and charged the owners of property for that, and then wanted to lower the street and footpath, they ought to pay the persons who would be injured by the alteration. He hoped the amendment made by the Council in this clause would be accepted. He did not think the clause would work as the honourable member imagined.

Motion to include clause 244 negatived.

On the motion of Sir R. STOUT, the First Schedule was added to the motion.

Motion agreed to, and a Committee, consisting of Mr. Macarthur, Mr. W. D. Stewart, Mr. Seddon, and Sir R. Stout, appointed to draw up reasons for disagreement.

REPRESENTATION BILL.

Sir R. STOUT.—Sir, in moving the second reading of the Representation Bill I wish to state that, though this Bill may be said to contain some new principles, yet I think the main principle of the Bill—namely, the principle of fixing the representation automatically, without leaving it open to the House to discuss the schedule of the Bill—has often been affirmed by the House of Representatives. So far back as the year 1858 there was a Bill passed by the House of Representatives which provided that the Governor was to divide the colony into electoral districts, and to himself—of course, that left it to the Ministry of the day—apportion representation practically on the basis of population. The same principle was contained in a Bill introduced into the House by Sir Frederick Whitaker in 1877, I think; and in 1879 a Bill was introduced by the then Premier, the honourable member for Auckland East, affirming again the same principle. The Bill was called the Representation Bill of 1879, and it provided that there was to be a "Representation Board," as it was called, consisting of the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Chairman of Committees, and the Controller and Auditor-General; and this Board was to proceed to apportion the representation. I myself had something to do with the preparation of that Bill, though I was not in the House when the Bill was introduced; but there were some provisions in it which I did not consent to. I will only point out that, so far as appointing a Board to deal with the representation of the colony is concerned, that question has been affirmed, practically, by the House of Representatives—once in 1858, and approved of, I think, by a large number of the members of this House in 1877, and again in 1879. I think it is to be regretted that that Bill of 1879 did not become law, at any rate, in an altered form. If it had become law the Representation Act which was passed afterwards, and which led, as we know, to a great deal of discussion and a great deal of ill-feeling, would have been avoided, for a Bill could have been prepared to enable this matter to be settled outside this House. Now, in reference to this Bill, the main provisions in it, or rather the main principles of it, I should say, are two: first, that representation is to be based on population; and, second, that the preparation of what may be termed the schedule of the Representation Bill, or rather the allocation of the districts, is to be settled by an independent Board, and outside the limits of this House. These are the two main principles in the Bill. There are other provisions in the Bill to which I will shortly refer; but I ask the House to look upon these two principles as the main principles of the Bill. Now I shall say one or two words about these principles. First, with reference to population, I believe, after all, that you can get no other basis for representation than population. You may search, if you please, for an area basis, or you may search for a rateable-value basis; but you will have to come back to this: that, after all, population must be the test, and however you deal with the matter you must deal with it on a population basis; and I would ask those honourable members coming from districts that may, this year, be affected by the census—I mean, by the change of representation through the census recently taken—to look at this from a broad and statesmanlike point of view: not to look at what loss their districts may suffer on this occasion, but to affirm a principle that will be a guiding principle on all future occasions in dealing with the representation of the people. Now, we have put in here one new provision, following the Constitution Act, which may be said to conflict somewhat with the population basis, and that is, that the Commissioners may take into consideration the proportion which the number of male inhabitants, other than Maoris, above the age of twenty-one years bears to the entire population other than Maoris. That was put in, though I do not wish it to apply beyond the limit I have laid down here—to one thousand if a borough or city, and five hundred in any other case. There is the further question of the number of those who might be on the electoral roll, and I have

thought that that would come still within the five-hundred limit, and I think that would be quite fair. So much about the question of population. Next comes the question as to how this matter is to be settled. I think it would be best settled by a Board. I do not believe, if we left it to this House to wrangle over, that it would be any credit to us as a representative Assembly, and I feel sure that, in the end, in the wrangle personal feelings and political prejudices would be so roused that it would be doubtful whether we should get a fair Bill at all. I hope, therefore, the House will assent to the principle of having a Board to deal with this matter. It is not a new thing, and the House has virtually assented to such a principle this session. I need not allude to other countries, but I could point to various countries—civilized countries—which have relegated this question to a Board. As to the constitution of the Board, of course there may be differences of opinion; but I have chosen a Board which, I think, would be fair, and which would certainly be unbiassed—namely,—

"The Controller and Auditor-General and the Surveyor-General shall be two official members, and the remaining three shall be such persons, not being members of the Civil Service, as the House of Representatives shall from time to time nominate, who shall be the unofficial members of the Commission."

If the Bill is passed, I shall be prepared to nominate men who, I think, will be acceptable to this House, and who have not such strong political feelings as would give them an unconscious bias in dealing with this matter. However, the question of a Board I leave to the House, as rather an open question. I do not wish to force my views on that point, if the House assents to the principle.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—What is the object of the remainder of that clause?

Sir R. STOUT.—"No member of the Commission shall, within three years after he ceases to be such member, be capable of being appointed or elected a member of either House of the General Assembly." I really only intended it to apply to the unofficial members, and not to apply to the Auditor-General and the Surveyor-General. I do not think the three unofficial members should come into Parliament within three years, nor should they have any chance of making a district to suit themselves. I think they should be removed from that temptation.

An Hon. MEMBER.—As to the Upper House?

Sir R. STOUT.—I think there should be that provision also, so that they could not be put into the Upper House as a sort of reward. That is the reason that I put that clause in. At the same time, I think it would be wise to exempt the Auditor-General and the Surveyor-General from the operation of that clause. I do not say that the members appointed by the House would be biassed; but there is such a thing as being unconsciously biassed, and there is such a thing as people saying men are biassed; and I think it better not to leave these members of the Board open to that. Some honourable members, I know, think there should be the present one-member constituency. I have never agreed to that. I think that is a mistake, from two points of view. It may not be such a mistake in large cities, such as London, Liverpool, and other places. One of the great dangers of our politics in New Zealand is that you have too local a feeling, and you have members coming up to this House who represent a district or part of a district, or a small borough or part of a borough, and they do not take such wide views of political questions as I think they should take: in fact, localism in our politics has, I think, done a great injury to us. I think that country districts might even be grouped to have even two or three members. I think that would give a better tone to this House, and it would get rid of a great deal of localism which we have in the House. I confess, at once, there is something to be said on the other side—namely, as to the danger of leaving the minority unrepresented. There is always that danger; but the remedy that we ought to adopt is some system such as the proportional-representation scheme which has been adopted and advocated at Home, sooner than have these single-member constituencies, because they really do not give a minority any chance whatever. A minority has less chance in a city split up into thirds and fourths than if these electorates were united. I do not know that there is anything further that I can say about this Bill. If the House is in earnest in passing it this session, it can easily be got through, if honourable members do not talk much on it. Of course, if we go into a lengthy debate the House must see that it is impossible to get it through. I ask the House, with as little debate as possible, to affirm the principle of this Bill by passing the second reading. Then we shall go into Committee, I hope; and then the short Bill can be passed without much trouble. Some honourable members have said, "If you get this Bill we shall have a dissolution, and no meeting of Parliament next year." I give my pledge that we propose to call Parliament together early next year; very early; earlier than usual; as soon as we can get the finances ready for the House—so that there need be no uneasiness on that point. Of course I do not know what the Governor may do; but I can say what I have said as regards the intention of the Government. I do not feel myself strong enough to speak further on this matter, and I hope the House will excuse me.

An Hon. MEMBER.—As to the number of members?

Sir R. STOUT.—I have left that blank. Members will believe that, as far as the Government is concerned, we are not unanimous on that point. I say so frankly. The members of the Legislative Expenditure Committee were in favour of reducing the number of members. Personally, I am in favour of the number being slightly reduced. If that is done some districts which formerly had representation will be crushed out. There is a difficulty about

that. I feel that anything which would tend to lower the energies of the people in any district would really be an injury, and I do not know that it would be wise to have the number of members reduced. However, I have left that open to the House, and I would ask the House to discuss that in Committee, and treat it as a Committee question.

An Hon. MEMBER.—As to the proportion of town and country representation?

Sir R. STOUT.—Taking six thousand as a quota, a country constituency could have five thousand five hundred, and a town district might have seven thousand. I think the provision in this respect is fair. As to this quota, it has been suggested to me that it ought to vary as the population of the colony varies. Possibly that is a matter which might be so varied.

Major ATKINSON.—I have great pleasure in supporting the Bill, and I shall follow the example of the Premier and be very short in the remarks I make, because I think it must be evident to the House that the Premier really means to carry this Bill through this session; and I, for one, thank the honourable gentleman, and congratulate him upon his determination. For reasons that I will not go into now, because the Premier has determined to take that course, it is unnecessary for me to urge this matter on the House; but I do wish to express my great satisfaction at his determination on this question. The honourable gentleman says there are two leading principles in this Bill—the population basis and the Board—that is to say, that representation is to be upon population, and the districts are to be determined by an impartial Board. To those principles I give my support. I think we have practically settled the question of population by former legislation on the subject, and I see a great difficulty in devising any other means. Most of us who have thought over this subject have, I expect, gone through all stages. We have thought that something else was wanted in representation. I, at any rate, have come, after many years' consideration, to the conclusion that population is the only basis on which we can go; but I do not agree to any modification as to the adult males, because, to my mind, that is going entirely in the wrong direction. I think that women have an equal right to vote with men; but we have not arrievd at that. I do not wish to recognize that male adults are to have extra representation in this House over women and children, who are more fairly represented if we go on the basis of population. Then, with regard to town representation. I should have liked to see a difference in the numbers required for town electorates, not because I think the country people are any better than the town people, but because I want to get real representation of the people. People living in towns can get their views put much more strongly before the Legislature than the country people can—their power of organizing is so great, the Press so clearly expresses their views in the first instance, and undoubtedly they can impress their views more on the Legislature than the country people can. It is not because I think the country man is superior to the town man, but because I wish to have the country man equally represented with the town man, that I think there should be a difference in the representation in favour of the country districts. Then, with regard to the margin which the honourable gentleman proposes. This, of course, is a matter of detail to some extent; but I think that the margin is not sufficient. There will be practically great difficulty in the country districts, because we have no means of ascertaining the population except by Road Board districts or ridings, and therefore in every case a whole Road Board district or a whole riding must be put in or out of any electoral district. I think if the honourable gentleman does not allow greater margin there will be a practical difficulty in dealing with this matter. There is another question which arises: Does the honourable gentleman propose to return to the five years' Parliament instead of the three years' Parliament? I confess that, to my mind, three years has proved too short to be satisfactory; but it may be that, under the provisions of this Bill, there will be a conflict between the time at which Parliament expires and that at which the census is taken. But I will not argue that point now, as it is one we can deal with in Committee. With regard to the constitution of the Board, I should like to see only the two gentlemen named in the Bill forming the Board. I do not think we want any one outside them. I do not know how the honourable gentleman proposes that they should act, but I should think that it would be somewhat in this way: that they should determine here in Wellington, after consideration, what the electorates are to be; that they should then publish them, and invite objections from the various districts, as, I believe, the Boundary Commissioners do at Home; then, if there is any difference and it cannot be arranged by correspondence, that a Court should be held in the district, to see how the proposal will operate. I should like the Commissioners to go round the colony altogether; but, probably, from the knowledge which the Surveyor-General has, they will be able to determine a large number of the electorates to the satisfaction of the electors themselves without leaving Wellington. There are, however, so many matters that affect electors locally that I think we shall have to give power to electorates to object to the Board's decisions, and provide that the Commissioners shall visit them if necessary. Then probably another person will be needed to sit with the Commissioners, and it seems to me that the best man would be either the Resident Magistrate or the District Judge of the district; and these three should determine, without the appointment of anybody else. Then, there is the question of the amalgamation of electorates. I agree, myself, with the Premier that it is decidedly desirable to have electorates on more than one principle. I do not say that the character of all electorates should be changed; but I confess that,

although I was a party to the present Act, I am not satisfied with the working of it. There is, no doubt, a great deal to be said on both sides; but I should like to see a variety in our electorates. I do not think we are bound to have all single electorates or all double electorates; but I fear if we go into that question this session we shall have a great deal of difficulty. I should almost like to suggest to the Premier that, as it is not proposed that we should dissolve until after next session, we might pass a Bill dealing with the city electorates in that session. We shall have the whole of the machinery ready in case of an election, and it will be quite easy to pass a short Bill dealing with the city electorates next session separately. I merely wish to throw that out as a suggestion to the honourable gentleman if he likes to take it. I have very great pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill, and will give the honourable gentleman all my assistance to have it passed into law this session.

Mr. PEACOCK.—I desire to express my pleasure at the Premier bringing this measure forward, and, although I should have preferred it to have been brought in at an earlier period of the session, I hope we shall get it through. I look upon the principle of this Bill—that is, the machinery for adjusting the electorates by means of a Board free from all political bias—as good, and as deserving of a fair trial. As to the question of the number of members, personally I should be willing to see them reduced to a limited extent. It must, however, be borne in mind that, so far as the present number of members being too large is an evil, it is one that will remedy itself as population increases; and, if we do not see our way to make an alteration in this respect now, we can always look forward to the time when the colony, if there is no further addition to the number of members, will attain such a population that the present number of members will be a fair one. With regard to the statement of the Premier that one of the main principles of the Bill is that representation shall be on the basis of population, I myself think that that is a very fair way of putting it at the present time, although we can well understand that, with a certain increase of population, such a system may require some modification. Honourable members will bear in mind that, if population were the basis in England, where the population of London alone exceeds the whole of the population of Scotland, the members for London would really swamp the whole of the representation of that country, and nearly equal the number for Ireland. I think, however, that in the meantime there is no urgent necessity for us to take into consideration the aggregation of population in the towns with a view to an adjustment or alteration in the population basis. I shall therefore agree to that portion of the Bill. I think, however, the Premier makes a mistake in introducing the question of the amalgamation of the city electorates. I hold a very decided opinion on that subject, and many of those who live in the district I represent hold the same view. I believe that the amalgamation of the city electorates would be a retrograde step. It seems to me that, if such were the case, elections would fall into the hands of organized cliques, and those cliques would dominate elections to a much greater extent than they do at present. The expenses of elections would be much greater if this amalgamation were to be effected, and it would not be right to pass what purports to be a liberal measure which would increase the expenses of persons endeavouring to obtain seats in this House. But there is another reason why I object to amalgamation of electorates, and it is a more important one. It is, that it would tend still further to prevent the representation in this House of large minorities of the community. I think that our present system is far from perfect, and I shall be prepared to go in for a radical change in the whole system of representation; but I think it will be evident, from cases which I will put before the House, that the amalgamation of electorates will still further operate injuriously in preventing minorities having any fair representation. Let us suppose the case of a city having four electorates—which is the maximum under this Bill—and let us take it for granted that there are two classes who have decided but antagonistic opinions on prominent points of public policy, and that in one of these four districts a certain class have a majority of two hundred, but in each of the other three districts we can imagine that they would be in a minority of seventy—that would be two hundred and ten in all; so that in these four districts, if amalgamated, the two hundred which in one district would have given it one member, would be entirely swamped, and thus the people holding these views would be precluded from having any representation whatever. I am not ignorant of the fact, and am quite willing to admit, that there are circumstances in which the electoral system at present in use would act prejudicially to majorities; but that is only in cases where people holding strong opinions on prominent questions of public policy are concentrated, as it were, in certain districts. In that case there might be a very large majority of voters in favour of some opinion; but these superfluous votes would be incapable of being used in the other districts, and in that way small majorities of a contrary opinion in these districts, although a minority of the whole, might get one or two additional seats. But, while the latter case is a possible evil in the single-electorate system, it does not apply to the case of this colony, for parties are so mixed up in colonies, and decided opinions on particular points are so evenly distributed, that such a case would not arise, and the case to which I have previously called attention would be more likely to occur. There is no doubt that one of the leading evils of the single-electorate system—but which, as I will show, need not affect us at present—is the system which in some cases was carried out, of political parties so arranging districts

Major Atkinson

as to fit in with their own views, and to prevent the majority in the community from exercising its full power in returning members. As honourable members are aware, that was the case in the State of Massachusetts when Governor Gerry, in the early part of the century, made such a division of electoral districts that the minority entirely swamped the majority of voters. Such an objection as that would apply to all electorates as well as to town electorates, and I do not think we are in much danger of the operation of such a power in this colony; but, if there had been such danger, I submit that the Bill now before us will do away with it. I refer to the fact of there being a non-political Board to whom is intrusted the duty of making the electoral divisions, instead of that being done by the reigning political power. I should not at all object to the amalgamation of the city electorates if we had some arrangement whereby the minority would not be still further placed at a disadvantage. If we had such an arrangement as what is known as "a three-cornered constituency," whereby, in case of there being three members, only two votes are given, or, if four members, only three votes, I think that might modify the evil. Or I should like it still better—and we shall have to come to that yet—if we had an arrangement of proportionate representation on a modification of the Hare system, wherein there should be a single vote for one candidate, but in which also the voter could set down in order of preference a list of those to whom he would next give his vote. Under such a system as that, where there would be an electoral quota, on attaining which the candidate would be elected, and the surplus votes would be given to the other candidates in the order of preference, there could be no objection to the amalgamation of the city electorates, or of country electorates either, into reasonable-sized districts. I will not occupy more time. I feel thoroughly sure our present system is not one which ought to remain. I believe a radical change is necessary. For we can understand that a very narrow majority may send members to this House, and that a very narrow majority frequently decides matters in the House, and we must see that a little more than a fourth of the electors of the colony are represented in the House by such majority. For that reason I think any arrangement such as proposed by the Premier with regard to the amalgamation of city electorates may safely wait, until the general question has to occupy the attention of the House. I shall gladly support the second reading of the Bill, although, in Committee, I shall endeavour to alter it in the way I have indicated.

Mr. MOSS.—I regard this measure as the most important measure which has been brought before the House this session, and am sorry it has been brought down so late. It seems odd to ask us to abandon our character as a deliberative Assembly in dealing with the largest question that can be brought before us. As far as I am concerned, I need not speak at length, because I thoroughly agree with the Bill. The main feature of the Bill is the population basis, and with that I am heartily in accord. Another question, of almost equal importance, is the number of members. I have often urged that the number of members should be reduced; but I should be extremely sorry to see the number of members reduced unless we first get rid of all the local work we have to deal with. I would rather see the number increased to one hundred, under the present conditions, than reduced to fifty. We are not here as a Legislature alone, but as a great Board of Works for the whole country; and, while that continues, no district will like to be deprived of its active representation in such a body. I should like to follow what fell from the honourable member for Egmont. I regretted to hear him draw a distinction between people in towns and people in the country. Where lies the distinction? I venture to say the larger the number of town representatives you have here the more will the House sustain its character of a Legislature. Do town members come here to consider political questions, or do they come to work for roads and bridges, and purposes of that kind? The House ought to welcome members who represent towns and suburban districts, for the simple reason that they are more free to consider questions from a political point of view, and not in relation to their bearing on roads and bridges. I regretted to hear such a distinction made.

Major ATKINSON.—I was particularly careful to say that there was no distinction, but that, as we desired equal representation, and as it was possible that there was much greater power of organizing and bringing their voices to bear on this House on the part of townspeople, it would be fair to make some difference, to make weight for that.

Mr. MOSS.—Then, I am warranted in saying, Let the country people be the more thankful for town representatives. If town representatives are able to organize better, have greater opportunities, and are able more clearly to lay the political views they hold before the House, surely they ought to be the more welcome on that account. I also differ from the honourable gentleman in his view that three years is too short a time for Parliament. I am one of those who fought as hard as any to get it reduced from five years to three, and there is no act of my political life to which I look back with greater satisfaction. We want turning out every three years to face the people. If we were here for five or ten years, what would be the condition of the House? It is only when we get into the fresh air outside that we are restored to our natural condition. When here, I venture to say that it requires a strong effort of the imagination to recall the fact that there are any people in New Zealand at all. We form a little world of our own; we form little parties and sets of our own; and it requires a strong effort to bring home to us that there are people in New Zealand outside our walls. Especially must this be the case when we meet

in a place which, with all due deference, is not a metropolitan city, which is without a metropolitan newspaper, without a metropolitan character, which no single city in New Zealand can have. I am sure a large number of members hold the same view as I do, that three years is not one day too short, and if there is to be a change it would be far better to adopt the system of the American Congress and make it two years. I should like to say a word also about minority representation, which we have heard a great deal of in times past, and which the honourable member for Newton has again brought before us. I do not believe in minority representation, or in any fancy franchise or representation. I believe that the minority, if it has a good cause, and if it is worth anything at all, will always make itself a majority in the long-run. If not, let it remain a minority still. For what purpose should we assemble a number of members representing minorities? What good would they do when they came here? Let them exert themselves and they will be heard. The very life of the country depends on the struggle the minority makes to become a majority. How stagnant we should become if we all represented sectional views held by various minorities met together and neutralizing one another! Nothing would dwarf the life of the country more than that. So far as the Board is concerned, we may well leave that to be considered in Committee. But there is one point I would like to call the Premier's attention to—that is, that it might be very desirable, in fixing the boundaries, to make them coterminous with the boundaries of counties or some other district, so that the same electoral roll might hereafter answer for both bodies. The time must come, in the nature of things, when the property qualification in counties, and Road Board and other districts, if the local bodies are ever to be real governing bodies, will have to merge into the same qualification that we have for electing the higher Legislature of the country. So long as those bodies deal merely with property, and levy certain rates, so long the present property qualification will remain. But, if the County Councils or any other bodies are to have the powers that governing bodies ought to possess, it will be necessary to alter the character of their suffrage, and they will have to represent the people in the district, and not only the property. That may not come for years; but it is just as well to keep it in view, so that the same electoral roll may be used for all without difficulty.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I believe in the policy on which this Bill is based, so far as the appointment of a Board to adjust the representation is concerned, and I intend to support it. At the same time, I object to the amalgamation of city electorates, and also that the cities should have the same representation as country districts, and I reserve to myself the right to do my best to prevent that being carried in Committee. I also intend to move, when the Bill is in Committee, to reduce the number of members to seventy-five — seventy-one Europeans and four Natives. This would make a reduction of twenty members. My experience as a member of this House is that the interests of the colony would in no way suffer if that reduction were made. We hear a great deal about economy. I think this is true economy, and if ever we expect to economize we should commence with ourselves, and a reduction of twenty members would make a very considerable difference in the cost of legislation, and would be in every sense of the word economy.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I congratulate the Premier upon having brought in this Bill, which, from the start to the finish, is a most excellent measure. I think his plan of having an independent Board is a most excellent suggestion, as it will prevent the idea of "gerrymandering" which has prevailed in the past. It appears to me, however, that there is nothing in the Bill to prevent a member of either House of the Legislature being a member of the Board; and in that case there would be a suspicion that all might not be quite correct. I am also glad to see that the honourable gentleman, in this Bill, has suggested a population basis. I can think of no other basis equally fair, and I believe there is more intellect developed, more activity of mind, in the residents of boroughs than in the country. Members have suggested that city members are about as good as country members. I say they are a great deal better; and, if we want proof, we can see it on the Government benches. There is not a country member on those benches. It is a fact, apart from all joking, that there is more intellectual life, more active participation in politics, in town than in the country. Country people live miles and miles away from each other, they rarely see each other, they have no chance of interchange of ideas, they do not get morning and evening newspapers, which have such an elevating influence. I hope the clause amalgamating city electorates will be carried. I believe that, in many ways, it will be a very good thing. Speaking for the City of Wellington, I am quite confident that a large majority of the people in this town are in favour of it, and that a great number of people would rather have three members for the city than have a member for each particular ward of it. There can be no question that the larger the electorates the better will be the class of men returned year after year, and, moreover, the more freedom, I believe, would be given to the representatives. In fact, I should have liked to see another Chamber elected on Hare's system, simply and solely with a view of giving expression to that feeling, and making it a test question whether members should be elected for wide areas. I believe that wherever two districts are amalgamated in thought and feeling they should be put together electorally. However, that probably would not be feasible by the present Bill. I hope the question of amalgamation of city electorates will be decided this session, because next year we may have heated discussions on other subjects; and, if it were thought that any one party might gain by the following election with amalgamated districts, possibly, party feeling being

called into play, the whole thing might be upset. The final clause in the Bill, I think, is unfair and unjust: it is the one saving the Maori Representation Act. The recent census shows that the southern Maori member represents 2,075 people, while each of the northern Maori members represents about 13,500 people. It seems to me a very great anomaly that one member should represent so few people; and I hope that in Committee the House will alter the Bill so that the Southern Maori Electoral District may be joined to the nearest northern district, so that the Maori representation will be equalized and the present inequality be done away with. As to a reduction in the number of members, I believe we could well do with a certain amount of reduction; but I believe it would be impossible to reduce the number by so many as twenty. I do not think any reduction should extend beyond half that number. When this House consisted of thirty-seven members there was one member to every 889 people, and from that the number of people per member has continually increased, till now there are 6,400 people to every member. Therefore the proportion of population to number of members has always been increasing, as I believe every one of us agrees it should do. My own feeling is that a House of a very small number, say, fifty, would not be any very great saving to the colony; but there can be no doubt that at present in this colony the number of members of the Legislature is too large. I hope the Bill will go through, for a better measure I have not seen among the great number of Bills I have seen introduced in this House during the three sessions in which I have been a member of it.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I will not detain the House two minutes, nor will I discuss the points already discussed; but I should like to say that, whilst I think it is wise to retrace the step taken in 1881 of making all the electorates single electorates, and whilst I think it would be well to have amalgamated electorates in the country districts as well as in the large towns, yet I think it would be unwise to have double, treble, or quadruple electorates without an alteration in the manner of voting. I do not agree with the honourable member for Newton, indeed, I hardly understand him, when he says that he would allow no one to have more than two votes in the amalgamated electorates. I would compel every voter to vote for every one of the number of candidates that could be elected.

Mr. PEACOCK.—What I stated was that, if there were three members to be elected, I would allow no one to vote for more than two candidates, and, if four members, then for not more than three candidates, as I hold that that would give the minority more chance.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I understand. I believe the evils and defects of the old system would be done away with by rendering plumping impossible and compelling each voter to vote for as many candidates as there were members to be elected. Surely it would be no hardship to say that each voter should use the whole of the privilege given to him. This system works admirably in New South Wales, and I believe it would be a very great improvement to introduce it in the amalgamated electorates here. We should then get real representation of a district, and cliques and organizations would not have the great power they have now, where they can plump for a particular candidate or candidates. We should have really fair and square elections under that system. I hope the Premier will think of this in Committee, and endeavour to devise some system whereby the evils of the old system may be prevented, if we return to the old system of large electorates. Any movement made for reducing the number of members I shall be inclined to support.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I shall imitate my predecessors, and say very little; but there are one or two points I wish to touch upon. I believe it is right not to touch the question of Maori representation in this Bill, as it would certainly cause long and probably heated discussions, and would be almost certain to prevent the Bill passing at all. I agree that the members of the Commission should be altogether official, and that it might possibly cause serious loss to the colony to debar from entering Parliament for three years a number of able, independent, outside men, who might serve the country well in Parliament. I think that might lead to serious difficulty; and I think that to have a purely official Commission will do away with all imputations of unfairness; and that, therefore, it will be much wiser to accept the proposition of the honourable member for Egmont than to have the Commission provided for in the Bill. As to the number of members, I believe that, talk as much as we like about it, we shall not materially reduce the present number, and that we had better start at once with the impression that we shall continue the present number of members, and that that number shall be properly distributed over the colony. The colony is rapidly progressing in population, and we may fairly hope that in a very few years the number of people will be amply proportionate to the present number of members. I shall oppose the clause for the amalgamation of electorates as strongly as I can, and I will state my principal objections now. I believe it would greatly increase the cost of elections, and, so, that it would deprive the constituencies of that large choice which they now enjoy. I believe it would throw the elections into the hands of cliques, and that a man outside the cliques would have hardly any chance whatever, unless he was a man of very great eminence and could overbear the influence of these cliques. I shall also oppose this proposal: "The Commission shall also, at any future time, amalgamate as aforesaid the several electoral districts which may hereafter be fixed for city, town, or place." Now, this clearly points to the Commission amalgamating not only city but also country electorates; and, for the reasons I have already stated, I shall oppose that. It is provided that,

though there is to be amalgamation, no amalgamated district shall return more than four members; so that when a town becomes populous enough to have five or six members it would again be divided into two or more electorates. This is altogether illogical. If it is right to amalgamate at all, surely it is right to amalgamate one whole town. I also oppose the provision for the Commission to divide the electorates according, amongst other things, to "the proportion which the number of male inhabitants of the district, other than Maoris, of or above the age of twenty-one years bears to the entire population, other than Maoris, of the district." I shall support any amendment for making more clear than it is here shown the difference that ought to exist, or that may be permitted to exist, between country and town electorates. No doubt a population scattered over a wide area cannot have the same facilities for bringing its opinion to bear on the House that is possessed by a town electorate, which has not only members advocating its ideas, but also newspapers.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I am very sorry to disturb the harmony of this debate, but in all my life I have never heard so much assurance packed into a speech as the honourable member for Thorndon imported into his few remarks just now. The honourable member drew a curious distinction between town and country members. I do not know whether the honourable gentleman intended us to take himself as the highest specimen of what a town can produce; but, if so, I am not sure that the illustration lends much force to the argument. He was most unfortunate in drawing invidious distinction between the occupants of the Treasury benches. The honourable member forgot that his own leader, the honourable member for Egmont, is the representative of a country district.

An Hon. MEMBER.—All of them.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Yes; the whole of the late Government represent country districts. Of course, the matter is of little consequence; but the honourable gentleman was alike invidious and unfortunate in his argument. But, although there is no difference in the average of town and country representatives, there is a distinction between the representation of town and country, and a great deal of weight no doubt attaches to what fell from the honourable member for Egmont, that at the present time in New Zealand—in all countries, in fact, but especially in new countries—the towns have means of organization, of united action, and expression of their views which are not possessed by the country districts. They have powerful organizations in the Municipal Councils; they have an influential Press; they have every facility and convenience for the holding of public meetings; and in various other ways they can supplement their representation to an extent quite beyond the reach of country districts, where the population is not only sparse, but widely distributed. Therefore I think that some sort of allowance ought to be made to the country districts similar to that which was made in the Act of 1881; and I think I can see where, as the Bill passes through Committee, that object can be attained without disturbing the general scope of the Bill. There are several other amendments which, I think, might be made in the Bill in the same way; but, as we have been requested not to debate the Bill, I will not enter into detail on them now. At the same time, I do think that we ought to be cautious how we affirm the principle that population should be the sole basis of representation. I think that is a fallacy. I think that population should be the main basis, but that it should not be the sole one; and it is not the sole basis at the present time in any country in the world.

An Hon. MEMBER.—In America?

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—No; not in America. They study other interests as well.

Sir R. STOUT.—It is the sole basis for the House of Representatives.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Not absolutely. They admit the principle and depart from it in practice. And within themselves many of the States do not recognize it at all. I can understand the population basis applying to an old country, such, for instance, as England, while it cannot be applied to a new one. If you take a map of England and put a pin into it at any point, you will find that you are somewhere in the neighbourhood of a large population, and therefore representation might possibly be equalized between town and country, even on a population basis. As a matter of fact, however, England departs more completely from the principle than almost any other nation, with advantage to the representation. Much less do I think that population should be held to be the only basis in a new country, because you have the largest interests represented in the country, although the population is more sparse than it is in the towns. I think that community of interests and sense of proportion should be considered. Beyond that, I do not know that I have anything to say about the Bill. The provision for a Commission is certainly a good one, following the method pursued in England, the same work being done there by the Enclosure Commissioners. Such a Commission will tend to avoid what might be acrimonious debates and interested discussions in this House. With those few explanations, I shall support the Bill.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Like those who have spoken before me I shall be very brief in the remarks I have to make; but I shall have to differ from those who have been almost unanimous in praising this Bill, and upholding its principle as the correct one. Now, my opinion is that population should not be the sole basis, although I admit that it should be a factor, and perhaps an important factor, in determining this matter of the representation. The Premier, in moving the second reading of this Bill, told us that we should take a broad view of the whole question. It may be very well to say that; but, as a matter of fact, is it done in this House? Is it not a fact that honourable members come here to scramble for the loaves

and fishes? Is it not a fact that in the recent debate on the Loan Bill one honourable member said that if certain members had only joined together they would have been strong enough to allocate the whole of the expenditure between the Otago Central and North Island Trunk lines? That is a fact which was stated here during the debate, and therefore I have a right to use it. I know also that when the Representation Act of 1881 was passed the number of representatives of the district from which I come was largely reduced, and that since that time no money has been spent in that district. In 1882 the Three-million Loan was raised, and, although some money was allocated to that district, very little was spent; and now we have the loan of a million and a half, none of which has been allocated to Nelson. These are facts to which we cannot shut our eyes. Now, it has been said that the number of representatives should be reduced. I shall be quite willing to reduce them if the members are taken away from the cities. We have been told by the honourable member for Egmont that the towns can make their wants known more easily than the country districts. That is so, and it is one of the principal reasons why the representation of the country districts should not be settled upon the same basis as that of the cities, which can easily make their wants known. Their inhabitants live closely together; they have the Press to advocate their views, and bring them prominently before the House. Then, the large cities are always being visited by people from other cities, and their people travel about, and thus their wants become known throughout the country: and so they have a great advantage in this House. Then, a great deal has been said about the amalgamation of the city constituencies—opinions in which I cordially agree, because I believe that minorities ought to be represented; and how can they be represented unless there are amalgamated districts? We have been told by the honourable member for Parnell that minorities should not be heard. He says that if they have a good cause they will be heard ultimately; but is it not better, if they have a good cause, that their views should be listened to? and, if they have reason on their side, surely the more facilities they have for converting their minority into a majority the better. But, if it is true and right that the town electorates should be amalgamated, why should not the same hold good as to the country districts? Is it right that in the towns only the minorities should be represented? Have not the country districts exactly the same rights as the towns? Now, the only way in which this object can be brought about is by having more than one representative for country districts. We are told that it can be gained by adopting the Hare principle: but that is thoroughly unworkable, and, so far as I know, is only in operation in one country—in Denmark—where, however, it is said to work very well. Still, I think it is mainly a matter of chance, and I do not think that we can adopt a measure like that. Now, as to representation according to the population basis alone, I do not think that there is such a thing in the world. If England were to adopt it the result would be, as we have been told, that the whole of the representation would be in the hands of the large towns; but, though it might be permissible in old countries, it would be quite out of place in new countries. In old countries, where the population is dense and evenly distributed, it might work fairly well; but in a new country the condition of things is very different. It must be remembered that the whole policy of a new country is to develop its resources by a system of public works; and the necessity is to have the wants of various sparsely-settled parts of the colony brought before the House, so that the resources of the country may have due attention. But I would ask, how is it possible, with representation according to a population basis, to have the country evenly represented, so that its various wants shall be made known? Then we know, furthermore, that some of the electorates are so divided geographically that it is impossible for one member to represent the whole district as it should be represented. I know that in the neighbourhood of where I live there is a district—that of Motueka—which embraces not only the Motueka country, but also the Golden Bay district, with a high range of mountains between them; and, while one portion of the district is inhabited by an agricultural population, the other part is populated by a mining community. There is no sympathy between the two parts of the district, and it is quite impossible for one man to properly represent both interests. Then, if we are to talk about a reduction of the number of members, there is another matter which ought to be taken into consideration. If we reduce the number of members it gives a great increase of power to the Government in this House. If the Government be corrupt they may hold out promises and bribes, and be able to do many other things which it would be impossible to do if there were a larger House. I am pointing this out because I am quite willing to vote for the reduction of the number of members, provided they be taken from the right quarter. I hold that there should not be more than two representatives for each city of the size that our cities are likely to be for many years to come. In a town it is very easy for a member to consult his constituents or for his constituents to consult him, but it is not at all possible where constituents may be scattered over an area of two hundred miles. It is almost impossible for one member to make himself acquainted with the wants of a constituency which is spread over so large an area; but in the towns a single advertisement in a newspaper will bring a member's constituents before him. Now, I think that the cities should be contented with two representatives. I place the number at two, because there are two interests in every town—there are the interests of the mercantile classes and the interests of the masses. It is quite impossible for one to represent the interests of the two classes. We find many people come out as working-man

advocates; but, as far as my experience goes, some of these persons can never be that. I do not doubt that these gentlemen who take up that position are thoroughly in earnest, and that it is their will and their wish to represent the masses; but there is something more required than either will or wish, and that is knowledge of the wants of the masses. They have been brought up among different associations; their mode of living is different; they do not know the wants of the people, and never can. Then, I say that there should be facilities given for the representation of both these classes; and I say that the towns should have two representatives and no more. It is not my intention to address the House long on the present occasion, because I see perfectly well that the Bill will pass its second reading, and I see equally well that it will not proceed further, because, from the speeches of honourable members, I find that there will be great diversity of opinion when this Bill gets into Committee. The two great points of discussion are the number of members and amalgamation of electorates. I may add that I do not think the Government themselves are in earnest about the passing of this Bill, because, if they had intended to pass it, I do not see why they should not have brought it down earlier in the session. The census would not have interfered with that, because now we have the Bill before us we can see that the census returns have nothing to do with it. It is merely a machinery Bill, and could have been passed though the census had not been taken. If the machinery were ready it could be acted upon any time the census was taken. My honourable friend asks me how I would fix the quota. The quota would fix itself, if it were decided how many members of the House there were to be. If that number was ninety, or a hundred, or seventy, to fix the quota you have simply to divide the whole number of inhabitants by the number of representatives, and then you have the quota. This Bill has no quota. It simply says, in clause 3, that the difference between the country and town districts shall be a thousand and five hundred; and that was not based on the census. The reduction of members is a question that has been frequently discussed; but, so far as my experience goes, on every occasion when representation has been readjusted, instead of the number of members being reduced they have been increased. In 1881, although many members spoke in favour of reducing the number of members, the number was increased; and I think we shall do very well upon the present occasion if we do not increase the number, but let them remain as they are. As I have pointed out, I cannot consent to any reduction unless that reduction is made from the cities. I do not think it necessary to detain the House longer, Sir, as I know other honourable gentlemen wish to address you; but I have so far expressed my views on the matter, and they are, that I do not believe in a population basis, that I do not believe in a reduction of the number of members unless the members are taken from the cities, and that I should be in favour of amalgamating the town districts. I would go a step further, and advocate amalgamating the country districts; but I do not see how that could possibly be done.

Captain RUSSELL.—I have four reasons for objecting to this Bill, and I will explain, in as few words as I possibly can, how I have arrived at those objections. The first objection I take is to making population the sole basis of representation. I next object to the proportion of the electorates between town and country as being insufficient. I object also to the amalgamation of city electorates; and I object also that this Bill does not, in some way or other, provide a change in relation to the special representation of the Maori people. The great cry of the democratic party has always been that there shall be no taxation without representation. In this country, at any rate, now we have got manhood suffrage, if representation is to be purely upon a population basis there will be taxation without representation, inasmuch as there is a considerable property-tax already imposed, and as it is the avowed intention of the Government to impose a land-tax whenever they can possibly do so, with the avowed object of injuring the present landowners. I think it is wrong that we should depart from the good principle of not having taxation without representation—that is to say, where there is property directly taxed; more particularly in a country where, as has been explained by the honourable member for Nelson, there has always been a scramble for public works. It is wrong, in principle, that property should be directly taxed for the production of public works, without representation, particularly where that property does not in any way benefit by the works. I also object to the Bill because of the insufficiency of the difference in favour of the country that is proposed to be made in the matter of the quota. The honourable member for Thorndon just now alluded to the fact, or alluded to what he called the fact, of the inhabitants of the cities being more intellectual and more fitted to govern than people brought up in the country, and he quoted, as an illustration, the fact that all the members of the Ministry were townsmen. I think that alone is sufficient evidence to show honourable members that they ought to agree to some alteration; because I conceive no sane person could urge that it would be specially desirable that only one class of the population should be represented in the Ministry, as it is at the present moment. There is one point which has not been alluded to by any of the previous speakers, and that is, that if you place a disproportionate amount of power in the hands of the residents of the town electorates you are giving the power, to those people who are comparatively the drones, who are only the distributors in this colony, to impose taxation on the producers of the colony: that is to say, you take away the political power from those men who, I contend, have the honest, genuine, *bonâ fide* work of colonization to do—the men who make the colony

progress — you take away the power from them, and place it in the hands of the distributing bodies — the less energetic and enterprising people who reside in towns. And not only that, but, as we see, the Ministry now is composed of gentlemen who reside in towns; and if you glance round the House you will see that the great majority of the representatives of the colony at the present time either represent town constituencies, or are town men themselves who represent country constituencies. As a matter of fact, the towns vastly preponderate in members in this House; and, owing to a variety of circumstances alluded to in the course of the debate, they have, according to my opinion at any rate, a very undue influence and preponderance in the councils of the government of the country. But not only in this House, but in another place, we find the town representatives absolutely out of all proportion to those who live in the country, who clearly, as I said before, are the hardworking producing people who have, under much difficulty, to produce all that goes to pay the debt of this colony. There is another objection, but that applies rather to the amalgamation of city electorates. It is impossible to conceive why, if we are to have manhood suffrage, and if we are to abolish plurality of voting, as it is frequently contended we should do—I, at any rate, cannot conceive why, because a man chances to reside in a borough, he should be entitled to four votes, while the man who lives in the country is only entitled to one. That seems to me in itself wrong; but, also, it would confer enormous powers upon such men as the Premier—men who are fervid orators, who can sway a large town constituency through the media of public meetings, not, probably, by good, sound, cogent argument, but by sophisms transparent to persons who will take the trouble to study them, but which, no doubt, are brilliant, and will carry away an audience unaccustomed to the art of dialectics. Unfortunately, such men as the Premier, and several well-known orators of the House, will be able to carry before them a great wave of perhaps misguided opinion, and be able to return four members to the House upon their platform—probably a wrong one—instead of leaving the electors to digest at more leisure and in a more careful manner the utterances of four different men, who address them at different periods of the election. Unfortunately, it is those who promise most, those who hold out hopes of a Utopia to come, who will be likely to sway such multitudes, not in any way, I believe, for the good of the cities themselves, and much to the prejudice of the colony. Then comes the question of the Maori representation. It was pointed out by the member for Thorndon that we shall still have, if the Bill remains as it now is, a worthy Maori gentleman at present sitting opposite to me, and in whom I see a very desirable member, coming to represent only 2,700 people, whereas every other member will represent three or four times that number: and probably the honourable gentleman I have referred to would himself admit that that would not be right. But on the whole principle of Maori representation I think that we are wrong, and that it is time to face the question. There is no reason that I can see, at any rate, why the Maoris should have their special representation, and why they should not be placed on the electoral rolls of the colony, so as to exercise their votes in the same way as Europeans do. I recognize that a considerable proportion of the Europeans will disapprove of such a scheme as this, and I believe that nothing more than advocating the same policy six or seven years ago cost me a majority at the general election. But I cannot help it; whether it costs me my seat or not, I am going to say what I think upon this subject, and that is, that the sooner we abolish the special Maori representation, and place them on the same electoral rolls as ourselves, the better it will be for the representation of the country. We can do that without doing any injustice to the Natives; and, taking what I hope is a far-seeing view, I believe that it will be absolutely beneficial to the Native race, though it possibly may be prejudicial to the Native gentlemen who occupy seats in this House at the present moment. But, supposing this proposed Board should divide the colony into separate electoral districts, I can see no reason why three electoral districts in the North Island should not be constituted which would, for the present, return three Maori members to this House. I need not trouble the House with the boundaries of those districts; it is easy to ascertain them. If we take the present census returns and a map of the North Island it will be seen it would be perfectly feasible to create three districts, in which districts it would be a certainty that three Maori members would be returned at the present time, though by degrees that would be changed. And here I would say—there is no use in blinking the fact, for it is plain enough—that before very long the Maori representation must be abolished. What we have seen in this House during this session is evidence that the Native is perfectly able to interfere very materially with the progress of business in this House. One honourable Native member has boasted that he was the means, through the Natives, of keeping the Ministry in office during last session; and we saw a whole night devoted to stonewalling the Dog-tax Bill on the part of certain honourable Native gentlemen, showing that they were absolutely perfect in the use of all the forms of the House. I believe that the Native interest itself would be better promoted in this House by influential European gentlemen, having a command of the Native language, who might enjoy the confidence of the Natives, and who would come, in the course of two or three elections after this time, to represent some of the Native districts. The Native representation would be modified to that extent by those who command the confidence both of Europeans and the Natives, and who would gradually supplant those individuals who at present sit in this House.

Then the change would be gradual, instead of coming at one fell swoop, as the change in the Native representation must come unless we adopt such a course as this. It will be, I believe, directly to the interests of the Native people and to the advantage of the Europeans if by degrees the special representation of the Maoris is abolished. There were other points alluded to in the Bill, but I feel it is useless to try to prevent its second reading. When the Bill comes into Committee I shall do my best to have effect given to the views I have indicated.

Mr. T. THOMPSON.—I desire to say very few words on the question now before the House. I may say that, equally with honourable members who have spoken, I was pleased to hear the statement of the Premier that he intended to push this Bill through this session; but I regret, at the same time, that he has thought it desirable to mix up with this question one which, I think, might safely be left to the decision of the electors of the different centres of population. The centres of population are not unanimous on the question of the amalgamation of the city electorates. With regard to the City of Auckland, I understand that a petition has been signed by a large number of electors against the amalgamation of the electorates of that city. I will state a few objections that can be urged against the amalgamation of the city electorates. In the first place, it would afford much greater facilities for personation, owing to the fact that there would be several polling-booths instead of one, as at present; there would be much greater difficulty in keeping the rolls pure; and, again, as has been stated by the honourable member for Newton, it would be almost impossible for minorities to be represented. It would also tend to increase the cost of elections. A greater number of electors would have to be waited on by candidates for election, and in that and other ways there would be increased expense, and representation would go more into the hands of the moneyed classes than at present; and that, I think, would be a great objection. There is another point: In the case of by-elections, a single electorate as now constituted might be unanimous as to the representative they would choose; but if the electorates were united the whole of the people of the city might have to be polled in order to elect one man. That would cause great trouble and expense. If the Bill be read a second time, as I hope it will be, I shall oppose the clause relating to amalgamation of city electorates, in Committee. If that clause be objectionable to the majority of the Committee, I see a way out of the difficulty, and that is, to carry out the view advanced by the honourable member for Egmont when he stated that he believed in a variety of electorates. That could be obtained in this way: Leave the matter optional with the city electorates. A majority of the people of Wellington may be in favour of amalgamation, and a majority of the people of Auckland may not. Leave the decision of that matter to the electorates. That would give the variety which the honourable member for Egmont desires. With regard to representation, I am in favour of representation on the population basis. I do not think there can be anything fairer than that. That entirely meets my views. With regard to the reduction of members, as suggested by the honourable member for Moeraki, he has my entire sympathy in that matter, because, to a certain extent, it is simply giving effect to the recommendation of a Committee which has given much time and attention to the questions submitted to them—the Committee on Legislative Expenditure. I was rather amused with the remarks of the honourable member for Nelson, who is so very generous with regard to city electorates; and as the remarks of another honourable member, who urged as an argument in favour of giving a less number of representatives to the cities that all the gentlemen on the Government benches were city members: and I think the honourable member for Hawke's Bay alluded to that fact just now. I will point out to that honourable member that his friends who are occupying the Opposition benches just now, and who were Ministers a short time ago, are nearly all country members. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill, but in Committee I shall move in the direction I have indicated.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I am glad to find that the honourable member for Egmont is with me upon this matter, that representation should be upon the population basis. Until I came to this House I thought the honourable member was what is called a Conservative, and opposed these things *in toto*. I wish to draw the attention of the Government to this point: if they are going to amalgamate the district that I represent—which has some ten or twelve thousand inhabitants—with a small district of five or six thousand, I do not know what kind of representation we are going to have at all.

Mr. GUINNESS.—This is too important a debate to be allowed to pass in the hurried way that the leaders of the House appear inclined to permit. If I remember the history of the late Representation Act, it was not allowed to be read a second time after two or three hours' debate. When that Act was passed the country thought, and I believe the members of this House thought, that it was to settle the question of representation for a number of years to come. I believe the intention to be gathered from that Act was that the principles embodied in it were to be continued; and yet now, simply because a census has been taken, and it has been found that a few thousands of people have, within the last year or two, gone from the South to the North, is it to be said that it is necessary to disturb the whole of the electoral districts throughout the colony? I maintain it is not. I consider that, if we are to take that view, we shall be disturbing the electoral arrangements every time a census is taken, and there will thereby be caused great confusion and uncertainty in the minds of the electors with regard to our electoral laws. That is one reason why I am inclined at pre-

sent to oppose this measure. I may say that the chief reason why I shall oppose the second reading of the Bill is this: that the Premier and the leader of the Opposition, and most of the members of the Opposition who have supported it, have declared that it is their intention to fill up the blank left in the Bill with a number which will have the effect of reducing the number of the representatives of the people. I believe that the Government have not arrived at a decision, or they have not been able to come to an agreement amongst themselves, as to what shall be the number of members in future. They have left it blank; but we can gather from the speeches of those who support the second reading that the present number may be reduced by twenty or twenty-five. If we pass the second reading of the Bill with that blank in it we shall virtually be affirming the principle that the number of members should be reduced. I consider that if the principle contained in this Bill is to be affirmed, that the town electors are to have the same voice as the country electors in returning members, it would be most unfair. The result will be that the number of members from the country will be greatly reduced, and those from the towns hardly reduced at all, because the towns have had a greater increase in population than the country. I quite agree with the leader of the Opposition when he tells us that the people in towns have a greater power of organization than the people in the country, and can press their requirements on Parliament with much more force. As the honourable member for Hawke's Bay says, the people in the country are engaged in the great work of colonization, and it is their work that supports the towns. They are scattered about, and have no means of congregating and discussing public questions. They have little opportunity of reading the newspapers, which have a beneficial effect in teaching people and educating them on the topics which agitate the public mind. The residents in the country therefore, I maintain, should have larger representation in this House, so that their voice may be heard to a greater extent numerically than those of the towns. I do not know that I should have opposed going on with the Bill had the Premier brought it down at an earlier period of the session and told us that he meant to pass it; but to bring it down now, within a few days of the end of the session, and ask us to pass it without discussion, is asking too much. The honourable member himself, when moving the second reading, forgot many of the points in the Bill, and had to be asked by the leader of the Opposition, "What do you think of that point? What have you to say about that other point?" There was some excuse for the Premier, considering the severe illness he has been going through; but what are we to say of the honourable member for Egmont, who followed in the same way? He, too, forgot many points in the Bill, and had to be reminded of them by his friends. There are several most important points which have to be considered before we come to a decision. There is the question of whether representation is to depend solely on population, or whether we shall consider the question of territory in the matter. I do not want to take up too much time by going into details, but I should like to point out some of the important principles which this Bill contains which have not been discussed by the leaders, or by any of the honourable members who have spoken in favour of the measure. For example, if we determine that representation shall be on a population basis, we have then to consider whether it shall be on the male adult population, or whether it is to be on the basis of the entire population of men, women, and children; for according to this Bill they are included. I say that is a vicious principle, and one which is contrary to the Constitution Act, which clearly lays it down that representation is to be in proportion, not to the whole population, but to the number of male adults in each district—that we are to ascertain the number of electors in each district of the colony, so as to give to each equal representation. That is a question which should be more fully discussed in the House than it has been on this occasion. Then we come to the further question of the amalgamation of the city electorates; and I would give this fair consideration. I should be content that they should be amalgamated, and that there should be a proportion of, say, three to two of population as compared with the country — that is to say, that, if you have a basis of two thousand for a country electorate, you should have three thousand for a town electorate; and it should be on a basis of the adult male population, and not on that of every man, woman, and child in the district. After we have determined that, we come to the further question as to the principle on which the votes in these amalgamated districts shall be exercised. Should that be by each elector being allowed to vote for one out of three or four candidates to be returned? I think that there should be no plumping at all. I heartily indorse the opinion expressed by the honourable member for Selwyn, that, in an electorate which returns, say, two or three members, each voter should be compelled to vote for the full number returnable. That is a question which does not seem to have been thought out or considered by the draftsman of this Bill. But what has become of the question of the representation of seamen? What has become of the honourable member for Rangitikei, who so strongly supports the cause of the sailors? I thought we should have him coming forward and telling us, as he has so ably done before, that he is an advocate of representation being given to the seamen of the colony. I have heartily supported the claim of our sailors to get a vote since I have been in the House, and I call attention to that as something which has been left wholly unconsidered in this measure. This is another defect in this Bill, which has been brought in so hastily. I know the Premier himself is a strong advocate for the representation of sailors in this Parliament; and I

understood the reason why the honourable member for Rangitikei did not bring forward his Seamen Representation Bill this session was that we were expecting to have a Bill dealing with the whole question of representation, and that in such a Bill we should have this very question dealt with. That is another reason why we should hesitate, at this late period of the session, to deal with such a question in a fragmentary way. I do not know why we should agree to the Board or Commission that is proposed to be constituted. I have not heard any good or sound argument why we should delegate one of our most important functions to an irresponsible Board. I certainly think the members of this House, being representatives of different parts of the country, would be better able to define the boundaries of the different electorates of the country than this Board could be; and that part of the Bill is one that I shall oppose if it ever passes its second reading. There are many more important measures than this that the Government might have introduced this session, and which they did actually introduce and carry to a certain stage, and then abandoned. One of the most important Bills of the session was that brought in by the Minister for Public Works—namely, the Workmen's Wages Act Extension Bill—and that was discharged from the Order Paper last Thursday. That was a Bill dealing with the truck system, and we see from the newspapers of the colony that that system is rampant, and wants something to check it. If this is the tail-end of the session, why is it that measures which the people were demanding, and which would be of great benefit to the people, have not been pressed forward? I shall conclude by saying that I shall vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. SEDDON.—I move the adjournment of the debate.

The House divided.

AYES, 31.

Allwright	Guinness	Pearson
B.-Bradshaw	Hatch	Reese
Brown	Hirst, H.	Ross
Bruce	Hislop	Samuel
Cowan	Joyce	Steward, W. J.
Dodson	Kerr	Taylor
Duncan	Levestam	Turnbull.
Fergus	McMillan	
Fraser	Montgomery	*Tellers.*
Gore	O'Callaghan	Ivess
Grace	O'Conor	Seddon.

NOES, 32.

Atkinson	Hamlin	Richardson, E.
Ballance	Hobbs	Richardson, G.
Beetham	Johnston	Rolleston
Buchanan	Larnach	Thompson, T.
Buckland, J. C.	Mackenzie, M.	Tole
Buckland, W.F.	McKenzie, J.	Trimble
Cadman	Mitchelson	Wakefield
Conolly	Moat	Wilson.
Fitzherbert	Moss	*Tellers.*
Fulton	Newman	Lake
Grey	Reid	Peacock.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Harper	Russell
Hursthouse	Dargaville
Lance	Bryce
Menteath	Stewart, W. D.
Pyke	Vogel
Sutter	Macarthur
Te Ao	Smith
Thomson, J. W.	Whyte
Walker.	Stout.

Majority against, 1.

Mr. KERR.—I hope the House will not pass the Bill this year at all. I consider that, the Bill having been placed before the House, all that it was necessary to do this year has been done. I think the country should have a voice in this matter. I also object to the towns having an advantage over the country. The towns are composed of men who are of very little advantage to the country—a large part of them are the "unemployed." The country districts ought to be represented in other ways than that of a population basis, because the country is really the support and life of the colony. This Bill ought to be thoroughly read and digested by the people of the country, and postponing it till next year would enable that to be done. As to reducing the number of members, what would happen, for instance, in Nelson if the number were reduced? There are only three members now representing it; and, if the number of members were reduced to two, one would come from the town, and the country member would have so large an electorate that he would never get through it. The present member for Motueka has now to go many hundreds of miles through his district, and if my electorate were added to his he would never get through it. If the number is decreased, of course, as before, it will be the weakest who will go to the wall, and the representation of Nelson would again be decreased. This is a matter which the House ought to think seriously over. It is proposed to give larger representation to the North Island towns—to men many of whom do not belong to the country at all—people hundreds of whom now have to live on those owning property in the country, and who will be given voting-power equal to those who have to feed them. Of course those people would support those candidates who would make a howling cry in this House to feed the unemployed. Who are the men taxed for these unemployed? It is the country, and not the town people. It is the people in the country who employ labour and keep the country going. Some parts of the North Island happened a short time ago to be very prosperous, and people flocked up from the South and went to Auckland; and now it is claimed that more representation should be given to Auckland on account of these people. But what have these people got in Auckland now? Why, they are unemployed by hundreds, and now you want actually to increase the political power of men who are of no benefit to the country. Without taking up the time of

he House further, I would express the hope hat this question will be postponed for a year, o that the country may thoroughly consider he Bill, and that advantage of it will not be aken in this way.

Mr. GORE.—This measure is so very imortant that it would take hours to properly iscuss it. It makes great alteration in the epresentation generally, and it amalgamates he city electorates. We find that opinion is uch divided on the subject, and I think full pportunity should be given to thoroughly disuss it. It is not possible to do so at this late our. I do not see any necessity for forcing he Bill through during the present session. Parliament does not expire until the 6th of ugust next, and I think it will be quite time nough to pass it next session, and there will e more time then to devote to the purpose. t any rate, it is too late to finish the debate o-night, and therefore I move, That the House o adjourn.

Mr. MOSS.—Why run the risk that adjournng the matter till next session must occasion? t is possible that the Government will be efeated next session, and they might ask for nd get a dissolution. In that case, when he new House met it would have to pass the Representation Act, and there might be three essions within one year. As to the eloquent ppeal made on behalf of the country by the onourable member for Waimea, we all recognize the value of the country; but what value would the country be without the towns? Who gives value to the country produce? The unemployed of whom he speaks belong to the class of people whose skill gives value to our raw products. Of what value would a hide be if it was not manufactured into an article of commerce by skilled labour in towns? I hope the House will not agree to the Bill being held over for another session. I think opinions are pretty well made up on it already, and delay is quite unnecessary.

Mr. SEDDON.—I hope the Government will consent to the adjournment. I am prepared to stay here a little longer, so that a Representation Bill may be passed which will reflect credit on those now representing the people, and I do not wish to take away any of their rights from the people.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I hope the adjournment will be refused. The honourable member for Kumara has had ample opportunity to address the House this evening if he had chosen. The debate has shown that there is a general desire not to discuss this matter at any length, and I am satisfied there is a great majority of the House in favour of passing the Bill.

Major ATKINSON.—I suggest that we should pass the second reading and admit the principle, and those honourable members who desire to speak can speak on the motion for committal.

Mr. SEDDON.—I do not wish the principle to be affirmed without debate.

Major ATKINSON.—I am certain that a very large majority indeed are prepared to affirm the principle and pass the Bill, and are very anxious to do it. I put it to honourable members whether it is not reasonable, at this stage of the session, to pass the second reading now, and to finish the discussion on the motion for committal.

Mr. FERGUS.—I fail altogether to see what is to be gained by having two debates. Now that we have started the debate, let us affirm the principle and end the discussion of the Bill on the second reading, and not open the floodgates of honourable gentlemen's oratory on the committal. If it were the intention of the Government simply to read the Bill a second time and then drop it, I should not argue in this strain; but I understand it is the intention of the Government to pass the Bill.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—What is the use of the honourable member for Kumara talking as he has done, when we know that he has been all day carrying round a paper trying to get members to sign to drop the Bill? And what is the use of the honourable member for Wakatipu talking as he does, when he is doing his utmost to get the Bill shelved?

Mr. FERGUS.—I object altogether, and——

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—The honourable member gets up and says one thing when he means another. What——

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member must not cast such imputations as those.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—Well, Sir, I withdraw them. But, all round, there has been an effort to kill this Bill. I suppose Ministers know it. All these motions for adjournment are simply to kill the Bill. Was not that the object of all the honourable gentlemen who were pressing round the honourable member for Dunedin South just now—trying to prompt him to make some motion which would have the effect of killing the Bill? Nearly all the debate to-night has been talking against time. —(Oh!)—It is all very well to say "Oh!" and "Boo!" but I know exactly how the case stands. Those honourable gentlemen who have been prompting, and moving, and voting for the different motions for adjournment do not want the Bill to pass—they do not want it to pass even the second reading—and the motions have been made in the hope and belief that the Bill would be prevented from coming on again. That is the whole state of the case so far as that goes. They simply wish now to set the House at defiance; and it is one of the worst cases of stonewalling that we have ever had set up in this House. There was a time when a debate of this kind took place before, and members are just as determined now. I do not intend to speak at any length, because I do not wish to delay the passage of the Bill; but I may say this: that a great many members of this House are not willing to see fairness done between Island and Island. I hear what goes on, and I know pretty well about certain things. The honourable member for Waimea has been pleased to call the people in the cities "loafers" and "unemployed," and he also told us that the people of the South who went to the North are useless for the purposes of colonization. I am very sorry the honourable member d-

live up our way, so that he might have the pleasure of running for a constituency up there. What we want to look at is this: We passed the Representation Act five years ago, and, owing to the manner in which a dissolution will take place, Parliament will die just about the time that the Representation Act will cease to exist.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—Well, at any rate, we can only have one session of another Parliament; so we must renew that Act, unless we at once pass a Bill. I am not going to say that efforts are about to be made to keep the North down, but I believe there is a determination on the part of some honourable members from the South that justice shall not be done to the North: and the sooner the colony knows that the better. I feel that there is a wider question which ought to be considered. We have got to pass a Representation Act next session, if not this session. If we do not, this Parliament will expire about the 8th of August; and honourable members know what that means, because we shall meet here about July, and then some honourable gentlemen who are so good in the talking line will be able to talk against time so as to prevent any Act being passed at all; and then what would happen? We should have to go back to the old Representation Act that was in force before the Act of 1881 was passed.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—Well, I have not spoken during the last four or five days, being anxious to get home; but I see very little chance now of getting home on Saturday, the day on which I wished to get home, and therefore I am quite prepared to stay here for another fortnight. But I hold that it is altogether unfair for four members to obstruct the passage of the Bill. If they are in favour of it, then let us read it a second time; if a majority is not in favour of it, then let it be thrown out.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Vote.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—I do not want the vote to be taken on a side-issue. Some honourable members have been trying the whole day to kill this Bill. The thing is preposterous, and I feel sorry that an attempt should be made to do it. I say that this Parliament should not shirk its duty. The Government have brought this Bill down. I do not know that they are particularly anxious to pass it, but I think they should not allow the thing to be shelved in this way. With regard to Native representation, I am thoroughly with those honourable members who are against it. I think there should be no special representation of the Natives, but that they should be thrown in with us in the North Island, and that we should all be represented on the population basis. I am against the amalgamation of the city electorates. I think the beauty of our present system is that it is a single-electorate system, and I hope we are not going to abolish that system. I regret very much to notice a provision in this Bill which will allow the Commissioners to amalgamate country electorates if they think fit. That I believe to be a great mistake. I also think that the country constituencies should be more largely represented than the towns. The honourable member for Thorndon seems to think that the town people are the only people who send creditable representatives to this House; but I think, without going into invidious comparison, that the country representatives will compare favourably with those from the towns. I think that the country members have more brilliant ideas than the town members, and that the views which they advocate are better for the colony as a whole than those which are brought forward by the representatives from the towns. However, I will not go into that question. These are my main objections to the Bill. The question of population as between North and South, and the gaining of extra votes to the North, is nothing at all to me; but I say it is only fair, as we have admitted that population should be the basis of representation, that representation should be varied from time to time as population varies. I shall be inclined to vote with the honourable member for Moeraki for reducing the number of members in the House, if only with the object of meeting the difficulty which is staring us in the face in regard to expense. If the Bill goes into Committee I shall vote in the direction I have pointed out. I hope the House will not be misled. Honourable members who are getting up and saying they have speeches to make are simply trying to kill the Bill. They may succeed; but if they do I hope the House will know what they are doing and why they are doing it.

Mr. FERGUS.—The honourable member for Franklin North has accused me of not wishing the Representation Bill to be passed. The only answer I can make to that is, that the leaders of the party with whom I am working know that I do want a Representation Bill.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—No.

Mr. FERGUS.—I am talking of the leaders and not of the fag-end of the party. I wish to have the blanks in the Bill filled up, and I want to know the number of men who are to be returned, and the basis on which they are to be elected. That has always been my contention.

Mr. SEDDON.—I was referred to by the honourable member for Franklin North; and, as I generally carry on my political warfare fairly and aboveboard, I should like to point out that he is entirely wrong in saying that I have acted in an underhand manner in connection with this matter. I differ very much from the Government for having brought the Representation Bill forward at so late a period of the session. My action in the matter has been public, and the memorandum referred to has been given to the Press, so that there has been nothing underhand in it. And, so that honourable members shall be fully aware of what I have done, I wish simply to say that this is the heading to the paper which I have asked honourable members to sign: "We, the under-

signed members of the House of Representatives, are of opinion that, in view of the late period of the session, and the importance of the subject, it is inadvisable that the Representation Bill should be proceeded with this session." That is all I wish to say. The round-robin speaks for itself.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—I regret that the honourable member for Franklin North has introduced into this debate an angry spirit between the North Island and the South. I should have thought that that honourable gentleman, who belongs to this country by birth, would have regarded one Island with the same political feeling as the other. I should not have supposed that his interests were confined entirely to the North Island. I also am a son of this colony, and I love one Island and the people of that Island as much as I love the other Island and its people. At all events, I am not actuated in my opposition to this Bill by any feeling against one Island getting greater representation than the other. I am not opposed to the North Island getting representation; for, on a former occasion, which I have no doubt you, Sir, will remember, when the present Representation Act was before the House, I opposed it, although it gave largely-increased representation to the South Island as against the North. The principle which actuated me in my opposition to that Bill also induces me to oppose this Bill. I have always opposed representation according to population, and I suppose I shall continue to do so until my dying-day. I did it because I think it is a wrong principle, and because I think it will lead this country into grave errors and into great expense. The honourable gentleman seems to think that we in the South Island are not willing to give the North Island "fair-play," as he termed it. I think he said also that there was a determination to keep the North down, and a determination on the part of the South to do injustice to the North; and he went so far as to say that a party of members in this House were quite capable of blocking this measure if they chose to do so. We tried that experiment once, and I do not think we came out of it very successfully. I do not think that many of us who took part in the work of endeavouring to stop the Representation Act of 1881 would do so on this occasion, though we have always held firmly that the Chairman of Committees and the Speaker of that Parliament were wrong, and that their action has never been borne out by precedent. Now, I have not much to say in reference to this Bill, and certainly I have no intention to stonewall it; but I wish to put on record once more my opinion that representation according to population is unfair, and not in the best interests of the country. It appears to me that its effect will be to throw the Government of the country entirely into the hands of the centres of population. Now, were these centres peopled by a manufacturing population I should not see so much objection to the proposal. But that is not the case. The residents in towns are mostly distributors; and, in my opinion, though they are not less intelligent than people who live in the country, still the circumstances are such that they are more easily represented in larger numbers by single individuals in Parliament than are people in the country. When you look at the numerous advantages which the citizens have who dwell in boroughs, when you remember that they have a Press which guides and leads public opinion, when you remember that they have numerous opportunities of meeting together without difficulty, I think you will agree with me that they can, as it were, enforce their opinions on the mind of this House in a manner which it is utterly impossible that people who live in sparsely-settled parts of the country should have an opportunity of doing. It is much more easy for the people who live in the towns to have their opinions expressed, as it were, by one person's utterances than it is for the people in the country; and so it comes about that the people in the towns have enormous political advantages over the people in the country. I have always been of opinion that the Representation Act of 1881 has been a great failure, because it has never carried out what it pretended to carry out. We have not had representation according to population in the true sense. It will be remembered that six thousand was the quota for a town constituency in that Bill, and we have had the Borough of Lyttelton represented for many years, with a population of four thousand, while within twenty-one miles of it there are city constituencies with more than double that population. It appears to me that we must regard what I call community of interests. We have districts in this colony with, perhaps, only three or four thousand people, who are distinct and separate from all the rest of New Zealand. Their trade is not with their neighbours, and their communication is by water, and their interests are entirely different from the interests of those only a few miles distant from them. Then, the inconvenience which another change will cause to the country is another objection to the Bill. Apparently we are to have a redistribution of seats every three years. If that is to be the case, people in the country will never know what it is to be. Then, I understood, when the Act of 1881 was passed, it was to remain in operation till 1887; and, in fact, there is a clause in the Act which says so in so many words. It is not 1887 yet, and I can see no reason except one why this Bill should be passed this session, and I presume I am right in concluding that the honourable member for Egmont is anxious to have the Bill passed now for the simple reason that it will give to the North Island three more representatives than it at present possesses, and I presume he anticipates some advantage from that. I fail entirely to see why the mere fact of changing three members from one Island to the other should have such an effect, because members should come here to represent New Zealand, and not any particular people.

Major ATKINSON.—That is not my object in the least.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—That is the only reason that could come to my mind.

Major ATKINSON.—You are a very poor hand at reasoning, then.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—I have nothing further to say, except that the Premier has misled the House to a certain extent. I understood him—when he was asked early in the session by the honourable member for Egmont whether he intended to bring down a Representation Bill—to say that he intended to bring one down, but to leave it over till next session before being finally passed. I had no idea he had any intention of forcing on this Bill at this late period of the session, the effect of which will be detrimental to much more useful legislation, which is now likely to be shelved.

Motion for the adjournment of the House negatived.

Mr. ROSS moved the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. SAMUEL seconded the motion.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I will accept the motion for the adjournment of the debate, as it is quite clear that little progress can be made to-night, and there is no desire on the part of the Government to force the debate.

Debate adjourned.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 10th August, 1886.

First Reading—Second Reading—Third Readings—Mining Bill—Government Life Insurance Bill—Counties Bill—Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Bill—New Zealand Loan Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Stamp Bill.

SECOND READING.

Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Deeds and Instruments Registration Bill, Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Bill, Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Bill.

MINING BILL.

On the question, That this Bill be read the third time,

The Hon. Mr. WILSON was understood to say,—Sir, before that question is put, I would like to take notice of some remarks that were made in reference to this Bill at a former stage. It was then stated that the provisions inserted in this Bill for the preservation and safety of those employed would impose difficulties in working the mining works provided for in this Bill. I think the safety and health of the people employed ought to be the first thing to be taken into consideration. As a matter of fact, the Coal-mines Bill introduced by the Minister of Mines contained a provision authorizing the employment above ground of women, young persons, and children.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—No.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—It does. I have the Bill in my hand, and I say that the Bill did contain that provision. I will read it. [Clause read.] It is true that on the second reading of this Bill there were certain observations made in favour of striking this out. Yet this is proposed by the present Government! A Government which is supposed to be a Liberal Government contemplated and approved the employment of women and young persons and children above ground in mining operations! I say this provision was in the original Bill; but it was struck out on the second reading in another place. It is a very sad thing to find such a thing contemplated in this country. To think that, after forty years' settlement, we should have come to such a pitch that employment is to be found for women, young persons, and children in the mines above ground! Is this the sort of employment fit for women and young persons and children? Certainly not. The Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker gave us a description of the employment of women and children in the mines of Cornwall. I never heard of this kind of employment being resorted to except in terms of regret that such things were possible. I believe, myself, that by the Mining Bill it is illegal to employ those people at all, although I am not certain whether it is made illegal by the Coal-mines Bill. Then, it is said that the forbidding of such employment will have a tendency to injure the industry. I do not agree with that at all. It is also said that many companies have met with disaster owing to this restriction; but the reason I should give for the disaster that occurs to most of those companies is that, instead of following the old-fashioned plan where people considered they went into a fair undertaking and only worked it out according to their means, those companies have shown a sole desire to abuse the law of unlimited liability; and that is why they have come to disaster. I doubt whether one company of this kind really intends, at the start, to work it out to a successful issue. What is intended is, by attractive prospectuses, to promote the undertaking and make money out of it, and they do not care about the success of the company or otherwise: in fact, it would rather suit them better that it should fail than that it should succeed. There is no doubt that the question I am referring to now is the disturbing element between the employers and their workmen; but I do not look to that as the real cause of the failure of the workings. That, however, is not a question which is involved to any great extent in this question. I should not have risen to make these few remarks had it not been for the observations which were made on a former occasion.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—There is one point to which the honourable gentleman who has just sat down referred on which I entirely agree with him, and that is that a dissertation on the failure of companies has nothing to do with this Bill. I do not, however, understand all that the honourable gentleman has been saying. His speech has been a sort of "omnium gatherum"—a reference to matters of all descriptions. Had he delivered it at the evening sitting I might have understood the source which had inspired it; but he has been inspired in some way to talk in the way he has done about everything. It appears to me that his object was to say something against the Government in regard to this Bill. There was a discussion in Committee over the clauses to which he has referred, but they were not altered; yet the honourable gentleman had made up his mind to say something, either against the Government or against the Bill, or with regard to some honourable gentleman in particular—he omitted to say which it was; and I would point out for his information that these clauses are in precisely the same condition as they were in when they were brought in. But why he should waste the time of the Council to talk—I will not say nonsense, but to talk in the way he did on what was altogether outside the question before the Council, I cannot conceive. With regard to coal-mines, everybody knows that women and children and young persons are not employed about them; and therefore no question was raised as to similar clauses in the Coal-mines Bill. But, as regards other mining, such as copper, lead, tin, and so on, women and children are employed—in England, but not as yet here, so far as I know—not below, but above ground; and I want to know whether that employment is injurious to them in any way whatever. The work is of the lightest possible character. The ore is brought up from the mine, and broken up into small pieces and picked by the fingers. A boy or a woman will do more than a man will do in a day; and for us to interfere with these persons earning a little money for themselves would be a most unreasonable thing to do. Men with families of children can supplement their wages by employing them for three or four hours a day in this manner. It is not arduous or continuous work. To hear the honourable gentleman talk, one would think that they were expected to carry copper-ore on their backs, or drag trollies, or do something of an unreasonable character. But I do say this: that we are getting into a state of limiting everybody's liberty to do as he likes. Unless you can show that there is something wrong or deteriorating to the people concerned, you should allow them to do as they like. I believe in giving the fullest liberty; I believe in permitting people, under reasonable restrictions, to do what they like. To attempt to tie everybody down by Acts of Parliament is a most monstrous thing, and it is in that direction we are going. I believe that the honourable gentleman would be in favour of tying people down as to what they should eat and drink. I say that is a state of things into which we ought not to get. It is perfectly right that the State should limit the employment of children where it is calculated to do them harm; but, where it is for the purpose of supplementing the income of their parents without any injury to themselves, it is better that they should be allowed to do that than run about wild doing nothing. I say we are doing a wrong if we place on them limits in that way. It is true that we have not on any occasion, so far as I know, employed women or children in mining in this country. I am not aware of any instance in which that has been done; but my honourable friends from the West Coast will be able to tell us whether we have done so there or not. All I said in reference to the clauses in question when they were before us on a former occasion was that the time might come when it would be necessary or advantageous to a man that his family should be employed in doing some light work, as is done in Cornwall. Does not the honourable gentleman know that on the Continent women and children are employed in the fields in every direction? What are we to come to? Are we to pass an Act to say when we shall get up in the morning, and what time we shall go to bed, and what time we shall have our dinner? What could be more unreasonable? The other day one honourable gentleman in this Council told us of the case of a man who found that he could not employ his children in the factories of this colony, and, as he could not earn his living here under those circumstances, he had to go to Melbourne in order to find employment for them. By going so far in this direction we are doing a great deal of mischief to the people themselves, and a great deal of mischief to the State. I have nothing to say against the third reading of the Bill. I had thought it would have gone without further discussion, and it is only on account of my honourable friend getting up and attacking me in the way he has done that I have said anything that may have delayed the progress of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I will not detain the Council for more than a minute, except to refer to what I understand the Hon. Mr. Wilson has said about me. I may say that my honourable friend's remarks were quite inaudible to me, and it was only through the reference of the last speaker to the fact that he had made an attack on the Government for having, as he said, inserted the clause in reference to the employment of women and children that I knew that was the case. But I say he is quite wrong. How this clause came into the Bill I cannot say. If the honourable gentleman will look at the 204th clause he will find that "No female of any age, and no male child under the age of twelve years, shall be employed for hire in any capacity in or about any mine." Nothing can be plainer.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—Look at the Coal-mines Bill.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—We are now discussing the Mining Bill, which relates to

mining for gold and other metals, and I may say I was surprised to hear the honourable gentleman rambling, as he did in his speech, from the Mining Bill to the Coal-mines Bill.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I would like to say, as the matter has been referred to, that the provision relating to the employment of women and children was introduced by the Goldfields Committee. It was found in one case that was mentioned to the Committee that a man's wife was in the habit of helping her husband to get out the coal, and it was thought it would be very hard to deprive that poor woman of the right to help her husband. As to this matter, I do not see why a family should not be allowed to assist their father by chopping up the stone and washing it in the cradle. There is more than one man who employs his boys in gathering up the stone and washing the gold in the cradle, and there is more than one family who are making their living in that way.

The Hon. Mr. WILLIAMSON.—The honourable gentleman told us that work is not very plentiful; and to prevent people from taking such work as they can get is probably to keep them hungry. I think it would be much more in keeping with the efforts of some gentlemen if they would point out some work which these people could take. A great many females are looking for employment in this country, and there are very few employments that are suitable for them. I think if the honourable gentleman would devise means for employing all classes of the community he would do a great deal more good than in pointing out what they should not do.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT.—Although the question before the Council is not as to the advisability or otherwise of employing females in mines, I may be allowed to say a word or two on a subject which is familiar to me from long experience. I have for many years been very familiar with the mining districts of Cornwall, and I can only say that women are there employed in very large numbers indeed, both to their own benefit and to that of the community. They are far indeed from being objects of commiseration. They are healthily employed in open sheds for a few hours a day. I have never heard a word of condemnation in reference to this employment—as to its mischievous effects in any way; and it would be a great hardship to them indeed if they were debarred from being so employed.

Bill read a third time.

GOVERNMENT LIFE INSURANCE BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said,—The subject-matter of this Bill, I have no doubt, is one which has been carefully considered by every member of this Council, and especially by any one who has an interest in the Government Life Insurance Association. Notwithstanding that I have no personal interest in it myself, I have given the matter a good deal of consideration. We know well, from what we have heard outside, that this Bill is one which the policy-holders consider necessary. The object of the present Bill is to carry into effect the report of a Select Committee of the other House, which investigated the whole subject-matter of this Bill, and also to carry out the wish of the policy-holders as expressed at a poll taken recently in the City of Wellington, when by a very large majority it was determined that the old state of affairs should be restored. The present Bill practically proposes to re-enact the Act of 1874, with one or two exceptions; and these exceptions are provided for in sections 14, 19, and 22. They are also provided for by an Act, which was passed in 1884, and which ran hand-in-hand, so to speak, with the Government Life Insurance Association Act—namely, "The Life Insurance Policies Act, 1884." It is intended that this measure shall come into operation on the 1st October; and as soon as it comes into operation the Act of 1884 will cease to exist. On that taking place the whole of the property vested in the Board will immediately become vested in Her Majesty the Queen, and all the obligations and liabilities incurred by the Board are to be liabilities for which the Commissioner appointed under the Act will have to take upon himself the responsibility. It is provided by this Bill that the whole of the officers of the institution shall not lose their status as Civil servants because of the change which has taken place, and that the salaries they are at present receiving shall be maintained by appropriation made by the General Assembly. There is a provision in the Bill to which I should like to call the attention of the Council, and that is clause 9. By section 45 of the Act of 1874 provision is made by which the Governor in Council may order accounts to be investigated by actuaries. That is now being done in London. The report has not yet reached the colony. It appears that that report will have to be laid on the tables of both Houses of the General Assembly before any distribution of funds can take place; but, as that report has not reached the colony, it is proposed that the amount which the actuaries say the policy-holders are entitled to shall be distributed as the Government may think proper, upon an order of the Governor in Council. As soon as this Bill becomes law, and as soon as the institution has returned, so to speak, to its former position, it is intended that not less than one-half of the funds shall be invested in Government securities or the securities of local bodies; part may be lent, as far as I remember, to the policy-holders themselves on the security of their policies; and the remainder on mortgage securities on freehold property. For the purpose of looking after and managing the investments on freehold property a Board is to be constituted. That Board is to consist of the Colonial Treasurer, the Solicitor-General, the Surveyor-General, the Property-tax Commissioner, the Public Trustee, and the Commissioner of the department for the time being. It is provided that before any money is lent on freehold securities the Board shall be unani-

s. I remember that last session a resolu- in favour of the course provided for in Bill was moved by the Hon. Mr. Peacock, h was almost scouted by the Council; but ok on it as being now the desire of the ncil, as it is of the policy-holders, that the state of things should be restored. Of se I am merely expressing the views as essed by the policy-holders, and by a Com- ee of another place; and I believe I shall be ulting the wishes of all persons interested his matter if I ask the Council to read this a second time.

he Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I do not rise for purpose of objecting to the second reading his Bill, because I am one of the policy- lers, and I voted for the Association return- to the Government; and I did so because former Act, by the introduction of the tical element, has so bungled the affair it is necessary to do something. When in rely business matter you come to introduce political element, as has been done in this , certainly you begin to find that the whole g is bungled, and that the unfortunate cy-holders and the Government are bound uffer. I am not, however, going into those ters of purchases which have been talked nuch about; and I am not going into the ter of any dispute, except in some cases ch have come under my own personal ob- ation, where the Board were kept as a sort of s to register the edicts of one man, showing force of will of one man on the Board. As as the investment of those moneys is con- ned, as a policy-holder—and I know that I k the views of a large number of the policy- lers—I say that the colony which gives this rantee is entitled to make something out of insurance business, and a large proportion he policy-holders would be perfectly satisfied nvest all the money in Government deben- es at 4 per cent.; and I will show why. In t investment there is no expense, and there no trouble. If you go to invest money on holds you have the inevitable result which have seen. I have heard that while the ociation was under the Board every one s scheming to smuggle bad securities on to Board. When one hears this all round, begins to feel that these securities might be rked through; and these bad securities were, elieve, in some cases, nearly worked through. erefore I hold that, whatever it may be now, all events there should have been no power der the former Board to invest moneys in ehold securities, and I opposed that clause ry bitterly when the Board was going through House: and we have seen the result of its eration. There is a considerable expense in ding on freehold securities, and it would be ry much more satisfactory, in my opinion, if funds were all invested in Government bentures, with the exception of certain ad- nces which are absolutely necessary to carry the work of the Association—that is, loans policies. It will continue necessary for this stitution to do something in that way, be- use other institutions do it, and this Associa- tion cannot be behindhand in that matter. Under regulations they may with safety make certain loans on policies. Even with all the safeguards—and I admit they are fairly good safeguards—I submit that it would be better to do away with these freehold securities. As to making loans, the following came under my observation. The Government Insurance funds and the Government were too flush of money. They went and asked a bank to take £50,000 on fixed deposit. The bank declined to take it; but on consideration it agreed to take £25,000. When the deposit came due, the Board passed a resolution to renew it, getting an Order in Council to make it legal. Find- ing, I presume, that the Government required money, a party representing them moved that the advice of the solicitors should be taken as to its legality. The solicitors said that it was illegal; and the deposit was withdrawn and was placed in another bank. If it was legal to put it in one bank it was legal to put it in another. It left a larger rate of interest—namely, 6 per cent.—and the one it went into only paid 3 per cent. as it went into the general funds of the Government; consequently the Insurance would not get a larger interest than that allowed to the Government themselves. This is the way the Insurance funds were knocked about. So that, I hold, if this Council laid down a rule that the Insurance funds should be invested in Government securities at a certain rate and in no other way, they would be so invested, and we should hear no more about it. I hold, myself, that if you had cleared all the political element out of this Act, and placed it as it was before, and prevented one political party "stumping" against another, the Bill would have worked fairly well, and the institution could have been managed the same as any other institution is managed; and it was entirely owing to the political element being introduced into the matter that the whole arrangement was spoiled by which the Government sought, at some future time, to gradually clear out of their own hands this Association; and I am afraid, with all the competition there is now, that even under the present auspices it will not be managed as well as an institution conducted purely and solely on its own basis, and studying simply the interests of the policy-holders. I do not think there is anything else in the Bill but what might be fairly allowed to pass. All I wish to add is that the unfortunate policy-holders, seeing the way in which the whole concern was being knocked about, could take no other course than what they did. Their only safe policy was to vote to hand the institution back to the Government. That is the reason, I believe, that the majority of the policy-holders voted in the way they did —to get out of the mess they were in at the time.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I should just like to reply to one or two objections that have been raised by my honourable friend Mr. McLean. The honourable gentleman was good enough to inform me of the change of the deposit of money from one bank to another

I may explain that this matter was referred to the solicitor to the Association, and it was found that the only bank that the money could be deposited in was where the Government money was kept. That was the only reason for the change. With regard to the purchase of properties, the honourable gentleman need not be apprehensive on that score for the future, because this Bill, as I ought to have mentioned when moving the second reading of the Bill, contains a clause—clause 14—which provides,—

"The following proviso is hereby added to section thirty-nine of 'The Government Insurance and Annuities Act, 1874:' Provided that expenditure on the purchase of sites and buildings or on buildings shall be paid out of sums appropriated for the purpose from time to time by the General Assembly."

That will prevent any question of that kind arising for the future. I merely wished to make these short explanations, so that my honourable friend need not be under any apprehension as to the position.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 11.—Other part of such moneys may be lent to policy-holders and on mortgage.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN moved, That subsection (2) be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 21.

Barnicoat	Kenny	Reynolds
Bathgate	Lahmann	Shephard
Bonar	Martin	Shrimski
Brett	Peacock	Swanson
Buckley	Peter	Walker
Campbell	Pollen	Whitaker
Dignan	Reeves	Williams.

NOES, 9.

Fraser	Menzies	Robinson
Johnson, G. R.	Miller	Williamson
Mantell	McLean	Wilson.

Majority for, 12.

Subsection retained.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

COUNTIES BILL.

The following message was received from the House of Representatives:—

"REASONS of the House of Representatives for disagreeing with the Amendments made by the Legislative Council in Sections 46, 47, 157, 181, 185, 195, 289, 291, and 313 of the Counties Bill.

"As to the new paragraphs added to section 46: First, that the proposed method of adjusting the representation will prove entirely unworkable; second, that the provision conflicts with the previous part of the section.

"As to section 47: The limit of one month is insufficient time to allow the Council to carry out what is required by special order. If two months were proposed, that might be accepted.

"As to section 157: That the amendment made is an infringement of the privileges of this House, and the House trusts that this will be a sufficient reason to induce the Council to waive its amendment.

"As to section 181 (new paragraphs): While the House recognizes the need of some such provision as has been added by the Council it may happen that the Chairman may not have received the yearly balance-sheets and statements. The paragraph would be unobjectionable if the words 'if received by the Chairman or Council' were inserted between the words 'not' and 'published' in the second line of the new paragraph, and if a proviso were inserted at the end of the last paragraph to the following effect: 'Provided always that the Chairman shall not be liable to any penalty if he has not received the balance-sheet, statement, or exceptions respectively.'

"As to section 185: The limit to ten ratepayers is too small, as a special audit is expensive. If the limit were fixed at one-twelfth of the ratepayers, such an amendment would be acceptable to the House.

"As to section 195: The way in which the section is framed gives all absentees votes against a new loan; and where there is a large number of absentee proprietors it makes it impossible to ascertain the true feeling of the ratepayers in regard to borrowing. Second, that the provision will be found unworkable and unfair, especially in districts with a scattered population.

"As to section 289: As the power to found agricultural schools is optional, and some counties desire it, there can be no harm in encouraging local self-government by giving the counties power to do so if they please.

"As to section 291: This provision has been in force for many years, and no harm has resulted from it. Second, it is a very necessary provision, because in many country districts it will be impossible to found a library without some aid outside of the subsidy granted by the Government.

"As to section 313: The amendment made allows of the Chairman of the Road Board delaying the sending of the accounts until the 30th June, whilst the Chairman of the county is bound, by the previous clause, to send in the accounts on or before the same date. Were the date altered to the 14th June, there would be time to comply with the terms of the former section."

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS moved, That the Council do not insist upon its amendments in this Bill. In doing so, he knew that a number of honourable members would not agree with him. If, however, Managers were appointed to meet Managers of the other House, an agreement would be come to. If it was the desire of the Council he would move an adjournment of the debate to some other time, to enable them to consider the amendments.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN said it was impossible for any person to take the responsibility of saying he would or would not agree to that

ndments that were proposed, without having to see what they were. There were one ro amendments in this message which he quite sure the Council would not agree to, there was another one which he heard —and which he was exceedingly sorry to read—which raised a question of the lege of the Council. He thought this was edingly unfortunate, and he moved, That lebate be adjourned until next day.

ebate adjourned.

AL BODIES' FINANCE AND POWERS BILL.

ne Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—The Local ies' Finance and Powers Bill provides for annual appropriation of funds for local es. It contains the same provisions as the al Bodies' Finance and Powers Act of 1885, is almost exactly, word for word, the same hat Act. The payments to the local bodies one-half the amount to which they would ntitled under the plan of distribution de- bed in the schedule to the Act of 1885. ances may also be made to local bodies he extent of 75 per cent. of the amounts ch they may be entitled to receive, and the ls are provided one-half from the Public rks Fund and the other half from the con- dated revenue. The Bill is one of those ple Bills which ought to be so well known he members of this Council as not to re- re any further explanation. I move, That Bill be now read a second time.

he Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—The Bill is a very ple one, no doubt, but it affects a good deal money.

he Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—It is the usual l.

he Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I know it is the al Bill; but I wish to draw my honourable nd's attention to the last clause of it, and sk him if that is the usual clause. That use provides, "The schedule to the said Act hereby amended by the omission therefrom the words 'during each financial year,' and substitution of '1887' for '1886' in the t paragraph of the said schedule." Does t mean that this sort of Bill is to come on in next year, or is this the last renewal of Act? I am not going to say that I do not ee to that, because it will probably be found t I shall agree to it; but I say those words very ominous. It means that no renewal the Bill will be needed next year.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—Sir, the honour- le gentleman who has just moved the second ding of this Bill has told us that it is a very ple Bill, and one which anybody could ily understand. It is clear, to my mind, m what he has said, that, simple as the Bill his understanding has not been adequate the comprehension of the provisions of the ll. He has told us that it is exactly the me Bill as that of last year, while, on the e of the Bill, it proposes to repeal the most portant clause of the Bill of last year, and act a different clause instead of it. Of urse one does not expect disquisitions on the principles of Bills of this character from the honourable gentleman, nor on the details of them. I think he is never less intelligible than when he is in what I call a state of explanation. Certainly he is not fortunate in his explanations. I have no doubt, however, that when we get into Committee we shall get some further information than it has been convenient for the honourable gentleman to give us on moving the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I rise to offer a few words in reply, first of all, to the Hon. Dr. Pollen. He says this Bill repeals a very important clause of the Act of 1885. So it does; but what does it repeal? It provides to omit the words "during each financial year" from the schedule, and to substitute "1887" for "1886," so that we are now providing for 1886 to 1887, and therefore it is necessary to repeal the section.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—What I want to know is, What is to be the duration of the Loans to Local Bodies Bill of this year in connection with this business? Also, are we to have two sources of loans—one the Government loans to local bodies, or this renewal of the Act of last year, which was merely temporary?

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—This is not the Loans to Local Bodies Bill. This is a temporary measure to provide for this year, until such time as the local bodies get into full working order to provide means for carrying on their functions. The honourable member has said it repeals a very important clause. It does repeal it, but it re-enacts it by making it applicable to the year 1886–87, instead of 1885–86. Then, the Hon. Mr. McLean was anxious to know whether I would explain clause 4 of the Bill. It requires no explanation. We have our Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Bill, and we shall have the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill; and I hope to see no such Bill as this in future. This Bill merely makes provision that it shall last for the current year.

Bill read a second time.

NEW ZEALAND LOAN BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I move, That the New Zealand Loan Bill be read a third time.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—After what has taken place, I apprehend the Council will expect that there should be some discussion upon what has been done. I may say at once that the motion for referring this Bill to a Committee was made by myself, and I was the Chairman of that Committee, and it therefore reasonably devolves upon me to make some observations as to what we have done. There has been great misapprehension as to the object I had in view, and also the object which the Council had in view in dealing with this Bill as they did in referring it to a Select Committee. No doubt the Bill is one which the Council cannot amend. I realized that and the Council realized that from the commencement; but there were certain matters which required to be elucidated, and I thought the most

venient mode of doing that would be by the Committee. I had no intention of trespassing in any shape or way upon the privileges of the House of Representatives; I always endeavour, as far as I can, not to get into any conflict of that kind: but there are, of course, positions in which it is necessary that the Council should take up its own views and press those views so far as the Council thinks it reasonable. In this case there was an important principle in question, and I think the Committee has done exactly what the Council intended it to do from the beginning; and I know of no ground of complaint which can reasonably be made by members of the other House as to the course taken by the Council. Under the law as it at present stands there are three things to be done in connection with the construction of a railway. The first is to resolve that the line is to be made. That must be done under the Public Works Act of 1882; and, in order that the line may be legally made, there must be what is called a "special Act"—that is, a special Act declaring where the line begins, where it ends, and the course it takes. That is the logical commencement of it. The Council, then, is placed in this position by the law as it stands: that they should examine this question as to the making of the railway; and the railway might originate, as far as I can see, in the Council, though it usually does in the House. It usually originates there, because afterwards the money must be provided for in the House. When the Bill comes up here, I apprehend it is the duty of the Council to see, at all events, that the line is one they are of opinion should be made. The Bill that comes up for the purpose of authorizing the making of the railway is one which can be altered in any of its clauses by the Council as well as by the House. It is not a Bill connected with money in any shape whatever. Being free from that, it is the right of the Council to make such alterations as it thinks fit; and it appears to me, when we come to consider the great question of making railways, and the large amount of money that is hereafter to be spent on them, and when the work is thrown on the Council of seeing that those railways are such as should be constructed, it is our duty to see that the railways are such as it is advantageous should be made. Having got the authorization Bill—which, as I say, is the joint work of the Council and the House—the next question is the raising of the money. The Council has nothing to do with that, except this: to pass or reject the Bill the House may send up. As an instance, the Loan Bill has been sent up, and that Bill it is perfectly competent for the Council, should it think fit, to reject; it is competent to pass it; but it is not competent for the Council to make any alterations. Supposing we found that these railways had not been duly authorized, then it would have been illegal for us to pass this Bill. All that we could have done then would have been to put it on one side until the House undertook to pass an authorization Bill, and then it would have been for us to pass the Bill. All that we could do was to reject it in its integrity or pass it in its integrity. The third step is to pass the necessary appropriation. That is another Bill which rests entirely with the House. But, with regard to this Loan Bill, it is competent, as the Council well know, to accept the Bill *in toto* or to reject it *in toto*, but they cannot amend. It appears to me that the Council for some years past has to a certain extent been neglecting its duty. I do not say that of one Government or another Government, for I feel that I have been remiss the same as other honourable members; but we have not done our duty as members of this Council. Authorization Bills have been sent up from the other House, and they have been passed in a perfunctory manner, and have never been sifted or carefully looked into. I think when these Bills are sent up here we ought to go thoroughly into the matter and see whether the railway is one which should, in our opinion, be made. If honourable members will look back at the different authorization Bills which have been passed since the public works policy commenced they will recollect that these Bills have been passed without that consideration which, I think, they were entitled to. People say, "Oh, some of these railways are political railways." If they are political railways, we are participators in the offence as well as the House of Representatives. These Bills are Bills which we can deal with as we think fit, and, if we have not dealt with them as we think they ought to have been dealt with, that is a dereliction of our duty. I say again, that this duty of the Council is a most important one, and is one in the carrying-out of which the greatest care should be exercised. I, for my part, think that no authorization of any railway should take place except where there has been a most careful examination of all that is necessary in order to justify the passing of the Bill. We have, hitherto, not done that. Each railway has never been discussed as it ought to have been, to see whether all the circumstances connected therewith were correct. We have passed Bills as a matter of course when they came to us, and we have not fulfilled that duty which the law casts upon us and requires us to perform. With regard to the railways now before us, the Committee were to inquire whether or not these railways were duly authorized by Act. Upon investigation we found that, although they purported to be authorized, the descriptions in several cases were not alike, and it was impossible to trace them. No doubt in the Public Works Department they could, I presume, trace them; but we ought not to be satisfied with that. Comparing the schedule of the Loan Bill with the authorization Act, I could not trace some of these railways at all. It required local knowledge. I think that in all cases the descriptions in the authorization Act, the Loan Act, and the Appropriation Act should agree, so that there may be no difficulty about it, because that question possibly may be raised in the Supreme Court hereafter. Money being granted for the purpose, it devolves upon the Minis-

Hon. Sir F. Whitaker

to make the railway. I apprehend that, he proceeds to make a railway which is t authorized, he does so without the autho- y given by special Act, and I apprehend at an application to the Supreme Court uld prohibit his going on with the work. e Supreme Court has, to a certain extent, a perintending power; and, if the Court finds at a railway is being made without the thority of law, it may, on a proper appli- tion being made to it, by a prohibition injunction order prevent the line being oceeded with. I think, then, we should at ast give some consideration to this point. ere was another branch of the inquiry, hich was that we were to ascertain to what tent the moneys would go in completing e railways, and what the probable cost of mpleting them would be. We had the evi- nce of Mr. O'Connor, who gave us all the formation we desired on the subject. By reference to the Public Works Statements hedules, and different returns, no doubt a eat deal of this information could be picked it; but it would have been a work of consider- le trouble, and it would require somebody ho understands the subject to be able to ck out the information. We have concen- ated the information we have obtained in return, in order that the Council may be in ll possession of it at one view. To a certain tent I have been, for some time past, rather armed at the amount which, it appeared to e, would probably be required for completion the railways we have already begun, and hich works to a certain extent, it appears to e, must be completed. I find that the two rge railways—the Helensville Northwards line nd the Otago Central—which are the two astly ones, will take £645,000 and £855,000 to mplete; and that it will take £2,179,000 to mplete all the railways on the schedule. If had been asked what the cost would probably e, before I got this information, I should have ated at least double that amount. There- re I feel relieved to a certain extent. No oubt some of these railways are near com- letion, and most of them have had a con- derable amount of work done to them. So ar as these railways are concerned, it appears me indispensable that they should be com- leted. So far from my having in view the opping of the Loan Bill, my view would have een, had I known as much as I do now and een in a position to make a proposition on the ubject, that far the best thing would have een to have at once borrowed enough money to mplete the whole of these railways. Some ears ago we raised a loan of five mil- ons, and spent it at the rate of a million year. I think that something of the same ind might have been done now, seeing that ese lines must be made, and seeing that s soon as this money is spent it will be still ore urgent that more should be obtained in rder that they should be completed. It only equires £2,197,000 to complete all the lines. orrowing at the present time is done at price at which, if war broke out, or a variety of circumstances occurred, we could not obtain money. I think, therefore, the better course would have been to have had some plan to complete these railways. With regard to the future, when there is no authorization the Council, acting up to its duty, will virtually have the right to say, in point of fact, whether money shall be borrowed. When any new rail- ways are proposed it will be able to say, "No; we do not think these railways ought to be made;" and it can reject the authorization, which means that no money shall be borrowed for them, as no railway can be made except by a special authorization Act, and when that Act comes to this Council it is perfectly competent to the Council to deal with it in any way it may think fit. I do not propose to make any motion; but I think, on the whole, that a discussion should take place. I think the report should be adopted, and therefore, after the third reading of this Bill, I shall give notice to that effect. I think that is the course which should be taken. The report sets out exactly what we have done, the ground upon which we have done it, and what we con- ceive to be our duty in the future. I have given explanations which I think desirable, and I say again that we in no way proposed to over- step our duty or privileges, or encroach on those of others. I am quite sure the Council never does desire it. No doubt cases difficult to determine arise sometimes; but I do not think the House of Representatives would desire to curtail our rights, and I am sure the Council never desires to trespass on theirs. Beyond these observations I have nothing further to say, and I leave the Loan Bill to take its course.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—It will be remembered that I opposed the appointment of this Committee. I did so under the im- pression that the object of the Committee was to see solely that these lines had all been authorized. Knowing, as I did, that they are all authorized excepting a part of the line from Helensville northwards, I thought that the Committee was unnecessary; but, as a member of that Committee, I am prepared to say that I am well satisfied that the Committee was appointed. It has done a vast deal of good, in as far as it shows us the exact position we are in with regard to these railways. It shows us what are our liabilities under them, and it also gave the members of the Committee informa- tion which I do not suppose we were all pos- sessed of before—that every railway, before it can be constructed, must be authorized by both Houses of Parliament; so that it will be entirely in our own power to stop any railways for the future. I thought, seeing that I was so strongly opposed to the appointment of the Committee, that it would be only right I should now state that I am perfectly satisfied that the Committee was appointed.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—It appears to me that the labours of the Committee have been very valuable indeed. I only regret that the limited time at their disposal prevented them entering more fully into the matter. I gather

from the statement of the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker that the position we shall now be in is this: that in all future Loan Bills we shall have something like estimates of those lines which the colony thinks it desirable to construct, and what the cost of those lines will be. Before any new lines of railway are adopted by Parliament the fullest inquiries will be made into the merits of those lines. The absence of such inquiries I take to be the greatest blot on our public works policy. I think it would have saved millions to New Zealand if we had seen what lines were required, and what their cost would be, and had then borrowed the money. In the future borrowing of moneys for railways we should insist on having full information on the subject; and if we do that we shall be proceeding on something like sound principles in connection with our borrowing, and any unnecessary expenditure will thereby be saved. It appears to me that we are making the first movement in the right direction.

The Hon. Captain FRASER.—Now that the Committee have given us the information that they have given, what are we going to do with it? Are we going to lay this Bill aside, or are we going to swallow it? I think we are made perfectly ridiculous by the action we have taken. We know that part of this Helensville line is not authorized. Are we going to pass it? It would have been far better if we had not moved in the matter at all. If I stand alone, I shall vote against the third reading of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. MENZIES.—The remarks which have fallen from the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker on this subject are well worthy of attention, especially those in which he pointed out to the Council that they should look carefully into the authorization Bills rather than to the Loan Bills, and that those are much more important and essential than the question of voting the money. My honourable friend Mr. Bonar referred to the same point, and said that it was a very desirable thing that we should look very carefully into the character of the lines before we authorized them. When the public works policy was first being launched and carried out this question was warmly discussed in the Council, and, after repeated discussions, the majority decided that a rough estimate, such as is usually called a parliamentary survey, gave quite sufficient information to guide the Legislature in authorizing the construction of the railways. If we have been remiss in carefully and properly investigating the character of the railways before we gave authority to make them, the fault was altogether our own, because that very point was repeatedly brought under the notice of the Council, and the Council, more than once, was quite satisfied with what is called a parliamentary survey. No doubt the Council acted very injudiciously and precipitately in not requiring that all information should be given before it did authorize any railway. The Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker pointed out, for the approval of the Council, what really deserves its approval in the character of the inquiry made by this Committee; but I do not think that this Committee by any means exhausted the field. If the Committee had had more time it should have gone into the question of the value of the railways which it is proposed to construct. That, I think, ought to have been considered quite essential. I think also we should ascertain how far those railways have paid a percentage on the cost of their construction, and how far they will pass through country where the traffic is likely to be considerable, and how far they are likely to pay if further extensions are made. That would have been quite a legitimate line of inquiry if there had been time to carry it out. I cannot agree with the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker in saying it was right that those lines should be completed if he adds the word "now" or "shortly." That they will be completed at some future time I think is quite right and equally certain; but that they should be pushed on to their completion at the present time is, I think, a mistake. It involves a want of a thorough understanding of the condition of the country. The pushing-forward of these railways now means the borrowing of more money, and that means a larger annual charge for interest, and that means heavier taxation. I maintain, and I have said so often before, that the producing classes of the country have a burden of taxation quite as heavy as they can stagger under, and any increase of taxation, or even the continuance of the present rate of taxation, is likely to produce disaster. Therefore I think it would have been wiser to have looked more closely into the various works which are referred to in the schedule, and have picked out those only which would be likely to pay something more than working expenses, and would be likely to yield some return for their construction at the present time. There are other lines which will yet be constructed. But there is no hurry: they pass through country from which it is impossible for a long time to come to expect a fair return, and therefore I think it would be far wiser to abstain from borrowing one sixpence for them for the present. When the condition of the colony is more prosperous, then we can push on whatever lines are required. I have no desire to thwart the policy of the Government with reference to the present Bill. I will not make any motion or say anything in opposition to the Bill further than express my own views on it, and I say most distinctly that I think it is unwise to borrow more money and thereby increase the liability and the burden of taxation.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I somewhat agree with the Hon. Captain Fraser, that the natural outcome of the report of this Committee would be, as a matter of course, to lay this Bill aside until the special Bill authorizing the Helensville Northwards Railway passes this House. But that would be an extreme course, and one which, under the circumstances, I am not prepared to adopt, because I am aware that the Government are anxious to send this Bill Home by the San Francisco mail, and I have

No. 26.

NEW ZEALAND.

ARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

10th August to 12th August

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1886.

Price 2d.

desire, as the money will have to be borrowed, to stand in the way of the Bill passing. I think we have come to a point now when we have made all the railways which are likely to be for some time to come; and with regard to all the railways which are on the schedule of this Bill, I think that the interest on three-fourths of the money to be spent on them will have to come out of the pockets of the taxpayer, because they are such lines as, even their best friends admit, will not pay more than working expenses for some time to come. Before sanctioning the unauthorized railway, I should like to set this Committee to work to ascertain whether it is a line which should be authorized or not. The Committee has done excellent work, and I think it is a very good thing that we have had it, as it will place some matters before the public which ought to be placed before them. In regard to this railway, I hear a good many different opinions about it. One opinion is that it should not be made, and another is that it will be a good, paying line. In England a company has to go through a course of investigation before the Imperial Parliament; evidence is taken on every point before they are even allowed to spend their own money: and much more should we require that in this colony, where it is public money that we are going to spend, and which, if it is spent badly, will have to be paid for by the taxpayers. That Glensville Northward line is not authorized.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Four miles are authorized.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—You can spend that, but if it is not authorized the money can be spent on other purposes. It is easy to get the money and apply it to the prosecution of other lines. Therefore I do not propose to stop the Bill. Then I come to the double line out of Auckland. No doubt it is necessary to have that. Then, as to the Grahamstown-Te Aroha line, I was at Grahamstown when the first contract was let, and I say that was really the laughing-stock of that place. They were reclaiming a lot of land from the sea at a cost which would have bought half the land along the line, and the houses too. I believe that no more has been done to that since. It is proposed, at Te Aroha, where the line is to be made, to spend £165,000 alongside of a navigable river. Those who know the district know that we need not expect to get more than working expenses for some time to come, and even that is doubtful; consequently the taxpayers will be called on to pay up annually between £60,000 and £70,000 for interest. I think the expenditure on that line might have been saved in the present state of the finances of the colony. It is a ridiculous authorization to have made, and it is to be hoped that the money will be applied to other railways, notwithstanding that my honourable friend says that it is ear-marked for this purpose. The Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker says that if all the railways are completed it will cost £3,127,000.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I said the sooner we made arrangements to raise the money the better, and that it would be the best plan, now that money is so cheap.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I quite accept that position, and am glad my honourable friends puts it in that way; but how is he to arrange to borrow on from year to year now that money is cheap?

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—We did it before. We borrowed five millions, to be spent at the rate of a million a year.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—The circumstances of that Five-million Loan I do not wish to rake up again. The amount of money that the people of this colony were fleeced out of by speculators was astonishing. I hope we are not going to have a repetition of that. I do not think my honourable friend would care to see a repetition of that speculation again. As to money being arranged for year after year, there is no way of doing that, because you have to put it on the London money-market. If you raise a large sum of money like that, and throw it into the banks of the colony to be lent out and distributed over the colony, when you come to take out the money quickly you create a panic and bring the colony back to a worse position than it is in now. I myself am not against borrowing—we cannot do without borrowing; but if you get the money quickly it will go quickly. I wish to impress on the public now that the railways we are making are bound to be a heavy burden on the people of the colony. I need not detain the Council now, because I referred to all these railway-lines at a previous stage of the debate. We have entered upon these railways, and they are bound to be made to a point where they will even pay working expenses, and we must go on to that point; and it is useless to say we are going to stop borrowing now, because we must borrow to make the railways to that point, and to improve the country and settle it, and by degrees we shall get them to pay their way to some extent. I have no objection to the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—I think that this Council is very much indebted to the honourable gentleman who moved for this Committee, and who has so clearly shown what its duty is; and I think we may regard this discussion as very instructive in several respects. I hold it is the duty of this Council not only to insist on asserting its views in the passing of all these railway-authorization Bills, but in the initiation of any public work of any magnitude, outside, of course, of departmental expenditure. If honourable members will look at the return which has been laid on the table during the present session with regard to public buildings they will see that a million and a half has been spent on public buildings during the last sixteen years, and this Council has never had any voice in saying Yea or Nay to that expenditure. I think we certainly ought, for the future, looking at the point of taxation which we have reached, to insist on being consulted, and on having the power to assent or dissent, as the case may be, in the matter of these large public works. The true friends of this colony are

those persons who do insist upon pointing out that we have reached the limit of taxation beyond which we cannot go. It has been over and over again shown here that, if we compare the taxation to which we are subjected here with the taxation at Home we shall find, taking as a basis that the value of money is 5 per cent., that 1d. in the pound property-tax in New Zealand is equivalent to 1s. 8d. income-tax in England. The income-tax of 1s. 8d. in England was the highest tax, I believe, which was ever imposed in England, and it was admittedly a war tax. It does seem ridiculous that in a young colony like this, for the sake of public works many of them of doubtful benefit, we should go on imposing taxation to the extent I have just stated. There is no doubt that a great many of these lines will not pay. I believe that if this Council had had these lines before them in the form of a simple railway-authorization Bill, with all the necessary data to form an estimate of whether they would pay or not, they would not have assented to a great many of them. I remember the discussion which took place in this Council when the public works policy was introduced. Member after member rose and said that the proper thing to do was to find out the cost of the railways, what were likely to be their revenues, &c.; but all that advice and those ideas were swept away, and we have been plunging on and on at railway-speed ever since. When the Government found that they were unable to resist this enormous pressure for railways, they hid their heads and passed the District Railways Act, thinking to get rid of the pressure in that way: and all these things have come on the colony. I hope this report will mark the beginning of a new era, and that this Council will firmly insist on its right to be consulted in the initiation of any large public work; and that, no matter what the unpopularity it may incur by so doing, it will firmly refuse to add to the liabilities of the colony, unless it sees a good prospect of the works paying.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—My honourable friend who has just sat down anticipated me in the expression of the view that the Council must be indebted to my honourable and learned friend for having moved for this Committee. No Government, I do not care what Government it is, is fitted for its position if it shirks responsibility or investigation of this kind. When this Bill was under discussion I was somewhat alarmed at the notion that Government after Government had been acting without the sanction of law, especially when the alarm came from my honourable and learned friend. I thought he must have made some new discovery in connection with the matter. The whole of the railways referred to in this Bill have been authorized, except the Helensville one, for which authority is asked. It seems to me that this discussion might more fittingly be taken when the authorization Bill comes before us. We are indebted to the honourable gentleman for having got this Committee, and I hope that on every similar occasion such a Committee will be moved for in this Council. I opposed the Committee because of the late stage of the session, because I thought probably the Bill might be in danger. But I am not at all sorry now that the Committee was appointed. However, the discussion will have one good effect—namely, that in future no railway will be authorized without the Council having some voice in the matter. I think the Council will be abrogating its functions on every occasion when public moneys are to be expended if it does not demand the fullest inquiry. I hope the Council will never for a moment abrogate its functions in that respect. We are as much the representatives of the people in some respects as the other branch of the Legislature, and the people look to us to do our duty. I am sure the Council will always give the fullest investigation to every matter of this kind which comes before it. The country expects that it should do so, and I am sure the Council will respond to the call of the country.

Bill read a third time.

The Council adjourned at a quarter past nine o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 10th August, 1886.

Maungatautari Block—Counties Bill—Municipal Corporations Bill—Wanganui River—Kurow Land—A. Clayden—Nelson-Blenheim Line—Te Whiti—Manawatu Gorge Bridge—Cust Telegrams—Kurow Cattle-yards—Telegraph Operators—Kurow Runs—Industrial Schools and Orphanages—"Hinemoa"—Cross Creek Employés—Wax Vestas—Mr. Gladstone—Lighthouse-keepers—Colonial and Imperial Squadron—Fruit Tariff on Railways—T. Kukupa—Thames Resident Magistrate—Rehearing of Native Land Claims—Parnell Vaccinator—Rotorua Sanatorium—Annual Railway Tickets—Telegraph Forms—Sheep Diseases—Unemployed—Stamp Bill—Settled Land Bill—Property Assessment Bill—Special Powers and Contracts Bill—Mining Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

MAUNGATAUTARI BLOCK.

Colonel TRIMBLE brought up the report of the Native Affairs Committee on the petitions of Harete Tamihana and others, Rutene te Umanga and others, White Potato and others, Te Wharepu te Whakaete and others, Wi Kaukuita Papoto and others, and Wi te Wheru. He moved, That the report do lie on the table, and be referred to the Government.

Mr. TE AO was very sorry that the labours of the Committee in this matter were without avail. The Committee had no power to accede to the prayers of petitions for rehearing. He did not approve of the judgment of the Court in the Maungatautari Block. He thought the Native Assessor did not conduct himself pro-

y. Very good reasons which had been iced for rehearing in that case had been iout avail. The same remarks applied to case of Te Kapua Block. The petitioners set forth that the Native Assessor who had in the Maungatautari case had behaved ' improperly. The Assessor was directly rested through his wife, whose name was nded in the certificate. It was not at all t that the Assessor in a case should have power to put the names of his wife and dren in the certificate for the block. It wed that the constitution of the Court was . He found great fault with that Assessor. was also stated in the petitions that this essor received money before the judgment the Court was delivered. There was no bt that money was given to him by way of e. Seeing that the man was being paid by Government, it was most improper conduct his part to accept money from any one else. receipts for the money received by the essor had been produced before the Royal mmissioner who had inquired into the tter, and also before the Chief Judge of the tive Land Court; but the Assessor himself er appeared before the Commissioner while inquiry was being made. Receipts for £25, , £15, and £10 were produced, and it was known that he had received £200 from the k, and he received a cheque in Auckland £25. The total sum he had received was y large. This showed that there was someng radically wrong. When it was proposed strike out the names of the Assessor's wife l children from the list of names for the tificate, this man was heard to say, before a mber of people, that it was entirely through exertions that the successful people obned the land—that but for his influence the posing parties would have obtained it. Three ve charges had been proved against the essor, and he hoped the Government would efully consider these matters. It was true t a Royal Commissioner had made a report; t the Natives did not know what that report s, as it had not been translated. Seeing t the Court failed in its duty, the Governnt should secure a rehearing of this block. made no charges whatever against the Chief dge or against the Court, but only against Assessor. That was all he had to say th regard to Maungatautari. He would w speak with regard to Te Kapua Block. did not think the decision given by the urt in that case a just one. One of the incipal claimants, Hone Tumango, stated, en giving evidence, that the evidence he d given at the *primâ facie* hearing was unken evidence—that he was not sober at e time. A witness was not worthy of any dence when he admitted that he had been unk, and the Court should not have paid any tention to a man who had made that kind of tement. Then, again, this man had not sided on or near the land. He lived a long ay off, at Wanganui, eighty miles from e block which was awarded to him. Hone d his co-claimant had told the Court that they had plantations upon and had resided upon the land, while it was well known that they had never visited the place. He made no charge against the Court, but he did regret that the Court had not sent some one up to inspect the land. That was a custom of the Court, and in other cases he knew that persons had been sent up to inspect the marks mentioned in the evidence. During a recent sitting of the Court at Wanganui the same people had claimed land at Pohonuiatane; but the Court took the precaution of sending people up to inspect the land, and it was then proved that these people had no right there. If the Court had not taken that precaution it would probably have fallen into the same error as it had done on a previous occasion. He asked the Government to take these matters into consideration, because he thought that the fact was sufficient to justify the Government in ordering a rehearing. He should like to mention, also, that when the land at Kapua was surveyed Hone Tumango signed an agreement by which he admitted that a certain Native woman was an owner of the land; but yet he did not include her in the list of owners. The Court had possession of that document at the time, and ought to have remembered it.

Mr. BRUCE had presented the Kapua petition, and, having taken considerable interest in the matter, was strongly of opinion that there had been a miscarriage of justice. He made this statement without wishing in the slightest degree to reflect on the character of the Court which tried the case. So far as he had gleaned from the unsuccessful claimants in the matter, they were all of opinion that the Judges who sat in the case were men of irreproachable character; but, nevertheless, he did contend that there had been a miscarriage of justice. Nor did he wish to reflect upon the report which the Committee had brought up. They could have brought up no other report than that which had been placed before the House; and for this reason: that the petitioners approached the House on the ground that irregularities had been committed in Court in reference to this case; but that allegation utterly broke down. Still, the fact remained that men who had lived seventy miles away from the land had claimed it, and that claim had been sustained by the Court. There was a consensus of opinion, among both white men and Maoris, that a wrong had been done. He thought therefore that there ought to be a rehearing; and he hoped, although that was a very inadvisable precedent to establish, the Native Minister would give the matter very full consideration, with a view of seeing whether that suggestion should not be carried out.

Mr. LOCKE thought that in these matters of rehearing very great care should be taken. It was clear that the Native Affairs Committee and the House were both incapable of coming to a decision on such a subject. Any one of these questions, if properly inquired into, would take up the whole session. He hoped that,

respect to this particular matter, the Government would look into it; and he also hoped that during the recess the Government would take the general question into consideration, with a view of coming down with some scheme for setting up a tribunal to deal with these applications for rehearing. Above all things it was essentially necessary that these matters should be kept out of the House and should be entirely removed from anything like political influence.

Mr. GRACE wished to add to what had been said by previous speakers that four petitions had come before the Native Affairs Committee this year praying for rehearings as to the blocks of land referred to by the honourable member for the Western Maori District, and for the Tatua West and Ohinemuri Block; and that it had not been able to give that time to them which, in his opinion, they deserved. He supported what had been said by the honourable member for the East Coast, and thought that the Government next session should consider the advisableness of moving for the appointment of a special Committee for the purpose of examining petitions for rehearings in the Native Land Court and for nothing else, for it must be borne in mind that Parliament was the only tribunal open to these petitioners, all other doors being closed.

Mr. BRYCE hoped that the Government would take great care how they dealt with these matters. The Native Affairs Committee had always found itself to be in a difficulty upon the subject, because it had never felt itself competent to enter into the merits of such questions, to enable it to arrive at decisions in regard to rehearing of title to Native land. The Committee had reported some years ago, and had from time to time repeated the report, that it was not competent to deal with such questions, and had recommended that a competent tribunal should be appointed to deal with these matters. At one time it was arranged that the Native Minister should have the power to decide when there should be rehearings; but he had to apply for information to the Chief Judge, who, in turn, applied to the hearing Judge, and then advised the Minister: so that the Minister had to rely on the opinion of these two Judges; and, while the Minister was responsible, he had no information beyond what he could get from these two Judges. That arrangement was so anomalous that it was soon put an end to; and then the Chief Judge became the party to whom applications had to be made, and he was authorized by law to give decisions upon such applications. Now, in many cases the Natives who appealed to the Chief Judge were dissatisfied with the refusal of rehearings. The Chief Judge, not unnaturally, was not in favour of granting rehearings, because of the enormous expense imposed upon the owners of blocks in respect of which these applications were made. There were instances—well-authenticated instances, he believed—in which the whole, or nearly the whole, of the value of the land had been absorbed by the expenditure in connection with the ascertainment of the title. Therefore there was no doubt that the competent authorities, or the people authorized to grant a rehearing, hesitated long before they granted a rehearing upon anything like slight grounds. To show how thoroughly incompetent the Committee must be, with the time at its disposal, and the various constitutions of the Committee—that was, different members attended from day to day—he thought it only necessary to mention the single case which the honourable member for Rangitikei had referred to. The case was heard before two of the best Judges in the Service, thoroughly competent Maori scholars, and men whose integrity was above suspicion, and was not, in fact, impugned by any witness they had heard. The hearing of that case extended over forty-two days, the claimants and counter-claimants being all present; and the Court arrived at a certain decision. Whether that decision was right or wrong he, at any rate, was not competent to pronounce an opinion—that was to say, not competent in any degree in comparison with the two Judges who heard the whole of the evidence. It would, he thought, be wrong for a Committee of the House to assume that it knew, or for the Native Minister to assume to himself that he knew, more of the circumstances of the case than those two skilled and impartial Judges knew after forty-two days' investigation. To assume that would be almost ridiculous. And those two Judges, it should be remarked, did not think a rehearing necessary in that case. He (Mr. Bryce) did not know anything of the merits of the case, and was unwilling to express an opinion; but, as a member of the Committee, he assented to the report because he was unwilling to pronounce upon the case, as he could not put his knowledge in comparison with that of the Judges who tried it. There might have been, as the honourable member for Rangitikei said, a miscarriage of justice; but what more could the House do than secure two Judges of high character, with a full knowledge of the Native language, to hear the case patiently for forty-two days? It seemed to him that that went a long way in the endeavour to secure justice. And he would point out this: that, if rehearings were to be granted, they should not be granted excepting upon very strong grounds, because rehearings were most expensive to the owners of the lands.

Mr. BALLANCE was sure there was no disposition on the part of the House to dispute the conclusions arrived at by the honourable member for Waitotara with regard to this question. It was very difficult indeed to go beyond the decision arrived at by the Judges after a calm and full inquiry in open Court; and, if there was anything which would satisfy honourable members that the decision arrived at—at any rate, in one of the cases—was a right one, it was that the two Judges who heard the case came before the Committee last session and gave their evidence. On the petition presented with regard to the Te Kapua case, they gave the Committee the reasons upon which they

arrived at their decision. After listening the evidence given by those Judges, and er a full inquiry—not so full an inquiry as uld have taken place in open Court, but one the most exhaustive Committee inquiries t had taken place — the Native Affairs nmittee arrived at the conclusion that it ld not recommend a rehearing of the case. th regard to the Maungatautari case, he ught that the conduct of the Assessor was n to grave suspicion; but upon that point the evidence that was possible had been en before a competent Judge — a Judge the District Court—who was appointed for purpose of hearing the charges against the essor, and, though he was not altogether isfied with the conduct of the Assessor, yet arrived at the conclusion that what he had e would not render him liable to be charged h bribery. It seemed to him nothing could ce the matter in a clearer light than the narks of the honourable member for Waito-a. The Government was asked to con-er the question during the recess; but at machinery was there at the disposal of Government to arrive at any satisfactory nclusion with regard to the merits of a case? was quite impossible for the Government elf to set up a tribunal to hear evidence on th sides, and the Government had no power law to authorize the Court to review. With gard to the Maungatautari case, he might k the House to pass an Act to allow the ques-n to be reopened; and he would have less sinclination to do that were it not for the ct that Europeans had purchased some of e land, and had large vested interests, which uld entail upon the House and the Govern-ent of the colony grave responsibilities from pecuniary point of view. So that it appeared him that it was almost outside the ordinary ibunals to deal with these cases, and almost tside the competency of the House to re-en them. He agreed that great care should taken with regard to allowing rehearings. was true that the Native Land Court Bill this session did establish an Appeal Court pon a different foundation, and it provided at, where the case was heard before the hief Judge, the rehearing should take place fore two Judges of the Court who were not ncerned in its first hearing. He did not now whether that would be satisfactory, but e thought that very great care should be ken with regard to rehearings. So far as the eneral principle was concerned, something ught be done for the better administration of stice in futuro; but, with regard to special ses, it was out of the power of the Govern-ent to make independent inquiry, and the ifficulties in the way of doing so were almost superable. It was of no use his saying to he House he would inquire into the matter uring the recess if he was not prepared to do o; and he had no machinery to enable him to o that. So far as rules for the reorganization f the Court were concerned, it was his inten-ion to ask the Judges of the Court to consider he question, to try to devise some means to prevent the possibility of just grounds of complaint in the future.

Colonel TRIMBLE wanted to explain the matter a little more than had been done. When the Native Affairs Committee arranged that he should bring forward the report it was understood that the Native members would then bring before the House what they considered a grievance—namely, that the Committee could not undertake to review the action of the Judges — could not undertake to re-examine the evidence the Judges had before them and to take new evidence, and to give a new decision, as if the Committee were a Court of justice. The Committee had endeavoured for several years past to set aside the idea that it could, in effect, review the judgments of Courts; but what it wished to do was this: If there was an allegation of injustice on the part of a Judge, or of partiality on the part of a Judge, or if any irregularity in the action of the Court were brought before it, it might pronounce upon that, and upon nothing more. With regard to this Te Kapua case the Judges sat for forty-two days, and during that time innumerable witnesses were examined by two Judges—Judge Mackay and Judge Mair—who were perfectly well acquainted with the Maori language, and who took minute notes of every important matter that came before them. The Committee were asked to reconsider that judgment and the evidence that was brought before that Court, and it was utterly impossible for the Committee to do anything of the kind. The Committee spent over this case four days last year and two days this; and the reasons given for the rehearing were in part things the Committee could inquire into, as they related to the conduct of the Court—to both Judges and to the Assessor. What happened this year was that the principal witness for the petitioners, who was examined categorically, denied that there was any truth whatever in the allegations in reference to injustice on the part of the Court; and he went out of his way to say this: that no Judges could have more patiently weighed the evidence that was before them, and that there was not a particle of the charge that could be proved against the officers of the Court or against the Court itself. In the Maungatautari case the position was somewhat different. Here, again, it had been asserted that the Judges were influenced by the Assessor. The Judges were examined before the Committee; and they asserted — and, he had no doubt, truthfully—that their judgment was in no way influenced by the Assessor; that, individually, before they asked the Assessor's opinion at all, they had come to the decision that was ultimately given as the judgment of the Court. With regard to the Assessor, it was stated that he had been bribed; and when that assertion was brought before the Committee last year a report was brought up to the effect that there were very grave circumstances which tended to show that the Assessor had received some consideration from a European who was acting as agent for the purchase of the land; and

the Government was recommended to go more minutely into the matter, and to inquire thoroughly as to his action. The Government had appointed an ex-Judge of the Native Land Court to inquire into the matter, and he had done so. It ought to be stated that the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court reported early last year that there were grave suspicions with regard to the case, and, indeed, spoke very strongly upon it. The Commissioner whom the Government appointed held an inquiry, and ordered the Assessor, a man named Waata Tipa, to appear before him; but, though he never did appear before him to justify his action, there was a sort of whitewashing process in the report. He (Colonel Trimble) had not the least doubt in his own mind that the man was bribed; but the sums the honourable member for the Western Maori District had referred to were many of them purely mythical. The Committee had no evidence of that at all. The statements as to special sums were mere assertions, which might or might not be true. But he did receive a cheque under the name of a loan, which it was said was repaid. Now, they considered that an Assessor should be just as much above suspicion as one of the Judges of the Court, and the Committee had embodied that in their report. The Committee said, "The Committee considers that the action of the Assessor should be above suspicion, and the Government should look after the official conduct of so important an officer, who is virtually a Judge." They wound up by saying, "The Government should at once address themselves to the question whether he should be continued as an Assessor." He maintained that the man ought not to be continued as an Assessor. But here was the position the Maori members took in regard to it: "What is the use of making a report of this kind? We want a rehearing. It is not the punishment of this man we want. We want a rehearing as to the land." They made the rehearing the main point, and the purity of the Court was a secondary matter. The position of the matter was as he had stated. With regard to the rehearing, the Committee could not deal with it. There was no use in making a recommendation which was utterly worthless. If they made a recommendation for a rehearing the Judge would not be in the least influenced by it, and there was no other Court to appeal to. But they recommended what could be done, and that was, that the Court should be purified. He trusted the Government would see to that before the House met again.

Motion agreed to.

COUNTIES BILL.

Sir R. STOUT brought up the following reasons for disagreeing with the amendments made in this Bill by the Legislative Council:—

"As to the new paragraphs added to clause 46. First, the proposed method of adjusting the representation will prove entirely unworkable; second, the provision conflicts with the previous part of the section.

"As to section 47. The limit of one month is insufficient time to allow the Council to carry out what is required by special order. If two months were proposed, that might be accepted.

"As to section 157. That the amendment made is an infringement of the privileges of this House, and that the House trusts that this will be a sufficient reason to induce the Council to waive its amendment.

"As to section 181 (new paragraphs). While the House recognizes the need of some such provision as has been added by the Council, it may happen that the Chairman may not have received the yearly balance-sheets and statements. The paragraph would be unobjectionable if the words 'if received by the Chairman or Council' were inserted between the words 'not' and 'published' in the second line of the new paragraph, and if a proviso were inserted at the end of the last paragraph to the following effect: 'Provided always that the Chairman shall not be liable to any penalty if he has not received the balance-sheet, statement, or exceptions respectively.'

"As to section 185. The limit to ten ratepayers is too small, as a special audit is expensive. If the limit were fixed at one-twelfth of the ratepayers, such an amendment would be acceptable to the House.

"As to section 195. The way in which the section is framed gives all absentees votes, and where there is a large number of absentee proprietors it makes it impossible to ascertain the true feeling of the ratepayers in regard to borrowing; second, that the provision will be found unworkable and unfair, especially in districts with a scattered population.

"As to section 289. As the power to found agricultural schools is optional, and some counties desire it, there can be no harm in encouraging local self-government by giving the counties power to do so if they please.

"As to section 291. This provision has been in force for many years, and no harm has resulted from it; second, it is a very necessary provision, because in many country districts it will be impossible to found a library without some aid outside of the subsidy granted by the Government.

"As to section 313. The amendment made allows of the Chairman of the Road Board delaying the sending of the accounts till the 30th June, whilst the Chairman of the county is bound by the previous clause to send in the accounts on or before the same date. Were the date altered to the 14th June, there would be time to comply with the provisions of the former section."

Reasons agreed to, and forwarded to the Legislative Council.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS BILL.

Sir R. STOUT brought up the following reasons for disagreeing with the amendments made in this Bill by the Legislative Council:—

"As to sections 135 and 137. The amendments made are an infringement of the privileges of this House, and the House trusts that will be a sufficient reason for the Council waiving its amendments.

As to section 182. First, that the proposed endment is contrary to what has been the in reference to borrowing in the Municipal porations for many years; second, that it imes all those who are absent would vote inst the loan; third, that it introduces a gerous principle in voting in allowing abtees to count as having voted against the posal.

As to section 219. That, if the words parate on' were omitted, the section would agreed to. That the reason these words are ected to is that it was a pledge given to the ple of Auckland when the Auckland Condating Loan Act was passed that no separate es should be raised, and that 2s. in the pound uld be the limit of rating for current exses and interest and sinking fund for loans.

As to the First Schedule. The creation of rn districts weakens county government; and se bodies are not required, since the creation a borough can be easily obtained."

Reasons agreed to, and forwarded to the gislative Council.

WANGANUI RIVER.

Colonel TRIMBLE asked the Minister for iblic Works, — (1.) If he will inform the ouse what the cost of snagging, clearing, and spening the Wanganui River, as at present oposed, is likely to be? (2.) What the cost completing the road from the Wanganui iver to the North Island Main Trunk Railay is computed to be, and whether the timated cost includes metalling? (3.) Whether the Maoris have asked for compensation r intruding upon their lands, either for the aking of roads, or for right of wharfage, or ght of landing; and whether Government will vourably entertain such claims? (4.) What the draught of water likely to be secured in e Wanganui River when the proposed works e finished?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON replied, as regarded uestion number one, the expenditure to the lst March last was £1,470 and the cost of the unts, and it was estimated that an additional um of £800 would be required to clear the river p to Pipiriki. To the second part of the uestion he had to state that the road from 'ipiriki to Ohakune for a pack-track with ough cart-bridges would be about £4,000, and was being laid out with a view of being conerted into a good dray-road ultimately. To he third part of the question he had to reply hat a small section of Maoris had made a laim for land taken and the privilege of landng. The principal man was not Major Kemp, s had been stated in the public Press, but nother Maori of the same name of no importnce; and the claim would probably be settled or a very small sum. In reply to the fourth uestion, it was intended to get 2ft. on the apids at ordinary summer level.

KUROW LAND.

Mr. DUNCAN asked the Minister of Lands, Why the land at Kurow is not advertised for ale, and why such delay? About two years ago a promise was made that this land would be opened for sale not later than September last, and yet nearly another year had gone by and no action had been taken in the matter.

Mr. BALLANCE said there had been some slight delay in the matter owing to the Proclamation having been delayed in the Printing Office. Instructions had been given by telegram to the Commissioner of Crown Lands to have the land advertised at once. The Proclamation appeared in the last *Gazette*, and the land for sale would be open in September, and the leased land a little later. With regard to the question of the opening of the land, the honourable gentleman would agree that there had been a good deal of difficulty in resuming possession of the land, and then the Government had to consider the best time of the year for throwing it open for sale; so that, in fact, the unavoidable delay in the matter had not exceeded more than a couple of weeks.

A. CLAYDEN.

Mr. PEACOCK asked the Minister of Lands, —(1.) Whether he has seen a letter from Mr. Arthur Clayden, in England, to the *New Zealand Herald* of the 31st July, in which he denounces the low-toned commercial morality of New Zealand? (2.) Whether that gentleman is receiving pay from the Government; and, if so, does the Minister consider that Mr. Clayden, while holding and expressing such opinions, is likely to render any real service to the colony? Although this letter had been sent to a newspaper in the colony, it might naturally be expected that the person who wrote it had given expression to the same opinions in the Home-country, and they would create an unfavourable and unwarrantable opinion there with regard to commercial affairs in the colony. He would read a few extracts from the letter to show the nature of it:—

"I shall be glad to use your influential columns to say a few words which, I think, it is time should be said on the low-toned commercial morality of the colony. In my self-imposed task of inducing a better class of emigration to New Zealand I have necessarily a large amount of correspondence. Some of my correspondents have sad stories to tell of frauds to which they have been subjected in New Zealand. My own experience in Nelson, where I had to take legal proceedings to protect myself from an infamous attempt on the part of a Government official to rob me of £200, leads me to sympathize with these defrauded English and Scotch investors."

The writer then went on to allude to a thrifty Scotch tradesman who had been induced by Mr. Bathgate and Mr. Berry to invest in mortgages on property in Napier, and sundry companies, to the extent of £5,000, and said,—

"He is, in short, confronted with something more than a bare possibility of ruin. One or two Dunedin companies, instead of yielding the promised 10 per cent., are yielding nothing but ruinous calls. One of these commercial swindles shows on its prospectus a sum of

institutions of the colony, as supplied in Tables 3 and 4 of last year; and whether this year's report will be made complete by supplying such information? The information in the report this year was far less full than last year. He was aware that now, under the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, many of the children were paid for by the District Boards; but, at the same time, information concerning them would be valuable, and he apprehended that the Government would have little difficulty in getting it.

Sir R. STOUT said the information had not been given because many of the institutions were now under local control, and the information supplied referred only to children paid for by the Government. However, he would ask the local Boards to supply the information next year, as it was useful information.

"HINEMOA."

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked the Government, Whether they consider it necessary, in view of the facilities afforded by the ordinary steamers, to send the "Hinemoa" to Auckland for the conveyance of members to their homes at the end of the present and future sessions? It seemed to him unnecessary expenditure to send the "Hinemoa" to fetch members down and take them back. He was aware that some time was saved by northern members in getting to their homes, and he should not object to it if they availed themselves of the convenience offered; but very often the "Hinemoa" took only a few, the great majority going by the ordinary steamers. He should like to see the Government save the expense.

Mr. LARNACH said it was a great convenience to the Auckland and northern members, because it meant the difference between thirty and seventy hours, owing to the number of places the ordinary steamers, when going up the other coast, called at. If fifteen or twenty members went by the "Hinemoa" it was really a matter of economy to send her, if the boat was not otherwise particularly engaged. For those reasons the Government considered it desirable to still offer to honourable members such a convenience.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked if the honourable gentleman would state a minimum number of members for whom the "Hinemoa" would be sent.

Mr. LARNACH thought he would be justified in refusing to send her unless ten or a dozen members went by her. He did not know that she had ever carried less than fifteen or twenty, except on the last occasion of coming down from the Manukau, where she was on account of having had to go north on other business connected with public works, and probably was only ready to start south at so inconvenient a time that many members had booked their passages by other steamers.

CROSS CREEK EMPLOYÉS.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked the Government, Whether they intend granting any compensation to railway employés at Cross Creek who have built houses there, and who may be removed from time to time to other stations along the line? He had more than once represented the injustice under which the railway employés there suffered in the matter of housing. Some of the men were living in Government cottages, and for a long time paid no rent whatever, but latterly they had been paying 2s. 6d. a week, while others had been indirectly compelled to put up cottages of their own, at a cost of £70 or £80 each. These men were subject to removal to other places along the line, in which case they would be quite at the mercy of their successors, if any, as to getting any return for their outlay. He knew a case in which a man had recently been shifted along the line—he understood, through the Government reducing the number of men employed at Cross Creek. He had put up a cottage there costing £60 or £70, and had cleared about an acre and a half of land; and was now compelled to leave the result of his labour and earnings behind him. He (Mr. Buchanan) understood that in other parts of the colony some consideration was given to Government employés in such a case as this, and he was quite sure that the Minister for Public Works would as far as possible prevent men suffering such hardship as that which had been referred to in asking this question. He hoped, therefore, that the matter would receive favourable consideration at the hands of the Minister.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that the honourable gentleman was good enough to bring this matter under his notice privately the other day, when a reply was given to him to the effect that the employé's case now referred to was under the favourable consideration of the department. He thought it would have been time enough to have brought this matter forward if any injustice had been done, which certainly was not the case in regard to the employés in question. He assumed that the object of asking the question publicly was to get his answer put on record. He had to say that the department would take the circumstances of these men into consideration as far as possible, and that no loss would be inflicted upon them that could be avoided.

WAX VESTAS.

Mr. BROWN asked the Commissioner of Customs, If he will state why differential duties are charged upon the same class of goods in quality and quantity—namely, wax vestas—50-plaids and 250-boxes—manufactured by Messrs. Bryant and May, Bell and Black, and Bell and Co.? He had no doubt that it was well known to most members of the House that an *ad valorem* duty of 25 per cent. was charged upon the class of goods to which his question referred, and what he desired to know was, whether the Government accepted the invoice price of the goods, or whether the department put its own value upon them. These vestas were well known to be similar in quality, and it was understood that the purchasing-price in the colony was the same; but it was supposed that the Government fixed a

lower rate of duty upon one of these lines than they did upon others, thereby handicapping to a large extent one or more of the other manufacturers. He would like to know what was the rule in relation to the matter.

Sir J. VOGEL replied that the question referred, apparently, to a long-standing dispute between one firm in the colony and the Customs Department. The facts were simply these: that the department had to resist an attempt to create a monopoly of a very exclusive kind in the sale of matches in New Zealand. He need scarcely tell honourable members that there were some countries which made a great deal by the sale of monopolies; and, if New Zealand were to do anything in that way, it would be better to do it not by a side-wind, but on some recognized principle, and in the interests of the revenue. The circumstances of this case were these: A particular firm had entered into a contract with the manufacturers of matches in England by which, in consideration of their guaranteeing very large orders — amounting, in value to £10,000 a year—the price was reduced to them by a very considerable amount. If the Customs Department were to levy the *ad valorem* duty upon the invoice price, the advantage to the importer would be large, amounting to a monopoly; and it would be very unfair to other traders, and to the revenue of the colony. Therefore an application in that direction had not been agreed to. The duty on matches was an *ad valorem* one, and the Act interpreted the value to be the fair market value of the dutiable goods in the usual and ordinary commercial acceptation of the term at the usual and ordinary credit, and not the cash value of such goods in the principal markets of the country whence the same were imported. That was the only way in which value could be estimated, in justice to the revenue of the colony. The House would better understand the force of what he had stated when he mentioned that one shipment of these matches that was seized—the importers being paid 10 per cent. in advance of the entered value, the duty at the same time being returned—had, on being sold at auction, realized 45 per cent. over the value at which they had been entered for duty. This was one of those cases in which the Government had to be firm, in protecting the interests of the country. If the firm who objected to the proceedings of the Government were inclined for litigation the Government would be quite prepared to meet them.

MR. GLADSTONE.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Government, Whether they will, seeing that it is the intention of the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone "to seek repose in or beyond Great Britain," communicate by cable with the right honourable gentleman, and invite him to visit the Colony of New Zealand? When he put this question on the Order Paper he was not aware that in September, 1883, a large majority of the members of the General Assembly of New Zealand wrote and sent a letter to the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, inviting him to visit the colony; but he found that that was so, and that in due course there came a reply thanking the honourable members of both Houses for having sent the invitation, and regretting "that it is unhappily impossible for me to comply with this invitation, as the constant pressure of my official duties will not admit of my removal even to a point much nearer these islands and this metropolis." It was known that since then the right honourable gentleman had been engaged in important duties in the Home-country; but a recent calogram stated that it was the desire of the right honourable gentleman to seek repose in or beyond Great Britain. That seemed to indicate that the causes that precluded his acceptance of the invitation of 1883 had now disappeared, and he might find sufficient leisure to visit this part of Her Majesty's dominions. It seemed, therefore, very fitting that another invitation should be sent to him. The results of such a visit must be beneficial in the way of strengthening the bonds of union between the Mother-country and her colonies, and the visit would give the colonies very great pleasure.

Sir R. STOUT was sure that nothing would give this colony and its people greater pleasure than to see Mr. Gladstone, who was undoubtedly the first statesman in the world; but it was to be feared that if he came here he would obtain little repose, owing to the great demonstrations which would be made to welcome him. However, if he could see his way to come here the Government would, on behalf of the colony, make his visit as enjoyable as possible. It was, however, hardly probable that the right honourable gentleman would venture to come so far, especially at this time.

LIGHTHOUSE-KEEPERS.

Sir G. GREY asked the Minister of Marine, Will the Government cause a few books to be purchased for the use of lighthouse-keepers, causing small boxes of these books to be carried from station to station in rotation by the vessels which visit those lighthouses? This was a question which materially concerned the comfort and welfare and happiness of the lighthouse-keepers, and he should be glad if the Government could see their way to make arrangements such as those suggested in the question.

Mr. LARNACH said that instructions had been given some time ago for the purchase of a small library for circulation among the lighthouse-keepers. The library would be of a miscellaneous character, and would cost about £30 or £40. The books would be passed from one station to another till they had gone round the whole of them.

COLONIAL AND IMPERIAL SQUADRON.

Captain RUSSELL asked the Premier, If any despatches or other communications have been sent to or received from the Agent-General, Admiral Tryon, or any other persons on the subject of contributions from this colony towards the creation or maintenance of a Colo-

nial and Imperial squadron of the Royal Navy in Australasian waters; and, if there are any, whether injury to public interests is likely to arise from their being laid before this House? There had been a great deal of discussion on the question of federation of late, and, as it seemed to him that the most likely step to lead to federation would be the establishment of an Imperial squadron in which the colonies should have an interest, he put this question. He might add that he had had the pleasure of conversing with Admiral Tryon on the subject, and knew that he took a great deal of interest in the matter.

Sir R. STOUT said that there had been despatches received in reference to this matter; but the correspondence was not yet complete. Had the Government intended to deal with the matter this session they would have produced them to the House, or such of them as were not of a confidential character. However, it seemed to the Government that the question was not ripe for discussion this year, and therefore they had not produced the despatches. Next year they would no doubt be produced.

FRUIT TARIFF ON RAILWAYS.

Mr. IVESS asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will cause the railway tariff to be readjusted, with a view of transferring fruit to Class E, in order that it may be carried at the same rates as charged for grain and other local productions? Great dissatisfaction existed among Canterbury fruit-growers because they were compelled to pay two-thirds more for the conveyance of their produce on the railways than the farmers were called upon to pay for the conveyance of wool, grain, &c.; and it was thought that if the Government would place fruit in the same class as grain that would very much help the export of fruit. He might add that he had been looking over the freight charged on fruit in the Australian Colonies and comparing it with what the New Zealand fruit-grower had to pay, and he would like to draw the attention of the Minister for Public Works to the differences. On the New Zealand lines the freight on fruit for 50 miles was £1 2s. 11d.; for 150 miles, £2 0s. 1d. In Victoria, for 50 miles, 13s. 6d.; for 150 miles, £1 18s. 6d. New South Wales, 50 miles, 5s. 4d.; 150 miles, 13s. 6d. Queensland, 50 miles, 12s. 3d.; 150 miles, £1 19s. 6d. South Australia, 50 miles, 8s. 4d.; 150 miles, 17s. 9d. The result was that we in New Zealand charged for the conveyance of fruit for 50 miles £1 2s. 11d., and for grain the same distance 8s. 8d.; and for 150 miles we charged, for the conveyance of fruit, £2 0s. 1d., and carried the same quantity of grain for the same distance for 17s. He hoped the Minister for Public Works would recognize the anomaly he had pointed out, and take speedy means to place fruit in the same class as grain.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON replied that probably the honourable member was not aware that some little time ago the charge for the conveyance of fruit had been reduced. It had not been reduced so far as the question asked that it should be; but it could hardly be expected that fruit, which required careful handling, should be carried at the same rate as coal, building-stone, or grain, which were about the best material the railways had to carry. The rates now chargeable, he believed, would meet the reasonable wishes of fruit-growers.

T. KUKUPA.

Sir G. GREY asked the Government, If they will, during the recess, cause an inquiry to be made into the claim of the chief Tamati Kukupa, in accordance with the report of the Native Affairs Committee of the 22nd July last? He wished to say that this chief and his brother, many years ago, were for a long time the safeguard of Auckland to the north. They were always faithful to the Europeans, and prevented the Natives coming down upon Auckland on one occasion. The chief Tamati Kukupa had a very strong claim upon the sympathy and goodwill of the Government, and he trusted that an inquiry would be made into his claim.

Mr. BALLANCE said the report had been considered by the Government, and instructions had already been given for an inquiry to be made, which the Surveyor-General would carry out.

THAMES RESIDENT MAGISTRATE.

Mr. CADMAN asked the Minister of Justice, What arrangements he proposes making in respect to carrying on the duties performed by the late Resident Magistrate and Warden at the Thames? He had received a considerable number of telegrams on this matter, many of them urging claims of various people, others requesting that he would endeavour to see that the appointment was given to none but a competent man. He would remind the Minister of Justice that there were several important Native purchases now in course of negotiation, which would be held in abeyance till this appointment was made. He hoped, therefore, the Minister would not let this work get too far in arrear by neglecting to fill this vacancy.

Mr. TOLE said that, like the honourable gentleman, he had received several reminders of this vacancy, and had got one just now. An arrangement had been made for carrying on the business at the Thames by Mr. Northcroft, of Waikato, until there was a permanent appointment, if any, which question would be considered immediately after the close of the session.

REHEARING OF NATIVE LAND CLAIMS.

Mr. GRACE asked the Native Minister, Whether the Government will consult with the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court with a view of so amending Rule No. 57 of the Native Land Court that it be made always the practice that, whenever an application for a rehearing is made against the decision of the Native Land Court in the first hearing of a block of land, or in a first hearing of a subdivision claim, the applicant or applicants for and the parties opposed to such rehearing be

given the option of appearing in Chambers or in open Court, at a time and place to be fixed, to argue in support of or against such rehearing being granted? He had put the question on the Order Paper with the object of remedying a want which had been felt for some time past, and was sure that if the course he pointed out were adopted it would tend to lessen the number of rehearings granted instead of increasing them, and would at the same time give general satisfaction to the Maoris. He understood that hitherto it had been the practice of the Chief Judge not to give the parties an opportunity of appearing before him, but to either grant or refuse an application from his office. He was aware that no provision had been made to meet this point in the Act passed this session; but, when the rules under the Native Land Court Act of this session were drawn up—and he supposed such would be done—he hoped some provision would be made in the direction indicated.

Mr. BALLANCE said that, without expressing any opinion upon the question stated, he might inform the honourable gentleman that it was the intention, in drawing up the rules under the new Act, to take the point into consideration. The rules would be very carefully drafted in the first place, and then they would be submitted to the whole of the Judges and their opinions elicited. The suggestions which the honourable gentleman made in the question had already been considered, and he might state that the opinion of the Chief Judge was not altogether favourable, though it went somewhat in the same direction. The matter would no doubt be very carefully considered when the rules and regulations came before the Judges.

PARNELL VACCINATOR.

Mr. SAMUEL asked the Government, Whether they will require the certifying officer at Auckland to certify whether Mr. Sanders, of Parnell, is or is not a competent and proper person to be appointed a Public Vaccinator under "The Public Health Act, 1876," as desired by a great many inhabitants of Parnell? The Public Health Act provided that persons other than medical practitioners might be Vaccinators, provided that the certifying officer for the district should certify that such persons were competent to perform the duties of the office. He understood that application had been made by a great many inhabitants of Parnell in favour of Mr. Sanders, who was a homœopathic practitioner, and had a large practice in that suburb. The certifying officer, he (Mr. Samuel) believed, evaded the question which was put to him, and did not certify either that the gentleman referred to was or was not competent. Instead of answering categorically, as it was evidently intended by the Act that he should do, the officer had replied that Mr. Sanders was not a medical practitioner, and that there were many duly-qualified medical practitioners in the district. It seemed to him that that was doing what was not contemplated by the Act; and therefore he asked the question. He would add that he was personally acquainted with Mr. Sanders, and had received benefit from his medical treatment; and that, before asking the question, he had consulted the honourable member who represented the district.

Mr. TOLE said the officer referred to had been communicated with, and his reply was in the terms mentioned by the honourable gentleman. He considered that the answer given was evasive of the intention of the section, and had given instructions that a categorical answer should be given to the question whether Mr. Sanders was or was not competent.

ROTORUA SANATORIUM.

Mr. GRACE asked the Minister of Lands,—(1.) Whether the sanatorium at Rotorua is intended only for the use and benefit of invalid visitors from outside districts, and Natives, and not also for Europeans residing in the Rotorua District? (2.) Whether the Government will, in future, on the certificate of the medical officer in charge, admit any applicant whose case, in the opinion of the said officer, may be benefited by the institution? He asked the question because he understood that European residents in the district were not admitted into the hospital in the same manner as visitors and Maoris, and instanced the case of two Europeans resident in the district who were in poor circumstances who, although the European settlers offered to subscribe for their maintenance at the hospital, were refused admission, and who both died two or three days afterwards.

Mr. BALLANCE replied that Europeans residing in the district suffering from ordinary complaints that were not likely to be benefited by the springs were at one time not admitted into the hospital; but since then the rules had been altered, and Europeans were now admitted into the hospital as if it had been intended for the treatment of all kinds of complaints. The first question was answered, therefore, in the affirmative. With regard to the second question, as to whether people residing in the district were to be admitted on the certificate of the medical officer, the rules required the certificate of the Government Agent; but there was no practical difficulty in the matter, and the rules as lately revised would, he believed, work satisfactorily.

ANNUAL RAILWAY TICKETS.

Mr. SAMUEL asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will consider the advisableness of granting annual railway tickets, exercisable only over special railway-lines in New Zealand, and especially over the New Plymouth–Foxton Railway?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON replied that annual tickets were already issued on these railways, also quarterly and monthly tickets. He was not sure, but he fancied the honourable member was alluding to the practice of granting tickets for £50 a year, extending over all the New Zealand railways, which were very extensively used, and that he wished the charge

for these reduced. This would involve loss of revenue, and from other points of view would be very undesirable.

TELEGRAPH FORMS.

Mr. GORE asked the Government, If they will state the difference in amount of tenders for printing telegraph forms; and if they intend to allow the Printing Department to compete with private firms in future? He was induced to ask this question because he found that many honourable members believed it was not desirable that the Government should enter into competition with private enterprise. He believed that there must be some very exceptional circumstances in their favour to enable them to do so successfully. In the case referred to in the question he had no doubt the Government accepted the tender lowest in amount; but, if rent, interest on capital invested, wear and tear of machinery, and everything that should be added were taken into consideration, it was quite possible that the saving was more apparent than real.

Sir J. VOGEL, in reply, said he had found in a *Gazette* of about the 27th of August—that being the date of the notice—a full list of the tenders for the printing of the telegraph forms. From this it appeared that the Government Printer's tender was the lowest—£1,252. The next tender was £1,283, but was from an English firm represented in Dunedin, and the printing would have been done outside the colony. It seemed to him better to have the printing done in the colony, so that the wages would be paid within the colony. The third tender was also from a Dunedin firm, and was just £300 over the accepted tender, or a sum about equal to 20 per cent. In reference to this contract, he rather regretted that he did not incur the extra expense; and in future he would certainly feel inclined to go to a larger expense to obtain the printing from firms in different parts of the colony, rather than confine it, as at present, to one part. He hoped that honourable members would not do such an injustice to his taste as to suppose that he had selected the gaudy colour which was adopted for the new telegraph forms, for he was as much horrified at it as he supposed other honourable members were. He would endeavour to curtail the present contract as far as possible, with the view of going in the direction which the honourable member's question clearly pointed out.

SHEEP DISEASES.

Mr. GRACE asked the Government, Whether they will cause to be printed for circulation Professor Thomas's report on sheep diseases, together with the pamphlet thereon which he drew up for the Royal Agricultural Society of England? He understood that a fuller report had been prepared by Professor Thomas, and sent Home to the Royal Agricultural Society, and thought that the Government might perhaps see their way to have it printed in pamphlet form and sold at a cheap rate, or circulated gratuitously. The matter of dealing with the diseases of sheep was of great interest to the country, especially to the district which he had the honour to represent, as parasitic diseases in sheep were most difficult of treatment in that part of the country, and a pamphlet of this kind would no doubt prove most useful to sheepowners there.

Mr. TOLE said there was no objection on the part of the Government to publish Professor Thomas's report on sheep diseases; but, with regard to the pamphlet which he had sent Home to the Royal Agricultural Society, it seemed to be rather a dissertation on two diseases known as "liver fluke" and "rot," to which New Zealand sheep were not at all subject; and he suggested that Professor Thomas should prepare a shorter paper upon the parasitical diseases which affected the sheep of New Zealand. The Government would take steps to have such a paper prepared.

UNEMPLOYED.

Sir G. GREY wished to put a question to the Government, without notice. He wished to ask the Minister for Public Works what were the arrangements which had been made for the unemployed in Auckland.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said arrangements had been made for giving employment to a very considerable number, and further arrangements were being made from day to day. To-day he had arranged to find work for an additional number; and if that did not meet requirements the Government had the matter under consideration, and would do their best to find employment for such as were absolutely requiring it.

Sir G. GREY.—I wish to move the adjournment of the House. I do that in the hope that the Government may be induced to put a sum on the estimates for the purpose of locating the unemployed in some new settlements. If the House would consider this question and endeavour to induce the Government to aid the unemployed in the direction which I point out I think they would find that I can make out a very reasonable case indeed. We have at our disposal three great blessings, as they would usually be considered in new countries. We have a surplus population unemployed, which may be compared to immigrants recently brought here, although in one respect they are much better than immigrants, because they have some knowledge of the country. We have land to put them upon; and we could get abundant funds for that purpose, giving security upon the land on which the men are put as well as upon the adjoining districts, because those persons and their families, and those in their own situation in life throughout New Zealand, are continually lodging small sums in the savings-banks, the total amount of which is very large indeed, and which must be invested; and I think ordinary savings could in no way be better employed than by assisting the neighbouring people in the colony to settle upon the land. We have abundance of land here; we have these people unemployed,—and I am assured by letters from

various parts of the colony that many of them are in great distress at the present time—real distress and real want. And we cannot deny that hitherto they have been greatly shut out from the lands of New Zealand—that is, there has never been any sufficient quantity of land open to the population to go upon, nor do I think that they have ever had fair encouragement to go upon the land. At the present time a series of regulations have been issued for what are called "village settlements;" and I should wish, if possible, to induce Ministers to abandon that system as a cruel one. I can regard it as nothing else. If honourable gentlemen will consider these regulations they will find that this is the fact: that no man, under these regulations, can obtain a greater amount of land than fifty acres: many of them will certainly get much less. For these lands they are compelled to pay at least £1 per acre, and to pay the interest upon that amount if they do not pay the principal, which of course they cannot. Then, certain advances are made to them in order that they may settle upon the land, and upon those they have also to pay interest. But now comes what, to my mind, is the cruel part of the thing. When they have made those little estates their own property, what is their position? They are actually placed under a system of *quasi*-slavery. They must always reside upon that property, which is to be their settled home, and they can only dispose of it, not by leasing, not by subdivision, but by finding some person who will purchase from them, being bound by the same terms of fixed residence—which will certainly be a difficult thing to find. I can fancy nothing more cruel than to compel a man who may have improved the property, who may have done his best with the bit of land, to pass the remainder of his life there, and not be able to dispose of it except to some person who will engage to take his place and live upon the same spot. Then, the property never becomes a freehold. It is always a leasehold. I approve of leaseholds under a proper system, but this is a leasehold under a system which I believe is not at all a judicious one. When one thinks of the great quantities of land which various individuals hold in freehold, it does appear a very cruel thing indeed to tell men who will take land almost upon any terms to escape from their miseries that they can only get that land upon condition of constant residence for their lives upon the spot, and that they cannot sublet it. It seems to me hard in the extreme that the extent of their property is to be so limited that they cannot take property to add to their own from a man adjoining themselves, but they are to be limited to the precise extent given to them in the first instance. Then, with regard to the unemployed at the present time, I would point this out: that, virtually, the land we now hold is in part their own. They have the same right to it as any one of us has; they are part owners of that land. They ought to be a great blessing to us—a treasured blessing—a population which might be put upon the land to bring it into cultivation, to increase the revenues of this country, to increase its population, to increase its commerce and its trade. To put them to work on unremunerative works is a great mistake.

Sir R. STOUT.—Who is doing that?

Sir G. GREY.—I believe it is being done at the present time. The proposal was to send them to the gumfields.

Sir R. STOUT.—That is not unremunerative.

Sir G. GREY.—It is very unremunerative, to men unaccustomed to the work. Some of them have been put to work near Mount Eden at which they can only earn 3s. 9d. a day. Skilled mechanics were put to work that they were very unfitted for. Is that remunerative? I contend that many of them at the present moment are on unremunerative work, because it is work they are unfitted to perform. You do not put a racer to drag a cart. You do not put a skilled mechanic to work on a railway or break stones, as is being done with some of the unemployed at the present time. I say that they are entitled to be put on land, to which they have a claim. You should use the blessings which Providence has given for the good of the country, and not waste them. I put this to honourable gentlemen again: that they will admit that everything produced which man uses comes from labour. Labour creates all wealth upon the earth, and I say, again, that labour distributes all wealth upon the earth, and that these poor people are the best and the greatest distributors of wealth. The sums they get are small. But which enriches the country most—one great squatter, with a few servants, living away in England, all his produce carried away, perhaps; or many persons resident upon the spot, who spend all their money here, encouraging internal trade and external commerce as well? I have no means of getting this proposal carried out except by appealing to the House. It is too late in the session. I have no means of getting money put upon the estimates, or of moving an address to the Governor to get it done; but the Government, if they please, can put a sum on the estimates sufficient to turn that which now appears to be a curse into an absolute blessing for New Zealand. I think it is impossible to consider the state of those miserable men without feeling for them. They have been brought out here, and I think they have been inhumanly treated. If I am not mistaken, I saw a notice from Mr. Graham, who dispenses relief to the poor in Auckland, in which, several months ago, he warned the authorities that he was sure this winter there would be great distress, and he begged that provision be made for that at once, so as to meet it when it came; but no such provision was made. It has come upon us suddenly. I have no opportunity of making a motion now; there might be a chance of doing so on going into Committee of Supply, though the chance is very small; but I call upon the House to try and get the Government to embark on a policy with regard to the unemployed which will make a fair use of the blessings Providence has bestowed upon us.

There is the surplus land, in which they have a partial interest, on which they could be put, with sufficient money, provided by themselves, absolutely to pay for all the cost of their being put on the land, and at the same time to give a full and proper return to those who lend it—namely, themselves. On their own part, they have the labour ready, and they have the funds provided by themselves and their fellows ready; but the land is lying waste, and I say, Open it to them on fair and reasonable terms. The three necessary factors are land, labour, and capital. Labour and the land mainly belong to the masses, and their joint capital is very large, and is available. Why should they be told that henceforth they shall not hold land in fee-simple, while everybody else does? Change your tenure of land if you choose, but, if you change it to a leasehold, do it in the manner proposed in the Bill which I brought forward this session, but which has never had a chance of being passed. That would give men power to acquire small farms, with means to support themselves, and give them the power of dealing with the land as they like—the power of leasing it if they choose, and going to take up some other pursuit; but do not attempt to tie them down on one spot of land for their lifetime. I say that is a most cruel and wrong proceeding on the part of the Government; and they have it in their power, if they choose, to give fair terms to these men, and to put them on an equality with their fellow-citizens. Why raise up a class of men who can never leave the land on which they are located? Your numerous great landowners wander where they please over a whole world. I do not know what other terms I can use to induce the House to interest itself in this matter. It is a miserable thing to think that the country is in this state; that there are all these men, many of them qualified to go on the land and make good use of it—mechanics ready to aid in the erection of their dwellings without the means of subsistence when so much land in the country is lying waste. We have power to call back into life and vigour these men, who are now hopeless and despondent—employed on unprofitable work, when hope and renewed vigour might be given to them to bring up their families in comfort. Even as I rose to address the House this day I heard of the death of one man, who is known to have been a good man, but who was plunged into want, and was unable to get work, and who has left a widow and family totally unprovided for. Why should we allow these things to continue, when Ministers, by a single vote to-night, might turn all this misery which exists, from Invercargill to Auckland, into a blessing to New Zealand, by encouraging persons with the hope and certainty of comfort in the future? I hope honourable gentlemen will help in the attempt I am making to gain this point, which can so easily be got; and that before we separate we shall know that the Government are determined to enter upon a large policy of that kind, instead of leaving this miserable state of things to continue, with no means being taken to prevent its increase, and with no adequate means for the present relief of those who are suffering from misery and want. All this the Government could do by writing one short note this night. I hope, therefore, that they will do something in the direction I ask.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I hope the Government will agree, before the House rises, to give an opportunity for discussing the resolutions which stand on the Order Paper in my name to-day, and that the honourable member for Auckland East will make the same speech on that occasion that he has now made. I sympathize very much with what he has said, and I think if the House separates this session without considering this question we shall be wanting in our duty to ourselves and to the country. This is the question of questions—there is no doubt about that: this question of the unemployed, and the spread of pauperism in the land. It will be a wretched thing if, after spending twelve or thirteen weeks here, we separate without coming to some practical conclusion with regard to the question. I hope the Government will give an opportunity of discussing those resolutions, and then we can speak on some definite issue, which we cannot do on the motion for the adjournment of the House.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—There is no doubt that this question of the unemployed is the question of the hour, and it is a problem which if this House could solve, if it did nothing else during the session, I venture to say it would have done heroic work. No one can help lamenting the unsatisfactory state of the labour-market, and sympathizing with the large number of men roaming about in search of work. I cannot help thinking that a young colony like this cannot be in a good state when there are so many able-bodied men in search of employment and not able to find it. I cannot help thinking that our land-laws are not meeting with that response which they should do. I do not know at the present moment where a person coming out from Home with £5,000 or £10,000, and wanting to get a reasonably-good holding, could find it. If he were to place himself in communication with the Government and say that he wanted two or three or more thousands of acres of land of a fairly good quality, I do not know where they could obtain it for him. I think this tendency to convert our lands into village settlements and perpetual leases, and so on, is a system which will not compete successfully with the practice that obtains in other countries where the freehold system prevails and reasonably-large holdings can be obtained. We must remember that our lands are not the only ones which are open for sale and settlement, and that we should make laws to attract a desirable class of settlers to our shores—that we have to compete not only with Canada, with its enormous tracts of land, and not only with America, but also with other countries and with other colonies; and therefore, if we have set up regulations which may be theoretically good but which do not work in practice, we must abandon that system and adopt some

r which will work more satisfactorily. I k this colony has been too much influenced dread of large landowners simply because or two men in the early days got large ings. From that cause we are to live in d of a recurrence of such a thing, and we t all our land-laws to the prevention of such ing. I venture to say that doing so is a t mistake. What I should like to see ld be fair holdings, and small holdings for e who wish to settle on them and get what be termed something like a comfortable e for themselves. I cannot help lament- that the colony is not making the progress ght to do. I am sure we are injuring it by nuch legislation and especially by too much -law legislation. The real success of the ny does not depend on legislation, but on cious administration. I know perfectly that persons will not readily invest large s of money in the colony, because there is ry serious dread of the future. We shall efore have to face the question, and if we to inspire confidence in the colony we t have something like settled administra- and legislation, and give up this system inkering, session after session, with every that is passed. If a man wants to sell his ls in competition with others he must adapt prices to suit the circumstances; and, in same way, we must adapt our land-laws hose of other countries which are in com- tion with us for settlers. As I said at the set, no one can help feeling very deeply with ard to this problem of the unemployed, and I uld go home a happy person if I felt that we adopted means by which every able-bodied n in the colony could get employment. If came here and did nothing else but solve t problem we should have done very well.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I agree with a great deal t has been said by honourable gentlemen have spoken, and I believe that this ques- could very easily be dealt with now if, in- d of wasting time, we were to set to work pass the public works estimates, and so allow lers to be invited for the works which are re specified. It is, after all, simply a ques- of administration between the Minister for blic Works and the Minister of Lands. Let Minister for Public Works give these men k along the lines to be constructed, and the Minister of Lands set apart a certain ntity of land along those lines on which se people could settle. Our land-laws are te liberal enough to enable that to be done. ould even go so far as to say that this land ght be given free, and then, as the honour- e member for Auckland East says, these men uld no longer be employed on unremunera- work. I would just say to them, "There is iece of work for you to do, and if you can- do it in eight hours you can take sixteen urs to do it." Then you would not have any re good men unemployed. But the fact of matter is that a great many of these people not want that. They want eight hours and more, and to get as much for working during t time as a skilled man would get. Therefore I say the only way to meet the difficulty is to place these men on piece-work on these contracts, and reserve a certain quantity of land for them to settle down on. You would then hear no more of the eight-hours business. As for the extraordinary argument of the honourable member for Auckland East, that it is a bad thing to give these people fifty acres of land and lend them money to help them on, I cannot understand what he means. He first pointed out the remedy, and then he went on to show what a dreadful thing it would be to apply that remedy. If honourable members are sincere in their desire to see these people getting employment, they will pass these estimates and enable the Minister for Public Works to push on his works, and then let the Minister of Lands give them twenty acres of land apiece if he chooses. But I say, Give them piece-work, and then every man who has a spark of manhood in him will go to work, and we shall hear no more of these unemployed. I know very well from past experience that many of those who are ready to adapt themselves to circumstances would, before long, from being possessed of small pieces of land, become possessed of large estates. The question that now confronts us is a question which we have had before us for the last five or six years, but which during all that time the House has been afraid to face. The remedy is simple. It is to get the people where there is land and work. Put the men where they can find land and work—where the men can both get work and establish homes—and the difficulty would soon come to an end. Every man who was inclined to work would stick to the work, and would in a short time be not only able to maintain himself and his family, but have got his land under cultivation.

Mr. SEDDON.—There is an old saying, "As ye sow so shall ye reap." I look upon the present distress and want of employment as being the result of the passing of the motion of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay last session. There is a dearth of employment in every centre of population, and for that state of affairs the Opposition are responsible. There are no public works going on, and whenever there are no public works in progress the men flock to the towns and compete with the people there. Everything is dull, trade is stagnant, and there are large numbers of unemployed in all our large centres, owing to the passing of that motion stopping public works.

Major ATKINSON.—The Government spent more money last year than was spent the year before.

Mr. SEDDON.—They require to expend more according to the circumstances of the colony; and if there was more to spend we should not have the distress and dearth of employment that now prevail all over the colony. Let those who are responsible for that take the blame of it; and there is no doubt in my mind as to who are responsible for the present distress throughout the colony. We know from the latest market reports that all our chief products—wool, tallow, hides—are rising in price;

and this will help to give an impetus to trade. But further help is required to remove the stagnation in business at the present time—we want public works vigorously pushed on; but we have seen the Opposition this session trying to prevent the Minister for Public Works from letting contracts. If ever there has been a thought of a contract being let the honourable gentleman has been at once asked if it is true that such-and-such a contract has been or is intended to be let before it is authorized by the House. We know of cases in which the honourable gentleman has been compelled to come down and say it is his intention to accept a tender. Through the paucity of railway-work skilled men are compelled to labour at other things, where they cannot earn a quarter as much as they could earn at their own trades if there were work to be had. They are obliged to take any employment that is offered to them, to keep themselves and their families in bread. Take the cases of the Arahura Bridge, the Greymouth-Hokitika Railway, and the Manawatu Gorge Railway: they could not be gone on with owing to the resolution of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. If that contract had been let through the Government not being hampered as they were by the Opposition, many men now among the unemployed would have been, for the last four months, engaged on work profitable to themselves and profitable to the colony. We must go deeper down than even this. In my opinion the real cause for our trouble and distress arises from the fact that we have a large number of skilled artisans in New Zealand, and that there is not nearly sufficient skilled labour for them in the colony in their respective avocations. Has this Legislature attempted during the present session to meet that phase of the question? No; but quite the reverse. Everything that is wanted by the Government they import, and so give work to hundreds and hundreds of men in other parts of the world, while our own skilled artisans are working as "unemployed." No attempt has been made to grapple with that question. The Opposition have not attempted it, and the Government have not attempted it.

Sir R. STOUT.—We are having more work done in the colony than was ever done before.

Mr. SEDDON.—I simply say you must go to the root of the evil, and you must find labour of the class to which your skilled artisans are suited. I say at once every industry you have in the country is taxed. No industry requiring skilled men can be started but that industry is ground down by taxation. Attempts have been made nearly every session that I have been here to put the taxation of the country more on the right shoulders; but these attempts have failed, and every year more and more taxation has been put on industries, until many of them have been crushed; and hence large additions to the unemployed. As to the importation of goods that can be manufactured within the colony, I charge this and previous Governments with not doing nearly what they ought to do. Take the matter of ironwork, which I, as a tradesman, thoroughly understand. We are sending out of the country every year thousands of pounds for work that can be thoroughly well done in the country—bridge-work, cylinders, girders, and work for carriages.

Sir R. STOUT.—That work is being done in the colony.

Mr. SEDDON.—Certainly not.

Sir R. STOUT.—Certainly it is.

Mr. SEDDON.—Without disclosing State secrets I will say that the cylinders for the Taipo Bridge, the Teremakau Bridge, the Arahura Bridge, and the Cobden Bridge, and many others have been or are being imported. Most of our railway ironwork is imported. The engineers of the department will not so frame their specifications as to allow of material which can be made here being used. They specify what they know must be made abroad, when what could be made in the colony would do quite as well. We must go to the root of the evil. Wrought-iron girders and lattice-work could often be used—they might be often made of boiler-plate—instead of cast-iron work. We are told that the local foundries have not the necessary cupolas and other appliances for casting railway iron-work such as heavy girders and bridge-cylinders—that the plant is not in the country. But you go the right way for the country never to have the proper plant. There are in the colony thousands of moulders and hundreds of blacksmiths, as good tradesmen as any country could have; but scores of them are walking about doing nothing, or else are breaking stones: and this is a serious loss to the country and to their families. They are skilled artisans; but, if they cannot get the work they have been brought up to and at which they are skilled, they must take to breaking stones—a work that is degrading to them; and their having to do this is a disgrace to the country. As to carpenters, seeing the state of that trade in the colony just now, why should not the Minister for Public Works do as is done in Victoria, and have all the railway-carriages made in the colony? With the extension of the railway system going on there must be a necessity for many more carriages, and the occasion of a slackness in the building trade might be taken advantage of by the department to get a good stock. I have no hesitation in saying that carpenters and cabinetmakers, who are trained to work in wood, could, if put under a competent foreman carriage-maker, in a month be able to do a large share of the work of carriage-making. The Government might have a large amount of work done in that way in Auckland, either in their own workshops or by contracting with private firms. Forty or fifty carriages might be made as a first instalment, giving the men a fair day's wages for a fair day's work, and good tradesmen would, in a very short time, become skilled in this particular class of work—the particular class of work required in the country. A large amount of work could be done in that way, instead of importing everything as we now do.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—No.

r. SEDDON.—I should like to ask the ›urable gentleman what he has paid for ›rted carriage-work during the past year.

r. E. RICHARDSON.—I will explain. ›e I have been in office we have got all our iages and wagons made in the colony, all the ironwork in connection with them, ı the exception of two or three things, such atent springs and so on, which cannot be le here. I may also state that in all our iracts for bridge-work we stipulate that, as as possible, everything shall be done in the ny. It is all done here except some heavy ings, such as cylinders, and even some of ıe have been made in the colony.

Ir. SEDDON.—The cylinders of the Taipo lge were imported. It is preposterous to that castings of that weight could not be le in the colony. Why, I believe they ld be made in the foundry at Greymouth.

'olonel TRIMBLE.—Poorer in quality and her in price.

Ir. SEDDON.—I understood the honour- e gentleman to say that he had only sent me for what absolutely could not be made the colony.

Ir. E. RICHARDSON.—I did not say that ı cylinders could not be made in the colony, ; that it was considered by the department ıt it was in the interest of the colony to ıd Home for them, and that in this view I ›eed for the present, as there is still too ıch difference in the cost here as against ›se imported to warrant our getting them all ıde here. No doubt the time is coming when this work will be done in the colony.

Ir. SEDDON.—I cannot agree with the nourable gentleman; for this reason: If you ver give this class of work to be done in the lony you will never have the proper plant re to do it. The girders, cylinders, springs, les, frames, and such things, will never be ade locally if there is no inducement to make em. I am sure, if tenders were invited in e colony, the colonial founders would offer make cylinders of a very large size at very ıtle above the price of those imported. The ages of moulders and other ironworkers are ›t more than 10 to 15 per cent. higher than ıose of the same classes at Home. Pig- on is brought out here at a merely nominal eight, and then there is the insurance. I ın claim to be allowed to speak as an expert ı these points, and I say you can get this lass of work done in the colony, and so keep ıany thousands of pounds that are now sent way for railway ironwork and plant. Manu- ıcture in other directions can be judiciously xtended in New Zealand, because we have he necessary skilled labour for it here. 'he Minister, I believe, has been lately re- ıucing the number of men employed at this lass of work in the Government workshops— ı Christchurch especially—and this at a time hen, there being a great depression in trade ›enerally, the men sent away from the Govern- nent shops have been thrown into competition vith people of a similar class in the towns, for whom there was previously not sufficient employment; and this has made the depression in various trades more intense. Notwithstanding the passing of the resolution of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, and notwithstanding the action of the Opposition, I am certain that, if the Minister for Public Works had given a larger amount of work, to keep all the artisans possible employed, he would have been doing his duty to the skilled artisans of this country, and would have been supported in this House. The honourable gentleman would have been exonerated if, in the face of the increase of works contemplated,—the North Island Railway, and other railways in various parts of the colony,—instead of decreasing he had increased the number of men, and provided labour for those who could work profitably.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—That is exactly what I did do.

Mr. SEDDON.—I am sorry that the honourable gentleman did not carry it further. In the Auckland District, in the face of the North Island line progressing, it would have been within his duty if he had employed more men to get carriages and trucks constructed. The artisans there complain of all the work being carried on at Addington, whereas it could be as cheaply done at Auckland. The cabinet-makers, joiners, and people of that kind who are accustomed to work for private firms, but who are now out of employment, might have been employed in that kind of work. That would have been a great assistance, for I believe that two-thirds of the people in Auckland who are out of employment are skilled workmen of that class, and they might have been employed profitably to themselves and to the country. I may say that I do not agree with the honourable member for Auckland East when he talks about putting the whole of these people on the land. The fact is that they are not fitted, many of them, for that sort of work. They have been brought up in the towns, and would not be able to earn a living if they were put upon the land. But I believe that there are a certain number of these men who might be taken and put upon the land. I refer to labouring-men who have been accustomed to farm-work, and who should be taken away to the country to prevent them competing with the artisans in the towns. Then, the question comes, How is it to be done? I would say to the Minister of Lands, Put these men upon small pieces of land—land that is cut up, say, into fifty-acre sections; for, in my opinion, sections of that size, if properly tilled, would be sufficient. As a rule, small farms are better cultivated than large ones. I believe that ten acres are of more use to a man, if properly cultivated, than fifty acres if only four or five acres are cultivated. Then, I would say, Give a man so much work a year in road-making, leaving him so much time to spend on his farm. That is the only profitable way in which you can put these men on the land—that is the only method by which they may be settled on the land. Then the question comes, Is there any part of the colony where

such a system as I suggest can be carried on—any part where such a system can be carried on profitably? I think there is. At any rate, there is one place which I have in my mind's eye. I allude to land to the south of Ross, in Westland—the "Big Wanganui Flat," as it is called. The Minister of Mines has told the House in his report that he considers that land to be nearly as good as the land on the Taieri Plain. But it is altogether away from market. Those who have settled down there have no means of getting their produce to market. What is necessary is that the Government should place a sum upon the estimates to construct a road connecting that part of the country with a market. The road might be laid off in lengths, and the unemployed might be given a certain amount of this work to do, say, at the rate of £1 per week. They might work on that road and earn money, and with the money so earned gradually improve their farms. If they were placed on land down there under these terms, and given an opportunity of pulling through the first year, they would no doubt get on very well. But it is of no use putting men on land unless there is some provision made by which they might get over the first year or two. But, if they were given assistance in that way, they might chop down their bush, burn it, and erect homesteads. I believe a large number of men might be put on that land if they were only assisted in that way. They would at once have a market for their produce at Hokitika: in fact, the whole of the Coast would be a market. That is the only way to form a settlement. But simply sending people upon the land, even supposing you give it to them for nothing, is altogether useless for the purpose of promoting settlement, unless you give them some means to live there for a year or two. And I say that to put people on the land without giving them a chance of that sort is to do those people a great wrong. I am only too pleased that the honourable member for Auckland East has brought this matter forward; and I would say to the Government that I am prepared, myself, to remain here a few days longer, if it is not too late, if they will endeavour to organize some scheme whereby they may be able to relieve the distress which at the present time exists in various parts of the colony. It makes one's heart bleed to see, in a fair country like this, which is naturally teeming with wealth, that we should come here, session after session, and not be able to devise means of bringing that wealth into use for the benefit of the people in the country. I feel keenly, myself, upon the subject every time I see in the papers an account of a meeting of the unemployed. I know the way in which these men look upon it. I have spoken to them frequently. It must not be said that people who go to those meetings go simply for the purpose of intimidating the Government. There are many men who put their names down asking for work who feel keenly the degradation of being compelled to ask Government to find them work, and only extreme poverty forces them to do it—men who, in the Old Country respected themselves and were respected, and who very much regret the day they left it. I hope that the discussion which has taken place this afternoon will bear fruit. All I have to say is this: that, in my opinion, the Government ought to push on their estimates and let as many contracts as possible at once. If they came down to the House and took the opinion of honourable members on the subject I am sure that the reply would be, "Let every tender you can at once for every work authorized."

Sir R. STOUT.—I should like to know why honourable gentlemen who talk so much about pushing on the estimates take up so much time in useless talk on motions for the adjournment of the House. I hope that next year there will be a Standing Order framed for the purpose of preventing these motions for the adjournment of the House. What does this amount to? It is simply a discussion about nothing. Every member is discussing a different subject. We have been told that the Government ought to get all their ironwork done in the colony. Just let me say one or two words about that. This Government has done their utmost to see that the ironwork, as far as possible, is done in the colony. They have done much more, I venture to say, than any previous Government ever did in that direction. I do not say that previous Governments have not done their duty, but the fact remains, that more ironwork has been done in the colony under the order of this Government than under the order of any previous Government. It may be that previous Governments found the cost too great: prices have come down in the colony, I admit; but this Government has taken full advantage of that. The ironwork for the Waiau, Beaumont, and other bridges has all been done in the colony, and much ironwork that had never been done here before is now being done in the colony. Then there is the Wingatui Viaduct, also being constructed in Dunedin. This seems to me to be entirely overlooked. Then, I would point out that we have even gone so far as to try to get our locomotives constructed in the colony. In fact, I say that no Government could have done more to encourage ironworking in this colony than this Government has done. Then I come to another objection. It is said that we have not provided sufficient land for village settlements. Why, only in to-night's paper there are telegrams showing how successful the Government have been in pushing on the village settlements in the Auckland District. Hundreds of people are going on to the land all over the country under the village-settlement system. I do not know what the honourable member for Auckland East really wants. What was his scheme? He did not lay down any scheme at all. His speech was all vague generalities. I say that the Government are dealing with this matter in a practical way. Now, I want to say that we should not teach the colonists to look to the Government for help whenever depression occurs. If we teach

ople to do that, then we shall injure the ', and we shall also injure the colony. is a great deal of talk about the unem- l in this colony; but I say that there are unemployed in Sydney than there are in o towns of New Zealand, and there are unemployed in Melbourne than in all the of New Zealand. I know that from o letters received from those places, as ts from what appears in the papers. It surd to say that this country alone is ing from the "unemployed" difficulty. uld like to ask honourable members who hat higher wages should be given to the ployed to tell me whether they think it visable to draw the population from the ry into the towns. That is what we been doing in the past by the high wages n have been paid. I know of a case where an was getting very good wages in the try, where he was well housed, well fed, clothed; but, because he thought that was more amusement in the town, he ally gave up higher wages in the country me and live in the town. I have no doubt that has been going on to a greater extent we are aware of. I have every sympathy people out of work, and still more sym- y with the wives and families of those out ork, and I am prepared to help them; but y that we have no right to go into the ur-market and offer such wages as will pre- people engaging themselves to work for the ers in the country. If we do we shall be ng in a manner which is contrary to the interests of the country, and of these people nselves. There is only one other thing. honourable member for Kumara says that discourage industry by taxing machinery. ll, I wish to point out this: that when the perty Assessment Act was being passed ough this House last year I tried to prevent t. I agree with him that it is wrong, and ink also it is wrong to tax agricultural im- vements, and I tried to cure both those s; but the honourable member for Auck- d East gave his vote against me on that asion: and yet he cheered the honourable mber for Kumara when he made the state- nt that we were discouraging enterprise by ing machinery, and that we were discourag- the small farmers. When the honourable ntleman cheers statements like those he uld recollect that he himself voted against posals for doing away with those grievances. ish honourable gentlemen would come down d say exactly what they want. It is of use honourable gentlemen coming here and ying, in general terms, "We want to get rid the 'unemployed' difficulty." What pro- sals have they to make? It is utterly useless talk about giving the people the land. It of no use to put the people on the land unless ere are roads, unless they are able to make e of the land. I say that I believe that any rson who really wants land can get land on the terms that are now in operation in gard to village settlements. The terms are liberal that any one who could not accept them is not capable of doing any good upon the land. For my life I cannot see what is the use of land without the means of making roads. That is the difficulty about the homestead clauses. The homestead clauses have been an utter failure.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Sir R. STOUT.—Yes; I say that they have been an utter failure, and they will continue be an utter failure, because there is no provision under them for making roads.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—You have not put them into operation.

Sir R. STOUT.—Not in Canterbury, for there is no land.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Oh, yes; hundreds of thousands of acres.

Sir R. STOUT.—No. I say that there can be nothing better than the village-settlement system under the present regulations. It would be inflicting a grievous injury upon people to put them on to land where they have to make their own roads and to put up their own houses, and where they have no means of getting over the difficulties which surround all new settlers.

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

STAMP BILL.

Sir J. VOGEL moved, That the Stamp Bill be recommitted, for the purpose of making certain verbal amendments in clause 3.

Mr. GUINNESS desired to move, That clause 2 be also recommitted. He regretted that, in the hurry of the Bill passing through Committee last night, a sufficient number of honourable members was not present to consider the effect of the amendment which he then proposed. In order to give his reasons for recommitting clause 2 it would be necessary to draw the attention of the House to the law as it stood before "The Stamp Act Amendment Act, 1885," was passed. Clause 2 referred to the amount of duty to be paid upon assignments or transfers of property held by miners. Under all the Stamp Acts that were in force up to the year 1885 miners' property came under this definition: "Assignment or transfer of miners' property—Under £20, 1s.; exceeding £20 and under £50, 2s. 6d.; and for every additional £50 or part of £50, 5s." Last year that clause was amended in this form:—

"Under the title 'Assignment or Transfer' all the words of the first paragraph, from 'Assignment' to 'assignor,' are hereby repealed, and the following is enacted in lieu thereof:—

"Assignment or transfer of a miner's right or a consolidated miner's right issued in pursuance of 'The Mines Act, 1877,' and the several amendments thereof, or letter or instrument authorizing such assignment or transfer, where the letter or instrument is the only act required on the part of the vendor or assignor."

In the early part of the session he drew the attention of the Colonial Treasurer to the fact that this Act repealed the clause in the Act of 1882, and that this subsection substituted for the repealed clause was simply nonsense, and

that, consequently, no assignment of miners' property could be stamped under this subsection, because it provided for the assignment of miners' rights or consolidated miners' rights, and honourable members must know that there was no such thing in law. Hence every assignment of miners' property, even if sold for the nominal consideration of 1s., had to pay a stamp duty of 7s. 6d. for the transfer, whereas hitherto it was only liable to the stamp-duty of 1s. In answer to a question he put, the Colonial Treasurer assured him that a Bill would be brought down this session with the object of altering this section in the Act of 1885, so as to make the law the same as it was before the Act of last session was passed. Section 2 purported to give effect to the promise made by the honourable gentleman; but it did not do so, and he wished to recommit this clause, with the view of having the matter discussed in Committee. It was asked, Why should not miners' property be subjected to the same duty as was payable for the transfer or assignment of freehold estate? But the Legislature had always recognized the fact that it should not be subject to the same duty, but to a duty of 50 per cent. less; and there were good and sound reasons why that should be so, because freehold property was not so frequently the subject of sale, transfer, or the investment of capital as was miners' property. In one case very few sales took place; but in the other, in order to get capital invested to encourage and foster the mining industry, sales were continually taking place. That could not be said of a piece of freehold land bought by a man to settle on it for his life. That was one of the reasons why, he believed, the Legislature, up to 1885, allowed a less amount of duty to be paid than was now attempted to be charged. He hoped the House would agree to the amendment, so as to carry out the promise of the Treasurer and his Government to foster and encourage the mining industry.

Mr. SEDDON seconded the amendment. He would remind the Treasurer that there was a debt due by the Government which he had not paid. He said he would refund the difference between 7s. 6d. and 1s. which was charged through this mistake. He told the House that it was a very small amount, and that he would refund it at once: but no refund had taken place yet. The return which was promised had not been laid on the table. The whole mistake arose through the designation of the property. There was no property in a miner's right of itself. The property was in a right granted by a lease or license. The Minister of Mines had carried a Bill which allowed property to be held without a miner's right at all; consequently, as this Bill now stood, mining property would have to pay on transfer the same as if it were freehold. That meant 7s. 6d., at the least, on every transfer. Property of this kind was, necessarily, continually changing hands, and on each transfer they would have to pay those very heavy fees. Exception was taken to that as soon as the Act of last year was passed, and he and the other goldfield members were taken to task for permitting the Act to pass. All he could say was that he had pointed it out to the Treasurer, who said it had not the effect stated. He simply wished to recommit the Bill and put the matter in the same position that it was in in the Act of 1882. By the Mining Bill it was provided, now, that all sales must be transferred immediately, or otherwise the person who did not register the transfer would be liable to loss of the property; so that, as they had made the transfer compulsory on every sale, they should reduce the charges to what they were in 1882.

Sir J. VOGEL could see no reason why property which had a consolidated value and which was held under license or lease should be subject to a less rate of stamp duty than other property. He was one of those who most earnestly desired to see the goldfields progress, and he thought every encouragement should be given to the working miner; but, if the thing were overdone, and claims made on behalf of all persons engaged in mining pursuits to exemption from ordinary taxation, and to carry it to the length of saying that valuable property transferred should not pay the ordinary rate of duty, that would hinder rather than encourage mining pursuits. If the property transferred were not worth much, then the duty would be very little. With regard to the return mentioned by the honourable member for Kumara, they could not obtain a return as to deeds stamped with adhesive stamps, but it was estimated that the whole difference paid was about £5 or £6. He did not suppose that included property held under lease or license.

Mr. SEDDON pointed out that as regarded leases it was a different thing. There might be a head-race held under license, and six or seven shares held in that race.

Mr. MENTEATH would like to point out to the Treasurer the footing upon which the property thus dealt with stood. Different measure was meted out in this Bill to mining property from that meted out to shares in public companies. The latter were subject to the differential rate of stamp duty which mining property was formerly subject to. Shares in public companies were now left under the same stamp duty as formerly, whereas an increased duty was placed upon the transfer of miners' property. Another point he would like to call attention to was this: Under the Bill introduced by the Minister of Mines, a large class of property—temporarily-held easements of Crown lands—which, formerly, were held under miners' rights—such, for instance, as a half-acre of land taken up by a miner for a dwelling—were now held under license, and not under a miner's right. If the Bill of the Minister passed into law, all this class of property, which otherwise would be free, would have to come under a very heavy tax. Therefore the effect of the honourable gentleman's measure would be a curse instead of, as it was intended to be, a blessing to the miners. Under this Bill if a man had a small piece of land and put up a tent on it and cleared it, and then wished to

er it, he would have to pay a stamp duty 6d. instead of a stamp duty of 1s. He tted that that was excessive, considering ass of property which had to be dealt He therefore trusted that the Colonial urer would accept a modification in the .

J. VOGEL said he would agree to the ion of the word "license."

GUINNESS said he would accept the tion of his amendment, as it would carry hat he wanted.

recommitted, reported, and read a third

SETTLED LAND BILL.

R. STOUT, in moving the second read- the Settled Land Bill, said that when the ation of Land Bill was under discussion e House it was suggested by many honour- members that it would be better to intro- the Settled Land Bill which was intro- d into the House of Lords by Lord Cairns Lord Selborne, with some amendments ake the Bill suitable to the colony. He ght, himself, that the Alienation of Land was simpler and clearer, and that there a great deal of verbiage in this Bill. At same time, he also thought that if a led Land Bill were passed it would be a in the right direction; and therefore he a Bill prepared, and asked the Hon. Sir lerick Whitaker to take charge of it in ther place. The honourable gentleman been good enough to look over it—to charge of it—and it had passed through Legislative Council; and, as the matter already been very fully discussed in this se, he did not think it would be necessary urther debate it.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I think this Bill is ewhat of an improvement on the Aliena- of Land Bill which was introduced in the ly part of the session, and which, it was ted out, would have been practically un- kable. It was a measure which, I venture ay, would have resulted in very consider- e inconvenience in practice, and in very at expense. I confess that this Bill, though s an improvement on that one, seems to me go too far. Although it may be adapted to state of things in England, where we know t settled estates exist to a much greater ent than they do in this colony, I am not that the power to the tenant for life to lutely sell property, as given here, is de- ble in a colony. We know that in England perty has assumed a normal value—that is ay, its value is always within reasonable its; but in a colony property is purchased person with a view of holding it, perhaps, a few years, with a view to benefit by a able enhancement of its value. And if the ant for life has the power to sell he may dis- of it, perhaps, at a sacrifice, the income n the invested purchase-money promising e much greater than the income derivable n the unsold land. I think it would be wise t, in all cases, before sale the consent of remainder-men or of the Supreme Court should be obtained. In this colony the value of property fluctuates very greatly and suddenly, and a tenant for life might hurriedly sell during depression, when the property might not realize half the amount it would in other circumstances. I do not say that the life-tenant is not interested in getting the best price possible; but we know that in the colony there is not that restraint against what may be termed sharp practice which there is at Home. I should be sorry to give the tenant for life an absolute power to sell without restriction, because circumstances are conceivable in which he would gain an undue advantage from such sale as against the remainder-men. This Bill is retrospective, and its operation will affect wills and settlements made prior to its passing, when those executing the instruments did not have it in contemplation that the law would be altered in this direction.

Sir R. STOUT.—Neither had they in England; and yet the English Act was passed.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—The English Act is different from this, and I say the system of adopting English legislation wholesale is a most vicious one. Because an Act is found on the English Statute Book, to say that that is reason enough for our adopting it as it stands is a most vicious contention. Any English Act introduced here requires the most careful consideration and deliberation to adapt it to the circumstances of the colony. I agree with the principle of lessening the restraint on alienation; but to give this arbitrary power of sale to a tenant for life is to give a power that will be capable of gross abuse, and one that I am certain will be misused; and I contend that such a power should be exercisable only subject to the consent of the remainder-men or of the Supreme Court. Clause 33 of this Bill states how a married woman is to be affected by it. I do not know whether this provision was passed in the English Act before the Married Women's Property Act was passed in England, because under the latter Act a married woman is given all the powers in regard to property of a *feme sole*. There is also in this Bill a provision by which a person may get himself appointed the guardian of an infant tenant for life, and that guardian is given the power the tenant for life would have if of age. Now, I do not say that an infant should not have the same power of disposal as other tenants for life, subject to proper restriction; but the Bill reads—"Where a person who is in his own right seised of or entitled in possession to land is an infant, then for the purposes of this Act the land is settled land, and the infant shall be deemed tenant for life thereof." Under this the infant tenant for life can sell land through a person who gets himself appointed guardian, and subject to no control by the Court.

Sir R. STOUT.—The Court appoints the guardian.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—Yes; but the Court does not sanction the sale: and when appointing the guardian on summary application it would not be likely to contemplate, probably, that guardian exercising, free from rest-

the very large power which it is proposed to give him by this Bill. I am not opposing this Bill in any sense, but I am merely pointing out the danger of passing it as it now stands. I say it is the bounden duty of this House to see that the property of infants is not so placed that a guardian may dispose of it without restraint. I consider that the adult tenant for life, or those representing an infant life-tenant, should be compelled to satisfy the Court that any proposed sale is in the interests of all the beneficiaries. It is all very well to throw a Bill on the floor of the House and say that it is a popular Bill and we must pass it. When, some weeks ago, I suggested that the Alienation of Land Bill should be referred to a Committee conversant with the subject I was laughed at, and told that to do so would be to "burke" the Bill. The Alienation of Land Bill would have been a most vicious measure, and would have led to no end of litigation and confusion. It has, however, been abandoned in favour of this Bill, which is a very great improvement upon it; but yet, I venture to say, the present Bill is not by any means a reasonably perfect measure; and this House should see that some restraint is placed on the possible action of the persons to whom I have referred, and by whom its powers are to be exercised.

Mr. GARRICK.—I understand it to be generally accepted that it is necessary to remove the restrictions which exist on the alienation of land. For that object various measures have, during the last few years, been introduced in this House—certainly, to my mind, all impracticable measures—and the Government have at last fallen back, and, I think, rightly so, upon what is known as the Settled Estates Act, passed in 1882 by the Imperial Parliament, and amended by them in 1884. I think we shall be able to make of this Bill a reasonably-useful measure, and one which will form the basis, perhaps, by improvement in the future, for thoroughly removing the difficulty intended to be dealt with, and working for good and not for evil. I object, however, to the mode of the Premier in introducing this Bill. I think that it is not fair to this House to say that the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker is responsible for this Bill——

Sir R. STOUT.—I did not say so.

Mr. GARRICK.—that he was intrusted with carrying it through another place, and that, because it had passed that Chamber, the Premier considered that it was quite unnecessary to give the House any information as to the character of the Bill—that, in fact, it must go through on the flood-tide because the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker had introduced it. Now, I am quite sure that those who have read the Bill and compared it with the English Act will see that it still requires much consideration, despite all the experience of and the care bestowed upon it by the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker. It requires alteration in many places, because its machinery is not applicable to the circumstances of the colony; and there are words in it which must be struck out, because they are only applicable to circumstances in England. Though I approve of the principle of the Bill, there are several provisions in it which it will be necessary to amend in Committee, and I hope the amendments I shall suggest will commend themselves to the good sense of honourable members as amendments which ought to be adopted. This Bill will practically remove all restraint on alienation. I wish the House to understand that that will be its practical effect. The law now recognizes that a man may clothe the trustees he appoints with authority for the administration of the estate, either under settlement or will, for the benefit of wife, children, or others; but this Bill practically proposes to supersede the power of the trustees altogether. I do not say that it proposes to eliminate them altogether from the position of trusteeship, but it proposes to deprive them of that authority with which they have been clothed by the testator for the management and control of the property intrusted to them. It purports to bestow on the tenant for life the absolute power to dispose of the freehold of the land; and I put it to the House whether it is prepared to go as far as that. Any one who will turn to the speech made by the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker on this Bill in another place will see that he referred at length to the condition of things in England, and to the disastrous result of tying up huge properties by the settlement of estates on tenants for life, tenants in remainder, and over, for as long as the law will allow. But such circumstances have no parallel whatever in this colony, and hence I submit to the House that there is no necessity for so drastic an alteration of the law as this Bill proposes. I think it is only right that there should be some restraint on the power of disposal by the tenant for life. I do not agree with the honourable member for Dunedin West that the consent of all the remainder-men should be obtained, because I think that would tend to defeat the exercise of the authority given in favour of alienation, and would surround the position with technical difficulties which might thoroughly defeat the operation of the Bill, and I have no wish to bring about that result; but I wish to make the Bill as useful a measure as possible for the purpose it is intended to effect. I submit to the House that, to insure the power given shall be exercised in the interest of all the beneficiaries, it should be surrounded with reasonable precautions. I suggest that, as this measure gives the tenant for life the power to overrule the wishes of the testator, to deprive the trustee of the authority with which he has been clothed by the settlement, and absolutely to dispose of the land—as it closes the mouth and ties the hands of the trustee, while the tenant for life is empowered to absolutely dispose of an estate in which he holds only a limited interest, I think honourable members will agree with me that so very great a power should be only exercised subject to the sanction of the Court, which should be satisfied that such power is to be exercised in

interest of the other beneficiaries. I dare that some honourable members will say, is a lawyer who is speaking. There is the ure of the order shown: he wants an appli- on to the Court, so that there may be legal s." That I meet point-blank by asking if honourable member who makes a will or lement for the benefit of his wife and dren, and clothes his trustees with certain horities for the management of the trust, ld not rather that his estate paid the cost nding an application to the Court to obtain sanction to the disposal of the estate by a ant for life holding a limited interest, than t such tenant for life should have an abso- ly unfettered power of disposal, irrespective his own wishes as testator, and possibly to prejudice of those interested in remainder. elieve it must commend itself to the good se of every one that a Judge of the Supreme rt should be given a discretion in saying ether an intended disposal was for the in- est of all parties concerned, rather than that only of those parties should exercise this solute power without any safeguard. Then, re is another objection to the Bill: It l be readily recognized that in England re may be large estates which it may be cessary to improve with the proceeds ob- ned from the sale of a part of the trust perty, and for which purpose it may become cessary to exercise a power that it cannot, in s circumstances of this colony, be necessary exercise. Now, I put it plainly, and submit at it would be most mischievous to give a ant for life the absolute power to dispose of e freehold of land, and to spend the pro- eds or trust funds in buying other land, mines, d minerals, and in developing and work- g the same—in a word, to speculate with the st estate. He may sell the fee-simple of the nd and speculate with the money. Under bsection (1) of clause 7 the money may be ent "in investment on Government securi- s, or on real securities in New Zealand, with wer to vary the investment into or for any her such securities." I submit to the House at that ought to come out; and if, in the terest of removing the restraint on the aliena- on of land, a tenant for life should have such thority, he certainly should not be allowed to and speculate in land in fee-simple, as pro- ded by subsection (2). If you look at subsec- on (3) you will find that he may speculate in ines and minerals. Surely that cannot be asonable. Just imagine a tenant for life sell- g the fee-simple of property and speculating mines and minerals!

Sir R. STOUT.—What does "settled lands" ean?

Mr. GARRICK.—I am making no observa- ion on this Bill except after the most careful onsideration, and I submit I have some know- edge of the subject on which I talk. All land ecomes "settled" under this Act. Further, ection 16 provides,—

"The trustees of a settlement, or any of hem, are not liable for giving any consent, or or not making, bringing, taking, or doing any such application, action, proceeding, or thing as they might make, bring, take, or do; and, in case of purchase of land with capital money arising under this Act, are not liable for adopting any contract made by the tenant for life, or bound to inquire as to the propriety of the purchase, or answerable as regards any price, consideration, or fine, and are not liable to see to or answerable for the investigation of the title, or answerable for a conveyance of land if the conveyance purports to convey the land in the proper mode, or liable in respect of purchase-money paid by them by direction of the tenant for life to any person joining in the conveyance as a conveying party, or as giving a receipt for the purchase-money, or in any other character, or in respect of any other money paid by them by direction of the tenant for life on the purchase."

While section 26 says,—

"On a sale, mortgage, or charge, a purchaser, mortgagee, or other person dealing in good faith with a tenant for life shall, as against all parties entitled under the settlement, be conclusively taken to have given the best price, consideration, or rent, as the case may require, that could reasonably be obtained by the tenant for life, and to have complied with all the requisitions of this Act."

Honourable members will also see at once that a trustee or person exercising the great powers conferred by this measure is by its provisions absolutely protected; but little or no corresponding protection is provided for the preservation of the estate; and I submit to the House that that is a very strong reason indeed why the House should sanction the interference of the Court, and afford the required protection. I would also draw the attention of the House to the fact that, as far as I can gather, it is intended by this Bill to give a power to mortgage; though it is by no means clear what really is intended. If honourable members will turn to section 11 they will find that it says "a tenant for life may contract to make any sale, mortgage, or charge." If a mortgage or charge is intended to apply to a life estate, which it may be taken to mean under subsection (2) of section 11, it would not be necessary to see that the tenant for life mortgages only his own interest; but I contend that there is no necessity for this power in the Bill. Now, under the English Settled Estates Act there is authority for borrowing money, and securing that money by way of mortgage, for the purpose of making improvements, for the purpose of partition, and for raising money to obtain equality of exchange—that is, where land is given for other land of a different value. There is no authority, however, in this Bill providing either for partition or exchange. Surely, then, a tenant for life should not be given power to mortgage other than his own interest in the trust estate, which he can do already without this measure, and which numbers of them have done to my own knowled[illegible] I submit, therefore, that the exercise powers granted by this Bill to a ter

should be surrounded by a corresponding protection to that provided in the case of an infant under the age of twenty-one years, or of a person found a lunatic, and that the guardian or committee, as the case may be, should apply for authority to the Supreme Court or Judge, and obtain the sanction of such Court or Judge; and I ask the House to extend the same protection to those claiming after the tenant for life. I think also that the power to make provision for partition which is in the English Act should be inserted. I think, if the tenant for life is to be set at large as regards his own moiety, there ought to be power to make partition, as between joint tenants or tenants in common, as no difficulty could arise as to exercise of power for such purpose. A father may leave a property to two sons jointly. If, instead of selling it under the power they would have as tenants for life, they thought better to divide it, I submit to this House it is only reasonable that they should have the liberty to make that partition, and such a provision should be inserted in the Bill. Again, there is a very objectionable clause in this measure—section 21—which I think ought to be very considerably modified. It says,—

"Where the Court directs that any costs, charges, or expenses be paid out of property subject to settlement the same shall, subject and according to the directions of the Court, be raised and paid out of capital-money arising under this Act, or other money liable to be laid out in the purchase of land to be made subject to the settlement, or out of investments representing such money, or out of income of any such money or investments, or out of any accumulations of income of land, money, or investments, or by means of a sale of part of the settled land in respect whereof the costs, charges, or expenses are incurred, or of other settled land comprised in the same settlement and subject to the same limitations, or by means of a mortgage of the settled land or any part thereof, to be made by such person as the Court directs, and either by conveyance of the fee-simple or other estate or interest the subject of the settlement, or by creation of a term or otherwise, or by means of a charge on the settled land or any part thereof, or partly in one of those modes and partly in another or others, or in such other mode as the Court thinks fit."

The part I object to is that which enables the trust estate to be mortgaged or sold to pay law-costs. Certainly one would think that this Bill was prepared in the interests of my profession. You may set the estate at large, you may dissipate it, in a sense; while those who exercise the power are free to give a receipt for the moneys. I submit to the House that this is a clause which requires amendment. I would also draw the attention of the House to section 22, which, I admit, is contained in the English Act, but the meaning of which I have failed, and now fail, to understand. Section 22 says,—

"The powers under this Act of a tenant for life are not capable of assignment or release, and do not pass to a person as being, by operation of law or otherwise, an assignee of a tenant for life, and remain exercisable by the tenant for life after and notwithstanding any assignment, by operation of law or otherwise, of his estate or interest under the settlement."

Now, I ask the House to mark that the tenant for life is able to sell: that is, after he has already sold his interest to a purchaser his powers as the tenant for life are to remain exercisable—that is, in fact, "after and notwithstanding any assignment, by operation of law or otherwise, of his estate or interest under the settlement."

That is an extraordinary provision.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. GARRICK.—I think it is. Here the tenant for life has the absolute power to dispose of the estate. But, suppose he has mortgaged or sold his interest in it—which he could do without this Act—the person holding the mortgage, or to whom a sale has been made, cannot interfere to prevent such tenant for life exercising the authority to sell the estate. Perhaps that is a proper provision, if the interest of the tenant for life be only mortgaged. But let us look at subsection (3) of this section. It is as follows:—

"But this section shall operate without prejudice to the rights of any person being an assignee for value of the estate or interest of the tenant for life; and in that case the assignee's rights shall not be affected without his consent."

This section seems to me to be most contradictory, and unless what the Legislature means is made more clear no one would lend money to or purchase from the tenant for life. This is a matter which requires considerable attention. Then, I would draw attention to clause 10, which enables land that has been acquired by purchase to be made subject to the settlement in manner directed in this section: that is to say, any fresh land acquired is to be just as much "settled" as any land was under the old settlement. Then, subsection (3) of the clause goes on,—

"Land acquired as aforesaid may be made a substituted security for any charge in respect of money actually raised, and remaining unpaid, from which the settled land, or any part thereof, or any undivided share therein, has heretofore been released on the occasion and in order to the completion of a sale."

I should think that it should be necessary to get the consent of the person who holds the security. Of course the Premier may say that that would be a matter for the Court to deal with. But I think it would be well to express in the Act that the consent of the person holding the security shall be necessary: in fact, substitution could not, I think, be effected without such consent having first been obtained. There are many other matters that will require careful consideration as the Bill goes through Committee. I should certainly say that the importance of the principles of the measure has been kept more in view than the necessity for embodying them in the necessary technical

— *Mr. Garrick*

uage to give effect to them; and it will be ssary for the House to fully consider the in Committee, especially those points to ch I have called attention; for, notwithding the high authority of the honourable leman who introduced the Bill in another e, I must say that I think many important ters have been overlooked.

r. CONOLLY.—I do not intend to occupy time of the House in discussing this Bill at stage. I shall not follow the honourable ber for St. Albans either in the points on ch I disagree with him or in those on which ree with him, for they are matters which nust consider in Committee; but I would point out this to the Premier: that if we to give due attention to the Bill it will be essary to give a couple of days to it at the least, and I do not know whether the se is disposed to take so long over it. I ll not oppose the second reading of the Bill, ause it is very much the same Bill as I inluced into the House three years ago, but ch the House declined to take up because ourable members wanted a simpler mea-e. The Bill goes in the right direction, and I regret is that it was not introduced at an lier period of the session. Still, I shall not ow any difficulty in the way of its being sidered and passed, though it comes before so late.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I think the House ought to l very much indebted to the honourable mber for St. Albans for his criticism of this asure. I do not think that I ever heard a re exhaustive yet, at the same time, temate criticism upon such a measure as this. o not propose, myself, to enter into a criticism this Bill, because I feel that the honourable mber has criticised it much better than I uld do; though there are many points that might touch upon to show that the Bill reires amendment. However, I recognize that e Bill is a very valuable one, and I hope we all pass it, for it is a great improvement, so r as my opinion goes, upon the Bill which was troduced at an earlier period of the session. hen we get into Committee upon the Bill I pe, however, that we shall so alter it as not allow the large powers proposed to be exersed by the tenant for life to be exercised ithout reference to the Court. That is a point hich I think needs careful attention.

Sir R. STOUT.—I was certainly surprised at e objection of the honourable member for St. lbans to a Bill which is a copy of the English ct, with the omission of a few provisions not nitable to the circumstances of the colony, hen I remembered that only a few weeks or onths ago he stated in this House that such measure as that ought to be introduced. ow, I shall just test the criticism of the onourable member in one way. I understand that he says that the tenant for life an, under this Bill, invest money in the purhase of mines and minerals. I believe I am ight in saying that he said that. Very well. ow, I will take that as an instance of the alue of his criticism, and, if I can show that he is wrong in this particular, I shall ask the House to believe that he is wrong in all things, I could show that he is wrong in all points; but I take that as a test. He says that the tenant for life can purchase the fee-simple of mines and minerals. He did not go on, in the first instance, to say "convenient to be held or worked with the settled land," but he did add those words afterwards. The object of enabling this to be done is perfectly plain. It is that, where a person has settled land, he may purchase the fee-simple of mines or minerals to be worked with the settled land. Of course, the meaning is that, where mines and minerals are being worked in connection with settled land, they may be purchased and become part of the settled land; but the House was led to believe that the tenant for life could speculate in mines and minerals. Then, I would point out that under any circumstances the tenant for life could not of his own free will spend the money. The honourable gentleman could not have read the next section of the measure. I am sorry that the honourable gentleman should have shown so little care. It is not for want of ability that he errs. The next clause says,—

"Capital-money arising under this Act shall, in order to its being invested or applied as aforesaid, be paid either to the trustees of the settlement or into Court, at the option of the tenant for life, and shall be invested or applied by the trustees or under the direction of the Court, as the case may be, accordingly."

If it is desired to purchase mines or minerals the money is paid either into the hands of the trustees under the settlement or into Court, and it is invested under their direction. The tenant for life has no charge over the money. Was that criticism of the honourable gentleman fair criticism? After the statement of the honourable member for St. Albans honourable members would believe that the tenant for life would get the money for the purchase of land, if he pleased; but there is nothing of the kind in the Bill. It must either be paid to the trustees or be paid into Court, and be invested as the trustees or the Court may decide, as the case may be.

An Hon. MEMBER.—But not without the consent of the tenant for life.

Sir R. STOUT.—But that provision makes it more difficult. Therefore all this criticism about the tenant for life purchasing mines is gone. There is no such power in the Bill. Is that fair criticism? That is the criticism which the honourable member for New Plymouth specially approved. Then, let us take the criticism on clause 22. The honourable member began by saying that he did not understand the clause. If I started out by saying that I did not understand a clause, I do not think that I should attempt to explain it. He said he could not understand the meaning of the words, "The powers under this Act of a tenant for life are not capable of assignment or release." Now, what is the [illegible] of that? The meaning is this: th[illegible] tenant is permitted to assign, h[illegible]

prive himself of the powers he has under this Bill. If, for example, a sale is authorized, and the tenant for life sells to another person, that person would become the tenant for life, and have the powers given in this Bill. Here, again, the criticism of the honourable gentleman fails. The only other criticism that needs noticing is that in reference to clause 21, which provides for the payment of costs out of settled property. The power which is taken in this clause is exercised every day when a Court of Equity orders the sale of property, and orders the payment of all costs, and expenses, and charges. It has been acted upon for the last hundred years. The only other criticism was that the tenant for life should not have power to sell. Why? Let us take, for example, the case of lands held under the Land Transfer Act. They may be clothed with a trust, but they are not known to be. The Land Transfer takes no notice of trusts, and where the trustee makes a sale the purchaser is not bound to inquire into the trust.

An Hon. MEMBER.—A *caveat* may be lodged.

Sir R. STOUT.—Of course, it may and it may not. There is no difference between the two cases. The only other criticism was that of the honourable member for Dunedin West, whose only argument was that this was a copy of an English Act. The honourable gentleman copied an English Act this session—the Apportionment Bill—and a very good one. I do not object to that; and I was wishing to copy an English Act. I wish this passed; and why? Not because I do not think the Bill introduced by myself was much simpler and clearer, and would not have carried out the same object; but I prepared this Bill because I thought that the most conservative members of this House could not object to a measure that had been approved of by Lord Cairns. I do not say that this contains all the provisions of the English Act; but, substantially, leaving out the portions of the English law not necessary in this colony, this Bill is the same as that which was approved of by Lord Cairns. Another honourable member wants the trustees of the tenant for life to be controlled by the Supreme Court. I do not think that should be the case. I think they ought to have the power of sale just as in the matter of personal property, without any interference from the Court. I do not think that land ought to be looked upon as anything more sacred than personal property. When the Bill gets into Committee I shall not object to any reasonable amendments, which I hope honourable members will tender, with the wish to make the Bill as perfect as possible. But I would put it to honourable members whether it is wise to ask that restrictions in looking after property should be put in that were not thought necessary in England.

Bill read a second time.

PROPERTY ASSESSMENT BILL.

Sir R. STOUT.—This Bill—the Property Assessment Bill—is an amendment of the Bill of last year, and, practically, it provides for three things. In the Bill of last year, as I intimated to the Committee, we proposed to tax the property of companies and societies of all kinds in the colony, except those that were specially exempt. The Property-tax Commissioner, in pursuance of that intention, taxed the lands held by various corporate bodies for Church purposes, and they objected, and it has been held by the Supreme Court that the Act did not apply to them. We have put in a clause to meet that difficulty, and I think it will meet it. Then, provision is made for the payment of the tax by mortgagees, though absent from the colony. In certain cases where the mortgagee was out of the colony, it seemed unfair that the mortgager should pay all the tax; and section 3 was put in to enable a mortgager to recover tax paid by him on account of a foreign mortgagee. Section 4 is to enable the tax to be recovered on reversionary interests in property. At present it is held, though I think it is a doubtful point, that tenants for life should have only their interests in the property valued, and that the rest of the property should not be charged with the tax. I say the whole of the property should pay; otherwise, if that were not done, the result would be that by making a settlement people would get rid of their liabilities. Then the other part comes, which is to restore the law to what it was before the Act of last year. I do not think it is necessary to say more. I think these points are sufficiently clear. I do not think that any one will say that people who have hundreds and thousands of pounds' worth of land should escape the tax. Churches, chapels, and manses are exempt from taxation. I do not propose to charge them. I only propose that, if people have large quantities of lands as endowments, they shall pay as well as others. I think it would be a monstrous thing for them to escape taxation. I think, too, that it is a fair thing that mortgagees should, at any rate, pay something of the taxation: and I therefore move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I may say that I cannot see what necessity there is for bringing in this Bill. I look upon the Bill as most impolitic and uncalled-for. I think it evinces a disregard for the highest and best feelings, or, if you will, the prejudices, of a very large section of the community; and all for—what? For the sake of getting a paltry few hundred pounds additional of property-tax.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Thousands.

Mr. MACANDREW.—If there is a hundred thousand pounds' worth of property it will not come to that. I say it is a paltry matter altogether; and, if revenue is wanted, abolish the exemptions. Since the foundation of the colony these properties have been free from taxation; and why should we commence to tax them now? Besides, this Bill is retrospective in its action. One clause—subsection (4) of clause 4—is clearly retrospective, I take it. I maintain that, if that is not one of its objects, one of the effects of the Bill will be to discourage all organization for the public worship of

mighty God. That will be one of its effects. ›t only will men in their individual capacities called upon to pay this property-tax, but in eir collective capacities they will have to do under the Bill;—whether they be Jews or ›ntiles, Pagans or Christians, whatever they e they will be called upon to pay the tax. I ink this is most objectionable. I do not ›ow what we are coming to at all. Not ntent with excluding the Bible from our hools, we are now also determined to dis›arge men, by the imposition of pecuniary ›nalties, from joining together for the public ›rship of God. This is, to my mind, carrying gnosticism a great deal too far, and I sincerely ›pe the honourable gentleman will not press ›e Bill.

Mr. GARRICK.—I would draw the Premier's ›tention to something in this Act which, I nagine, cannot have been intended. Section 4 ›ys,—

"The trustee of any property held in re›ersion, remainder, or expectancy, or subject to ny future or reversionary interest of any kind, hall be chargeable with the tax payable in re›pect thereof in the same manner as if such roperty were his own."

That would create a personal obligation on he part of trustees.

Sir R. STOUT.—I do not mean it in that way.

Mr. GARRICK.—I apprehend the Premier ›as no objection to alter it in Committee.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Mr. GARRICK.—Subsection (3) makes pro›ision for releasing. The Property-tax Commis›ioner may register a lien against the estate, ›r, if the trustees be unable to pay, he is to release it; otherwise there will have to be an application, I suppose, to the Court to appoint some one to execute a reconveyance. I differ from the honourable member for Port Chalmers, and fully expect, from the course of legislation, that we shall render every man liable to a criminal prosecution who has anything whatever to do with land.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I heard the remarks of the honourable member for Port Chalmers with a great deal of pleasure. He indicates the line of policy which I hope the Government will introduce next session, and that is a graduated property-tax or income-tax. The honourable member raises the question of "exemptions;" but if he will say that there shall be no exemptions, but a graduated tax, and that every man in the community shall pay according to his means, I shall willingly support that proposal. There is not a working-man in the country who is not prepared to pay his sixpence or shilling towards the necessities of the State, equally with those who own thousands. I am sure that the tendency of legislation is in that direction. We know that the great bulk of the gentlemen who at the present time raise their voices against taxation have been, in the past, the most prominent and sincere advocates for a large expenditure of public funds from which they have derived great benefit.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. TAYLOR.—It is all very fine to say "No;" but if you look through the Domesday Book you will find it there, without any "No" about it. That is the fact, and these cries raised at the present time against further borrowing and further taxation emanate chiefly from those honourable gentlemen who have already had their own turn served. Therefore if the honourable member for Port Chalmers will bring in something like the measure he has indicated—that we should have a graduated tax, every man paying according to his means—I will support him, and he would be doing, then, his duty to the country. I am sure the Premier holds the same views, because it is recognized by all political economists that there is no fair or just system of taxation but what is based upon what is called "community of sacrifice." Now, I want to ask this question: If you take a shilling from a man who has ten shillings, and two shillings from a man who has ten pounds, where does the equality of sacrifice come in? It is the small men in the aggregate who keep the big ones going; but, so long as the big ones have their own way, you may depend upon it that they will keep the small ones under. It was not my intention to speak on this matter at all, but I think it my duty to say that I hope the honourable member for Port Chalmers will assist the Government, because I think the Government is inclined to go in the direction which the honourable member for Port Chalmers favours. Why does he not get up and do as I should do were I a leading member of the House—move in the direction in which he believes legislation should go? I do not believe in relieving one portion of the community at the expense of another. Schools and churches have a vast amount of property, and yet we have to make roads and footpaths, and provide all the decencies of life, and they do not contribute a single sixpence. Is that fair or just? I do not object to a chapel or a church being exempt in the cases which the honourable member seemed to indicate, but I disagree altogether from the way in which he indicates they should be exempt. If the local bodies have to make those improvements, at least those gentlemen in the aggregate—because some of them are very influential bodies—should contribute their fair share to ordinary borough rates.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—Since this Bill was introduced I have examined the Consolidation Bill of last session as introduced by the Premier, and I find that the words exempting Church property were omitted last session from the Consolidation Bill, and were not inserted and erased in the ordinary way of showing that an alteration was intended to be made in the law. Therefore honourable members did not know last year that the Premier had in view the charging of those Church properties with this tax. I quite admit that that is a fair subject for discussion, but this House ought to have been informed of the fact before a change in the law was made. After the session, to my surprise I found that an alteration had been made; and I am greatly surprised that the Premier intended to make that alt

he did not intimate it to this House. A question arose as to whether those bodies were justified in paying this tax, because, however willing they might be to pay the tax, if the trustees paid it illegally they would be personally liable; and when the question went before the Supreme Court Mr. Justice Williams held that the Legislature had not carried out any change in the law, because an omission had been made in not altering the interpretation of the word "companies." When any radical change is proposed to be made in the law this House ought to be informed of the fact. The Premier, in introducing this Bill last year, said,—

"Again, I will say that the important provisions of this Bill are the exemption of agricultural implements, the exemption of machinery, the taxation of life-insurance companies, besides those dealing with good-will and reversionary estates."

There was not a word in the whole of his remarks, or in the remarks of any other honourable member, indicating that a change of the law in this respect was contemplated. I do not intend to discuss the question whether or not those properties should be subject to taxation. For reasons that I need not explain here—being connected with Church properties in the South—I shall probably not vote upon this question. I simply wished to direct the attention of the House to the fact that a radical change was proposed to be made in the taxation of the country last year without the House being informed of the fact. With regard to the proposed interpretation of the word "company," I am not at all sure that the Hon. the Premier will not find that this interpretation will land him in difficulties that he is now unaware of. The definition, although intended to reach everything, may accomplish rather more than he intended, and I think the House should watch carefully the proposed interpretation of this word. Then, section 3 says,—

"Where a mortgagee of land is not resident in the colony and has no known agent therein authorized to pay the tax payable in respect of his interest in such mortgaged land under the said Act and any Act construed therewith, the mortgager of such land shall be liable to pay such tax on behalf of the mortgagee; but the mortgager shall be entitled to retain and deduct from any interest or other money payable by him to the mortgagee the amount of any tax paid by him in respect of the interest of the mortgagee as aforesaid."

I ask, is it fair to cast on the mortgager the duty of finding out whether the mortgagee has any agent in the colony to pay this tax, and, if the mortgagee has not, to make the mortgager personally responsible for the payment? If he does pay it the mortgager may object to the deduction being made from the interest, because he might say that there was an authorized agent in the colony. Section 4 is a repeal of section 28 of the Act of last year, and this important principle is involved there: Suppose, for instance, you settle £2,500 on five children through a trustee, if the money was handed over separately to the children each child could claim the £500 exemption; but if it is placed beyond their legal control, or they are not of age, then the trustee will have to pay tax on £2,000. Then, honourable members will see that this clause is made retrospective. I think that in Acts of this kind there should be no retrospective legislation. With regard to section 6, curiously enough those companies were formerly taxed on the balance-sheet value of the land; but the Government, for reasons best known to themselves, decided to tax the market value of the land. Now, however, the Government revert to the law as it stood before the Act of last year, and they say in so many words that the value of the property shall be the value as set forth in the balance-sheets of those companies. I do not know whether that is a fair test or not. It seems to me that the proper value of land is what it can be sold for. We know that for company purposes it is sometimes worth more than it will sell for.

Sir R. STOUT.—As to the 2nd clause, it is proposed to tax Church endowment property, and I do not see why that should be exempt. If there is to be aid given to Churches by this colony, it should be given by way of vote. That is the fair way to do it. The honourable member for Dunedin West says it is only a matter of a few hundreds; but it means £3,000 a year given to the richest Churches, while the poor Churches get nothing. If the Churches are to be aided we should do it by giving something to the poorer Churches, which have no land. As to the 3rd clause, the honourable member for Dunedin West evidently does not understand the position. At present the mortgager is paying this tax; so that we are not imposing a new burden, but we are allowing him to deduct it from the interest, and thus we are giving him relief. As to section 4, I believe there are only two cases in the colony where trustees have refused to pay the tax sought to be imposed. There is a doubt as to the interpretation of the Act, and we thought it better to pass this clause than go into the Supreme Court. The reason why we introduced section 5 is this: We have found that the result has been that property has been valued at, apparently, only £5 or £6 an acre, while the balance-sheet of the company showed that that land was worth £11 or £12, and the company would not sell under £12 or £15 an acre. I think a company ought to pay on what is said in its balance-sheet to be the value of the land. Some people think that section 2 will charge all Church lands and all schools: but that is not the case. We do not propose to repeal section 18, which exempts property of that kind. Honourable members will therefore see that this clause only proposes to touch property practically held by Church organizations for endowment purposes.

Bill read a second time.

SPECIAL POWERS AND CONTRACTS BILL.

On the motion for the committal of the Special Powers and Contracts Bill,

Mr. BRYCE said,—I am one of those, Sir, who, as a general rule, think that the discussion on the principle of a Bill should be taken on the second reading, and not on the motion for going into Committee; but I think an exception should be made when, according to our Standing Orders, a Bill is sent to a Select Committee on its second reading. A great deal of discussion might then take place on the second reading which might turn out afterwards to have been unnecessary, in consequence of alterations made in the Bill by the Select Committee. It has been proposed, during the present session, that the Standing Orders should be amended so as to provide that discussions should be confined to the second reading; but, if that be done, then Bills ought to be sent to Select Committees before their second reading. There are good general reasons why Bills should only be discussed on the second reading; but there are a great many reasons why this Bill should be discussed on the motion for going into Committee on the Bill. One reason is, that there is not one principle only in this Bill, but one might say that there are at least a score of principles in it: that is to say, there are at least a score of things in this Bill which should each form the subject of a separate Bill. In my opinion, the original reason for which Bills of this kind were introduced has been departed from, and this method of legislation is being ruined. I think it is being abused to such an extent that by-and-by we shall not be able to avail ourselves of the convenience which such Bills afford. There is no doubt that a Bill of this kind is very useful to correct technical defects, and to legislate on temporary and particular objects, on which there is not likely to be much difference of opinion or discussion. But in this Bill there are a great many things which could not be expected to pass without a great deal of discussion if introduced in separate Bills; and, indeed, there is almost a suspicion that they are put in here for the purpose of evading discussion. I may instance the case of a local Bill—I do not know whether it is even in order to introduce it in this Bill. A local Bill was introduced into the House a few days ago, and it was about to lead to a great deal of discussion, when it was postponed at the instance of the honourable member in charge of it; and yet an attempt is being made to slip that local Bill into the schedule of this Bill, without its having been read a first or a second time by the House as far as this Bill is concerned. Whether that is in order or not I do not know; but I should say it is not. I will give another instance of how a Bill of this kind may be abused; because it is not only what is in the Bill when it first comes before the House, but what may be introduced in the Select Committee, and also what may be introduced without the Select Committee knowing of it, as is the case in the instance I have given. There is another very striking instance which I can give. Honourable members will remember a very long and strong memorandum by the Attorney-General on the Owhaoko case. That memorandum and the Bill connected with it have been sent to a Select Committee, and have occupied the attention of that Committee to a large extent. The evidence taken extends, I believe, to between eighty and one hundred pages. Would any one say that that Bill, which is still in course of being inquired into by that Committee, should be slipped into the schedule to this Bill? It might be, for we have had experience of the same thing. Two years ago, when the Special Powers and Contracts Bill was brought down, it was actually proposed, in Committee, to put a Bill exactly similar to the Owhaoko Bill into the schedule without any notice at all; and it was not only proposed, but done. It is evident that this Bill is being abused. I consider that our Standing Orders always mean something: they are meant to give assurance to honourable members that Bills shall be considered fully and deliberately; but it seems to me that the manner in which this Bill is being brought in and pushed through is distinctly in violation of the spirit of the Standing Orders in all these respects. If you take up the First Schedule of this Bill you will find that there are in it local Bills and special Bills of various descriptions—if I say to the number of from a dozen to twenty I shall be a long way within the mark. Surely that cannot be said to be in compliance with the spirit of our Standing Orders. I propose to point out a few things in this Bill which will prove the truth of what I say. I know that the reply will be made to me by-and-by, as it has been before, "Oh, you introduced a Bill of the same kind yourself." It is true that the Government of which I was a member did so; but my argument is, that these Bills are getting worse and worse, that if they were abused at that time they are more abused now, and that the matters put into this Bill are growing in magnitude year by year. I will say, in anticipation of an argument of that kind, that, supposing I am in a Government—of course, Governments do not always agree—and supposing I am opposed to a thing which the Government introduce, no one will contend that when that Government goes out and I am on the opposite side of the House my mouth is to be shut. I say, therefore, that, although the Government to which I belonged brought in such a Bill, I am as much at liberty now to state my objections to such a course as I might have been formerly to do so in Cabinet when the Bill was proposed. I will go through a few clauses, to show that this Bill proposes a great many things which might each form the subject of a separate Bill. If the honourable member in charge of the Bill will look at clause 5 he will see that it deals with a matter in which, I am sure, he takes a great deal of interest. This clause 5, according to the side-note, is for the purpose of making "provision in case of Native land inalienable for a longer period than twenty-one years except with the consent of the Governor." The honourable gentleman knows very well that we have passed a Bill, which has also gone through another place, dealing entirely with

this question, which provides for the manner in which Native lands shall be dealt with, and prohibits what this clause pretends to deal with. This clause is unnecessary, or, if necessary, I think this is an improper Bill in which to amend an important substantive law on the subject of dealing with Native lands. Then, clause 6 positively proposes to amend the Land Act in a very important respect. Surely that is not the sort of thing to go into a Bill of this kind. Again, in clause 8 there is what appears to me to be undeniably an endowment from the colony to a borough. That is certainly a local matter, and, if it means the conveying of property of the Crown to a borough, it appears to me it should be in a separate Bill, or, at any rate, in the Land Act. Then, there is a new clause, 8A, which seems to make the land of a certain institution rateable; but, I confess, I do not understand the clause myself. I notice that in clause 9 there is an amendment of another Act—I do not know whether it is the Christchurch Drainage Act; but clearly this clause contains an amendment of a specific Act, and ought not to be in a Bill of this kind. There is one objection to putting in promiscuous clauses like this, and making a hotch-potch of the matter—that, supposing a case had to be tried in a Court in connection with the main Act which this clause is intended to amend, no Judge or lawyer, unless his attention were called to it specially, would ever look for an amendment or repeal in the Special Powers and Contracts Act, because on the face of it it has no relation to the original Act. Then, clause 10 provides that the County Council of Selwyn may raise a special loan, without first obtaining the consent of the ratepayers of the Malvern Water-race District; and it goes on to describe the object to which the money is to be applied. It may be a proper enough object; but surely that is, to all intents and purposes, the subject of a local Bill, of which due notice should have been given, and which should have been brought before the House as a local Bill, and not in this Bill as it appears now. There is a similar provision in clause 11, which enables another local body to borrow without the consent of the ratepayers.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—They have the power now.

Mr. BRYCE.—Very well; if that is so, and this clause is only introduced to remedy a technical defect, I withdraw my objection, for that should be the object of the Bill. I approve of the object of clause 12; but I do not approve of it appearing in a Bill of this kind, because, as I have said, the spirit of the Standing Orders as to our procedure is almost deliberately set aside in acting thus; and, in any case, there is the utmost inconvenience in having the law on any subject amended in an Act on the face of which there is nothing to show that it contains anything on the subject as to which the law is altered. As far as the clause violates that principle it is objectionable. I believe petitions have been presented here and in another place in reference to the subject of clause 16. It proposes to deal with land appropriated for a college, hospital, asylum, and so on at Wellington. Clearly, that clause is a local Bill, and notice of it ought to have been given. But it has been represented to me that even the Governors of the college mentioned knew nothing of what was intended to be done until this Bill was brought before the House. If that is so, surely there is an impropriety on the face of it. Any one reading, impartially, clause 16, must see that it is a local Bill; and, even if it were desirable to set aside the ordinary Standing Orders as to local Bills, surely the utmost care should have been taken to give intimation to the parties interested. The First Schedule of the Bill is really a very extraordinary affair, and I think I am within the mark in saying that it contains the subject-matter of some twenty local Bills. The schedule contains forty-seven paragraphs, the subject of many of which should only be dealt with in separate Bills. Paragraph 17 of the schedule is—

"To give legal effect to a promise made to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Auckland that certain lands, reserved in terms of the Auckland Waste Lands Acts and the New Zealand Settlements Acts, should be set apart for Roman Catholic Church purposes."

I think we should be given what information there may be in regard to that. The Committee has struck out paragraph 18. I presume the intention of the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill was that that should be really an amendment of the Thermal Springs Act. In passing that Act a very great concession was made to persons who held informal leases from Maoris to have them confirmed for the same period. This provision would go much further in the same direction, and I presume it was considered so objectionable by the Committee that they propose to omit it. Paragraph 19B refers to forty-seven acres given to the Borough of Onehunga and the County of Eden for the purposes of a rifle-range, cemetery, and recreation-ground. Now, if I recollect aright, that reserve was obtained mainly on the representation that it was especially required and would be especially suitable for a burial-ground; but now it is proposed that the rent of the land shall be used to buy a cemetery elsewhere. Paragraph 19C proposes to set aside the provisions of the Native Land Administration Act, the ink on which is scarcely dry. That, I presume, refers to something additional to the lands formerly authorized in connection with the coal company at the Mokau; but it does appear to me that provisions of this kind, if lightly entered into, are of a very dangerous character. I suppose I have a fair knowledge of this matter; but, such as my knowledge is, it certainly would not lead me, without very much more explanation, to support this provision. It is an objection, as honourable members will understand, that, whereas, all the rest of Her Majesty's subjects are precluded from entering into this lease, this particular company or person is authorized to enter into it, and, therefore, without competition, which appears to me to

very objectionable. Of course, the arrange-
at already entered into is in contravention
aw. Paragraph 20 proposes to surrender a
it-of-way. I do not know anything about
particular case; but, unless very good
sons are shown for it, I do not think that
its-of-way ought to be lightly surrendered.
agraph 23D is a very curious provision. It
ls with the land in the Waipawa Township of
erson who died intestate twenty-three years
, causing the land to revert to the Crown,
ler certain conditions. I dare say that is
fectly right; but it is a sort of thing which
ht to be dealt with in a general Bill on the
ject. A general law should be provided to
et all such cases, and this matter ought cer-
ly to form no part of a Special Powers and
ntracts Bill. I am informed that a similar
vision was struck out of the Bill of last year
the Council. I was not aware of that; but
objection occurred to me on the face of it.
ere is no saying where this sort of thing will
p, if you once begin legislating on such a
ject in such a way. Paragraph 27D reads,—
'Certain sections of land having been vested
the Wellington Harbour Board as endow-
nts, and afterwards resumed as being needed
the purposes of a printing office, it is de-
ed to vest other lands in the said Board in
mpensation for the lands so resumed."
I was under the impression that they had
been vested: perhaps in his reply the
nister will say how and when they were
ted. Paragraph 28A—which has been struck
by the Committee—refers to a religious
ucational reserve granted to the Bishop of
w Zealand, comprising land which was partly
own land, but for the most part a Native re-
ve. Any one who knows what my action
been in regard to these matters will know
at I am not taking exception to the merits of
is provision, and I think a good many of
se education reserves ought to be dealt with
the way that is proposed here. Some ten
ars ago I myself introduced a long Bill con-
ning a power, surrounded with many safe-
ards, for changing the purpose of a trust of
at kind, and I believe I incurred a great deal
hatred for my action in that matter. How-
er, that is nothing. What I say is that
serious a matter as cancelling a trust of
is magnitude ought not to be undertaken
thout the fullest notice being given to all
rties concerned. I do not object to the pur-
se of these reserves being changed when
cessary; but it certainly ought to be done
a very much more open and public manner
an by merely a few lines in the schedule of
Bill containing a great diversity of other
atters. I think that is a very serious objec-
m. In paragraph 31 power is taken to sell a
eat many sections to a great many indi-
iuals, and I am told this is proposed to be
ne in very peculiar circumstances, and I am
ite prepared to admit that, although at first
e provision appeared to me objectionable.
aragraph 32 may be right enough; but it
rtainly requires the assurance of the Minister
at it is right, because it takes a power which
is outside the spirit of the Land Act at all events. Paragraph 39 proposes to give land to certain half-castes. I have an idea that it is quite right to do that; but surely it is a substitution for, or an amendment of, the Middle Island Half-castes Grants Act; and it must be admitted that a power of that sort ought not to appear in a Bill of this kind. It is an amendment of a distinct Act; and, as I have pointed out again and again, if we once get into the habit of passing amendments to distinct Acts by a mere line in a schedule to quite a different Bill, people will never know where to look for all the law on any subject, or be sure that they have found all. Paragraph 40 is struck out—I do not know why; but my idea is that the land, in the first place, was not a Native reserve at all, although it is so called here; and, secondly, that if the Natives have any claim on the land, it should be granted in trust for the Natives of the locality generally, and not in fee-simple to three individuals. That is all I find it necessary to say on that point, but I think I have said enough to show that this Bill is really assuming a magnitude in these matters that it ought not to assume, and that it embraces a lot of matter that really ought to be dealt with by separate Bills, and in some cases as local Bills. I once hesitated in my own mind as to whether the Standing Orders really permitted local Bills to be introduced in a Bill of this kind; but the striking instance I have given might be considered an only one. A few days ago a local Bill was on the Order Paper; but it was postponed at the instance of the honourable member in charge of it, and now it appears here as one of the matters to be dealt with in the schedule of this Bill; and I therefore ask you, Sir, whether you would rule that it is permissible to put local Bills, whether notice of them has been given or not, into the schedule of this Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It appears to me that some curious legislation is put in Special Powers and Contracts Bills, and that there are subjects dealt with in this Bill which ought to be put into separate Bills. On the other hand, there are so many precedents for passing a Bill of this kind that I should not be justified in saying that I would stop this course of procedure on the point of order raised. There are very numerous precedents for passing them in this way.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I may say that, in consequence of clause 9 appearing in the Special Powers and Contracts Bill, I have received several telegrams from the people interested in this matter, and it is my intention to put this case clearly before the House, because I am quite sure they will not allow a local body to borrow £200,000 unless they have the sanction of the ratepayers to do so. I was a member of this Board, and know all the circumstances of the case as they occurred, up to the time when I came down to this House, when I resigned my seat because, being absent, I was unable to do my duty to the ratepayers as a member of the Board. I also know the circumstances of the Board, and I agree that

local body should have the power to obtain the loan, though, at the same time, I hope the House will not sanction a clause of this character being put in by a side-wind. The whole difficulty of this Drainage Board has arisen from the fact that the members of the Board, some four or five years ago, by way of an overdraft, borrowed some £5,000 from the bank. There is nothing in the law to provide for that. That money was borrowed illegally; but, knowing the position of the Board, I am prepared to go in the direction of legalizing the overdraft, because it is necessary, when you borrow money, to pay the interest on the loan. But I protest against giving the Board power to anticipate their revenue, which amounts to £20,000 a year, to expend in works which would not benefit the district which I represent; and I hope the House will not tolerate a clause of this kind being drifted in in this way. I may explain that there used to be a drain running through the place, and the Drainage Board found it was of no use to them, and they allowed the owners of the property alongside to purchase it, and this clause is simply giving them a title. I hope honourable members will not tolerate a clause of this kind, which will give the Board a borrowing power not contemplated by the Act, and which is contrary to the wishes of the great bulk of the people in the district. I do not object to giving local bodies power to borrow what they like, providing you can get the majority of the ratepayers to sanction it. But my experience is that you cannot get people to go in for a loan. The last poll we had you had to get cabs and call on people in order to induce them to vote as to whether they would have the loan or not. The district I represent here is represented on this Board by one member; and, seeing the way in which the money is being spent, I protest against this clause, which I hope will be withdrawn.

Mr. SEDDON.—Mr. Speaker, the Bill before the House now is one that generally provokes a slight amount of debate at the end of each session. Sir, it is natural, from the description of the Bill, that it should provoke debate. This Bill is not unusual in its provisions, and I must say that the Government who have brought it in are no worse than those who have preceded them.

Major ATKINSON.—You ought not to say that.

Mr. SEDDON.—My honourable friend says that I should not say that. Well, I will say that these are on a par with the works dealt with in the Bills of this class brought in by the Government of which he was the head in the past. Indeed, I do not see anything in the present Bill nearly half so bad as what we saw in their Special Powers and Contracts Bills.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Name them.

Mr. SEDDON.—I see a clause here now which I expect to hear described as the worst clause of the Bill.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Which is that?

Mr. SEDDON.—I have gone through this Bill very carefully, and, with the honourable member for Waitotara, I think it is a duty which I owe to my constituents to vote against it, especially seeing that there is nothing here that refers to my part of New Zealand. It seems that I, at all events, have not required any special legislation, or legislation of a peculiar nature, for my constituents. There is a clause here that refers to the West Coast, and on that particular clause I shall have something to say further on. But we commence with the 6th clause of the Bill, and at the outset we see that we are legislating in this Bill for what is past and gone. I have often heard it said in this House that we should not do that, and that in doing it we might be inflicting a wrong on persons without being aware at the time that we were doing so. Then, we come to clause 6,—

"Notwithstanding the provisions of section one hundred and thirty-two of 'The Land Act, 1885,' any holder of a pastoral deferred-payment license may, with the consent of the Land Board, surrender his license, and obtain from the Board in exchange a lease of the same land as a small grazing run, with perpetual right of renewal, under Part VII. of 'The Land Act, 1885,' subject as follows:—

"(1.) The lease shall be antedated to the date of the license which is surrendered.

"(2.) The rent under the lease shall be an amount equal to two and a half pounds per centum on the price paid for the land under the license.

"(3.) The payments made in respect of the license up to the time of surrender shall be retained as so much back-rent and rent in advance under the lease, commencing from the date of the original license, as the said payments represent.

"(4.) Provided always that all applications under this section must be made before the first day of January, one thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight."

Here is an amendment of the Land Act.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. SEDDON.—Decidedly it is. If it is not an amendment of the Land Act, why should it be here at all? My honourable friend the member for Geraldine should know something about this. Does the honourable member support that clause?

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Yes; I have said so in the House here.

Mr. SEDDON.—The honourable gentleman concurs in my argument, then, that this should have been in an amending Land Bill? If the principle is good that there should be an exchange, then it was the duty of the Government, or the members interested if the Government refused to do so, to have introduced a Bill to amend the law in this respect. What deferred-payment settler or holder of a pastoral license would think of looking in the Special Powers and Contracts Act of 1886 for a provision of this character? Or, if advice is to be taken of a legal gentleman, would he ever think of looking here for this subject? Certainly not. It is most likely that, if his advice were asked, he would look up the Land Act of this session, and not finding in it any provisions

amending the pastoral licenses or leases provisions, he would say there was no such amendment in the law. I have no hesitation in saying that this clause should not be here at all. Now, clause 6A is a clause which, I presume, has been introduced by the Waste Lands Committee. I would say at once that my arguments relating to the previous clause also apply to this one. We had a Bill dealing with the question here referred to last session, and it was then understood that the Act we passed was perfect. The Colonial Treasurer, who was in charge of it, claimed that in the passing of it we had dealt once and for all with this question of forest-planting. I say, if it is found in the working of this Act that the amendment which is sought to be enacted in clause 6A is absolutely necessary, then we should have a Forest Planting Amendment Bill before the Committee. Then the next section to which I wish to draw attention is that which deals with the Auckland Hospital—section 7. I ask why that clause was not introduced into the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Bill when that measure was before the House. It may be that the Auckland Hospital is entitled to this money; but I should like to know what the amount of it is and what it is likely to reach every year. The clause reads as follows:—

"7. The Public Trustee is hereby authorized from time to time to pay over to the Auckland Hospital and Charitable Aid Board, or to such other Board or Trustees for the time being having the control and management of the Provincial Hospital at Auckland, all surplus moneys heretofore accrued or which may hereafter accrue in his hands, as the same are defined in section 5 of 'The Auckland Hospital Reserves Act, 1883;' and such moneys shall be applied by the said Board for the purposes of the aforesaid hospital, and not otherwise."

I should like to know how much those moneys amount to; and it might be well for honourable members who represent districts outside of Auckland City to inquire into the position of this matter, to see that, in case of a division of the Auckland Hospital District, the right of places outside Auckland City to participate in the revenue from these reserves will be secured to the districts outside Auckland City. Then, I should like to refer to the 8th section. That clause, so far as a certain part of the colony is concerned — the Borough of Ross — absolutely repeals the Rating Act of 1882. That Act provided that no rates over two years due should be collectable; but by this Bill it is provided,—

"Notwithstanding anything contained in any other Act to the contrary, the Council of the Borough of Ross is hereby authorized to collect all rents or other moneys payable from time to time in respect of leases of land granted within the said borough under the provisions of section nine of Appendix F of 'The Land Act, 1885,' or of any provisions to the like effect previously in force, and also all moneys heretofore payable in respect of any such leases and remaining unpaid at the time of the passing of this Act.

"The several lessees shall pay the said rents or other moneys accordingly, and in default of payment the same may be recovered by the aforesaid Council in any Court of competent jurisdiction.

"All moneys received or recovered under this section by the said Council shall form part of the Borough Fund of the said borough."

Here a clause is slipped in under which rates that have been due for twenty years may be collected, and the people interested may not know anything about it. The honourable member for Hokitika is not in his place, or I am sure he would object to that. I do not think we should pass such a clause as that, which is retrospective in its operation. Such a hardship should not be perpetrated by this House upon the ratepayers in that district. If it were necessary to introduce such a proposal it should have come down in the shape of a local Bill, and all the formalities as to giving notice should have been gone through. If this is done on the recommendation of the honourable member who represents the district it is all the same. The residents should have some opportunity of speaking their mind on the subject. We are laying down a dangerous precedent in passing a clause like this, without knowing that the people in the district have knowledge of what is being done. There are other clauses to which I should like to allude, but I do not wish to take up the time of the House.

Mr. GARRICK.—I wish to make a few observations in regard to clause 9, which has been referred to by the honourable member for Sydenham. That clause deals with matters relating to the Christchurch Drainage Board. I think that the honourable gentleman must have misapprehended the position. The fact is this: That Board has had to undertake a large expenditure, and something like £200,000 has been borrowed by it for the purpose of carrying out drainage works in the City of Christchurch and suburbs, and for the purpose of maintaining a pumping-station and machinery. The Board is now charged with the duty of paying interest upon the debentures upon which the necessary funds have been raised, and carrying on the ordinary functions of a local body, except that there was no provision in the Act for seeking the authority of the ratepayers for the borrowing of money; so that the observations of the honourable member for Sydenham on that point were beside the question. All that the Board asks for is to be put in the same position as any other local body was put in for the discharge of the duties that were cast upon them. For instance, Municipal Corporations have power to anticipate their income, for the general purposes for which the boroughs were constituted, by means of an overdraft—that is to say, by borrowing from the bank, or others who might be willing to lend, for the purpose of defraying current expenditure. The same power is given to County Councils. In fact, it is recognized as a principle by all local bodies that they may anticipate their revenue in that way. It has been doubted whether

there is sufficient authority in the common law to permit that, and consequently the powers were given to various bodies by the Acts under which they work. The Drainage Board wished for similar power. I can understand that the honourable member for Sydenham, in the discharge of what he deems to be his duty, in consequence of having received a variety of telegrams, should look into this matter; but I think it should be understood by the House that the Borough of Sydenham has always been in strong opposition to the Drainage Board. The honourable member, I may say, was once a member of the Board, and is to some extent responsible for the condition of things to which he just now referred; but, nevertheless, he now deems it right to oppose this authority—this reasonable authority in comparison with the power that is exercised by other bodies. What is desired is authority to pay interest on the debentures in the first instance, and then to expend money upon necessary works, so far as may be necessary, in anticipation of ordinary current revenue. The honourable member for Sydenham is quite willing, he says, that the power should be given by way of anticipation to pay interest on the debentures; but I failed to gather his objection to that power being extended to the general working of the institution. It is only anticipating it to discharge obligations incurred in connection with the good government of the borough in the matter of drainage, and I feel quite certain that will commend itself to this House.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—The honourable member for Waitotara, when he spoke, made reference to various matters in this Bill. It appeared to me that all the information he required would no doubt have been given in Committee. He said that no doubt this thing was all right, only it required a little explanation; and that the other might be all right. It is not my intention to deal with any of the remarks that the honourable gentleman made beyond those which had reference to the Bill which he said had been brought forward by a member—that was myself—and which would have provoked a great deal of discussion—a discussion that, he said, it was now proposed to prevent by bringing in the Bill as a clause of the Special Powers and Contracts Bill. That particular Bill was discussed in the House, and was read a second time; and therefore all the discussion that could possibly have taken place upon the Bill did take place. Upon the question coming up of going into Committee on that Bill, I withdrew it, for the reason that the Colonial Engineer had reported to the effect that the whole piece of ground that it was intended to reclaim under the Bill should not be reclaimed, inasmuch as it would interfere with the harbour. Therefore the Minister of Marine thought it to be his duty to introduce an amendment, as far as the schedule of the Bill was concerned; and, as he told me the amendment had not been prepared, I consented to withdraw the Bill, to get it postponed until the amendment could be prepared. Those are the whole of the circumstances connected with the Bill. The honourable member was utterly mistaken when he said a great deal of discussion would have taken place if the Bill had been brought forward in any other manner. All the further discussion that could have taken place would have been in Committee, and it will now be open for discussion in Committee. There was also another matter having reference to Nelson to which he took exception, and that was, the apportionment of the endowment to the Nelson Hospital and Lunatic Asylum. Both those institutions were managed by the Superintendent of the province, and on the abolition of the provinces those establishments were taken over by the Crown, and, naturally, the endowments went with them. Since that time another Act has been passed by which the hospital has been handed over to a local body, and it is only right that that body should have the endowment granted for the purpose of the hospital. As it happens, these endowments are in one; and this Bill is to separate them, so as to give a fair portion to the lunatic asylum and another fair portion to the hospital. I may add here that the Superintendent of Lunatic Asylums, Dr. Grisham, made the apportionment himself, and it was agreed to by the Minister and the local authorities, and all that is wanted is to give sanction to it by an Act of Parliament.

Mr. CONOLLY.—It is not my intention to go through the various items of this Bill, which will no doubt receive attention in Committee, and many of which were touched upon, as requiring attention, by the honourable member for Waitotara; but there are two matters in it which, it has occurred to me, should probably, to some extent, be explained by the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill in this House. The first is with regard to the transaction by which a certain piece of land at Waipawa, the area of which is not mentioned, is to be taken possession of and converted into Crown lands upon certain terms, on the ground that the owner, whoever he may be, has not been heard of for a considerable number of years. Now, I quite agree with the honourable member for Waitotara that, if such a thing is to be done, it ought not to be done by a clause or a portion of a schedule in a Bill of this description, but that there should be some general enactment by which, where no claimant appears to land which has been granted for a number of years, it should revert to the Crown. But, since no Ministry has ever thought it necessary, so far as I am aware, or even desirable, to bring down a Bill having any such object, one naturally inquires what the reason can be—why it should be pressed in this case. It was in a Bill last year, when it was strongly commented upon. It was carried upon a division; but, having again attracted a good deal of attention in another place, it was there struck out. I think honourable members are entitled to be informed why it is that this particular piece of land is proposed to be dealt with in this manner. It appears that at present there is a receiver of the estate, that the land is let, and that one-third of the yearly

rents is paid to the widow of the deceased owner, the heir-at-law not having appeared. It is now proposed to turn this into Crown land, and to sell it as Crown land, subject to the payment—by the purchaser, I presume, it means—to the widow of a sum equivalent to one-half of the annual rent such an allotment would produce, there being no provision as to how this annual rent is to be ascertained. I presume, at present, the land is let upon lease, and it may be so let from year to year; but, if it passes into the hands of a purchaser, I do not know by what means it is proposed to ascertain the annual rent, and whether, therefore, the widow of this person will be in a better or worse position by receiving one-half of that supposed rent than she is in at present by receiving one-third of the real rent. I think, on the whole, it is a provision on which I am entitled to ask the Minister to explain why there is any necessity at all for dealing with this land. Another paragraph, 28A, on the face of it is a very extraordinary transaction, and I have heard that it is still more strange than it seems. On the face of the Bill it appears that—

"On the 25th July and on the 4th August, 1853, respectively, two grants were made to the Bishop of New Zealand and his successors of 660 acres and of 418 acres respectively, more or less, of lands at Motueka, in the Province of Nelson, in trust for the establishment and maintenance of an industrial school at Motueka, for the education of children of all races, being subjects of the Queen. The first grant included 500 acres of Native reserves and 160 acres of indifferent Crown land; the second grant comprised Native reserves exclusively. The school has failed and been closed for some years, the Natives considering their reserves should not be so appropriated; and the lands have been diverted from their trust."

The proposal was that the grant should be cancelled; that the Native reserve should be handed over to the Public Trustee as the proper guardians of the Native reserves; and that such as had been Crown lands should become Crown lands again. That of itself appears sufficiently reasonable and proper, and I cannot understand why it has been struck out; but it is still more reasonable and proper that that alteration should be made after, as I am informed, there has been a large income derived from this land for a great many years, which has been diverted entirely from the purpose for which it was intended. It was granted, it appears, to the Bishop of New Zealand and his successors. I do not know who the successors of the Bishop of New Zealand are; whether the Bishop of Nelson is his successor or not I do not know, because there has been but one Bishop of New Zealand, and he ceased to be so many years ago—how many years ago that is I do not know, or whether he retained the title up to the time of his leaving the colony twenty years ago: but, at all events, there has been but one Bishop of New Zealand; and I am informed—I do not know whether it is true, but I am informed—that the proceeds of this land, which ought to have been applied to the purposes of the school and no other by the Bishop of New Zealand and his successors, have been devoted to the denominational purposes of the Church of England.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. CONOLLY.—Very well; some honourable member says "No." Possibly I may be misinformed; but I should like to know, first, whether there has been any income derived from this property; if so, what has been the income; and, if, as I am informed, it has been a considerable sum, what has become of it: because, if it has been used for any other purpose than that named in the trust, there has been a most serious breach of trust, and in some way or other it clearly ought to be dealt with. I should like to know whether the striking-out of this clause of the schedule has the sanction of the Minister, and, if there has been the misappropriation of trust to which I have alluded, whether the Minister proposes to deal with it in any other fashion. I think these matters are of sufficient importance to entitle me to detain the House a little while, in order that it might be explained whether the charges, if so I might call them, can be answered. The only other matter on which I shall touch is the question which has been mentioned just now by the honourable member for Nelson. He misses the point of the application made to you, Sir, I think, by the honourable member for Waitotara; and, if I may venture to say so, I do not think you, Sir, answered the point of order with regard to this particular matter. There are a great number of matters introduced into this Bill which, undoubtedly, one would say, should be made the subject of separate Bills, local or otherwise; but you, Sir, have stated that the practice, although a bad one, has been so long used that it is too late now to take objection to it. But with regard to this matter the position is this: The Nelson Foreshore Bill is still on the Order Paper as a local Bill; and the point which the honourable member for Waitotara wished to raise was this: whether the subject of a Bill in that position could be introduced into the schedule of this Bill. The clause which it is proposed to introduce into this Bill is on a Supplementary Order Paper.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have only this Bill before me, which makes no reference to the Nelson Foreshore Bill. I ought not to prejudge clauses that may or may not be proposed in Committee. The Chairman will have to decide points of order when it is proposed to introduce clauses in Committee.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—With reference to this trust at Motueka, referred to by the honourable member for Picton, I would point out that it is a very plain one; and I am sorry to say that this case is by no means uncommon in New Zealand. Certain lands, generally the property of Natives, were passed over to certain missionaries—clergymen of the Church of England or ministers of other denominations—for educational purposes only; and to a very

large extent those endowments have been put to purely Church purposes,—and this is one of the endowments that have been so dealt with. The endowment consisted of a hundred and sixty acres of bad land belonging to the Government and something like nine hundred acres of good land belonging to the Natives. The rental was considerable. For years together—for six years on a stretch, once—there were no Native children, and no other children, receiving advantage from the fund derived from this endowment; but the money was used in this way: A clergyman of the Church of England had £300 a year, and of that amount, £275 came out of this trust. Now, if that is not a malversation of trust I do not know what is. The land was originally given in trust for this purpose to the Bishop of New Zealand; by him it was transferred to the Bishop of Nelson; and by him it was handed over to the Church body. I am glad that the Minister has addressed himself to this subject; but what I want to have explained is, whether the withdrawal of this clause from the Bill will mean the abandonment of the subject of the endowment for school purposes. I am the more particular about it because I know of no less than three cases of the same kind, although none of them are so bad as this. I believe the Government should bring in a general measure to deal with the whole of those trusts now nominally belonging to various religious bodies, who have had them without adequate reason. There is another matter, in paragraph 14 of the First Schedule. This is to carry out an exchange of some land between certain Natives and a man named George Alexander Douglas. It relates to land on the Island of Motiti, in the Bay of Plenty. I had occasion, four years ago, to examine this matter; and the facts of the case are these: In the year 1868 a Crown grant was issued for land in that island amounting to 1,080 acres. It was given to a chief in trust for his tribe, and that trust is expressed in the grant. In the same year this chief leased the land to this man at a rental of £70 a year. In the year 1874 he began to purchase it—that is, he began to make advances to the Natives upon the land. His lawyer at once pointed out to him that there could not be a legal conveyance; and when he applied to the Government he was told that he could not get a legal conveyance. Notwithstanding that, he went on paying money to the Natives, and when he had petitioned he had paid £593 upon it. He said that he did this notwithstanding the information he had had, because he knew that some time or other the Government would issue an Order in Council that would enable him to purchase the land. So that he took all those steps with his eyes open as to the risk. Now it turns out that he has got a title to at least a portion of the land; and I want to know how this man's risks are made up to him. It appears that he is about to transfer to 170 Natives of this tribe 166 acres of this land in exchange for 100 acres of their land on the mainland, I presume. The Committee stated, in its report of 1882, that this is one of a class of cases which presented serious difficulty, and that that difficulty could not be got out of except through legislation; but the Committee was very particular, for it said it could not recommend any legislation that did not deal with the whole question. Yet I find that this man has now, somehow or other, got some kind of title for a portion of this land. I would like to know what is the relative quality of this land which it is proposed to exchange.

Mr. PARATA.—Paragraph 28A of the First Schedule to this Bill has been struck out by the Waste Lands Committee. For many years past the Natives have been presenting petitions to this House referring to this land at Motueka which passed into the hands of the Bishop of New Zealand. In 1884 the Native Affairs Committee adopted a report about this land. The gist of that report was that the terms of the trust had not been fulfilled by the Bishop, and it was shown that the school which was erected on this land had not been open for perhaps twenty years. It was not known what was done with the rents derived from this land. I think that the Bishop or Church body has no right whatever to that land at present, because the terms of the trust have not been carried out. During the present year the same Natives sent a petition to the House about the same land. This petition, in due course, came before the Native Affairs Committee; and the Committee reported that, in their opinion, the trust had not been carried out, and that the land ought to be made a reserve for Native purposes. The Committee also urged the Government to take immediate steps in the matter. Seeing that the Native Affairs Committee have repeatedly reported on this matter, I cannot understand the action of the Waste Lands Committee in striking out this clause. I think that Committee acted most unadvisedly, and could not have taken any evidence. Mr. Mackay attended the Waste Lands Committee, but had no opportunity of giving evidence; but if he had been allowed to do so the Committee would have seen that it would be only right and just that this land should be returned to the Natives. I hope honourable members will admit, after this explanation, that the trust has not been fulfilled, and that the land should be given back to the Natives. I would like to remind the House that there are a great many other pieces of land in the same position, and that the moneys derived from these lands are not devoted to the purposes to which it was originally intended they should be applied. There is another piece of land in the Wairarapa in exactly the same position. It was given to the Bishop for a school and a church and mill site; but no church has been erected there, and no Native school nor mill; and the land has passed into the hands of the Bishop. A petition was brought before the Native Affairs Committee this session in relation to this matter. If the House will not give these lands back to the Natives I shall urge upon the Government to bring in a Bill so that all these lands may be returned to the

original owners. I do not mean only the land at Motueka, but all the lands similarly situated. I will now refer to paragraph 47. This paragraph refers to some islands near Stewart Island. I do not object to it at all; but I wish to say that when the Bill goes into Committee I shall move some amendment to it. The honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill has agreed to accept my amendment. The reason why I wish to make this alteration is that certain arrangements were made with the Natives in 1864, when Stewart Island was sold to the Government. I will just read one of the documents connected with one of these islands:—

"Waihopai, 5th July, 1864.

"Listen, every one, Maoris and Europeans! Horomamae and Te Wharepuaitaha, muttonbird islands, have been absolutely set apart by the Government for Haeroa, Huruhuru Huro, and Horomona Pohio—that is to say, for the Maoris. These islands are to be for the abovenamed Maoris, for themselves and their descendants for ever and ever.

"HENRY T. CLARKE,
"Commissioner for the Purchase of Stewart Island."

There are a number of similar documents in relation to the islands which have been set apart for the Natives. I hope that when the Land Court sits in the South these documents will be brought forward. That is all I wish to explain.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I am sure the honourable gentleman in charge of this Bill will not accuse me of criticising it unfairly; but, like the honourable member for Waitotara, I must protest against the form this Bill is assuming year by year. I am sorry to see that the leader of the Opposition is not in his place to take the stand I am taking, but perhaps it is that he is in hope this Bill will be as convenient to him in the future as it is to the present Government now. I am sure the pressure brought to bear on the Ministry from all parts of the House in regard to matters in this Bill must have been very great. In fact, looking over the Bill, I think the Opposition had the best of it. One thing I must protest against, which was protested against years ago in this House by an honourable member, and that is the system of introducing into this Bill a number of Bills the promoters of which have not been able to get them forward in their proper places in the House. There are some of these which have been incorporated in this Bill since it was first circulated. One of them is the Nelson Foreshore Leasing Bill, which did not pass through the House; and another is a local Bill, which was thrown out by the Select Committee because the Standing Orders had not been complied with. I say that it is a most dangerous precedent to establish, that a Bill which has been set aside because the Standing Orders have not been complied with should be incorporated in this Bill. These Bills are now being forced on the House, not by the Minister, because the Bill did not contain them when it first came down, but by the Waste Lands Committee or in some other way that I do not know. As I think it wrong that a local Bill which has been rejected because it has not complied with the requirements of the law should be put into this Bill, I shall move, in Committee, that the clause relating to that particular Bill be struck out.

Mr. SUTTER.—I wish to call the attention of the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill to clause 10, which gives power to the County Council of Selwyn to raise a special loan of £3,000 without the sanction of the ratepayers. I think it is a most extraordinary thing that there should be such a clause as that in this Bill. It is absolutely an attempt to evade the Act by bringing in a local Bill, and I am astonished that the Minister should lend himself to such a thing. The money this County Council want is spent, and now they are to be authorized to raise a loan of £3,000 whether the ratepayers agree to it or not. The following proposal, that the County of Waihemo should be allowed to spend money in hand for baths which was raised for harbour works—£1,500—is not of so objectionable a character, the circumstances being different. I do not think we should entertain any proposal to let a local body borrow money or strike a rate without the consent of the ratepayers.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Honourable members have used arguments of very great force against particular parts of the Bill, and I shall not refer to those parts; but I wish to say, generally, that I do not think we should be expected at midnight to begin the discussion in Committee of a Bill of this kind. To do justice to it would require considerable time, for this Bill contains three or four times as much as an ordinary Bill; and we ought to look at it with more care than we have looked at similar Bills in years gone by. I know that on one occasion a Bill of this kind contained one proposal that was a complete swindle; but we blocked it, and it was thrown out. With every desire to get through the work speedily, the Minister in charge, admitting that we ought to do justice to the many subjects that are treated in this Bill, cannot expect us to get through it in Committee to-night. I think we have arrived at this stage as to this annual Bill: that we may assume that a great wrong will be done if we do not find sufficient time to examine every clause.

Mr. BALLANCE.—There has been a great fallacy running through the speeches of many honourable members, who have said that this Bill is yearly growing in dimensions. The reply to that is, that the number of clauses in the schedule this year is considerably less than the number in the Act of last year. As to the quality of the matters dealt with, I maintain that the items in the schedule ought to be discussed in Committee, where, alone, they can be exhaustively and properly considered; and in Committee I shall be prepared to discuss them. There are one or two points, however, that I shall refer to now. As to the assertion that this Bill comprises several local Bills, it is quite true

that several of the clauses might be made local Bills; but, by the converse, a local Bill, or the substance of it, might with perfect propriety, as far as precedents are concerned, be introduced into this measure. Almost every clause of these Bills, for the last four or five years, might be made a local Bill. It has been said that in this Bill we are doing the work which the Provincial Councils were intended to do. But surely the old Provincialists should not object to that—to this Legislature carrying on the work of the old Provincial Councils; nor should the Abolitionists object, because it is shown that a great deal of useful work that was done by the provinces can be very easily done by the House. I do not think the question is so much whether it is local work, but whether it is work that ought to be done. I maintain that this is one of the most useful Bills that were ever introduced, and that if there were no such measure as the Special Powers and Contracts Bill much good work that ought to be done by this House would be left undone. The more I look at it the more I feel that this Bill is absolutely indispensable; and I think even the great variety and number of its clauses is sufficient alone to show that it is indispensable. The honourable member for Timaru referred to something that had been done by the Local Bills Committee. I hope the honourable member does not hold up that Committee as infallible. Is it to rule this House?

Mr. TURNBULL.—I said it ruled that the Standing Orders had not been complied with.

Mr. BALLANCE.—They are complied with here. With regard to the supervision that should be applied in cases of this kind, let me tell the House this: that before the Waste Lands Committee every clause of this schedule was exhaustively inquired into and evidence taken on it, and the Committee either approved or disapproved according to the evidence. I venture to say that neither the Local Bills Committee nor the Private Bills Committee have this session gone into the matters before them with the same scrupulous care as the Waste Lands Committee exercised on this Bill; and I make that statement deliberately. The honourable member for Picton referred to the question of the Motueka trust; and the question has been asked why the clause dealing with that was struck out by the Committee. I am not going into the merits of this particular case, but the question is one which involves a very great principle that has been frequently discussed in this House. Some years ago I brought in a Bill to deal with and modify a trust in nearly the same terms and for precisely the same object. Without going into the merits of that case at all, I came to the conclusion, after hearing the evidence that was adduced before the Committee, that the question was one involving too large considerations to be dealt with otherwise than in a separate Bill, and that this particular question was intimately connected with a number of other trusts, and that the matter involved not only great principles, but large considerations affecting other parts of the country. I felt that the question should be dealt with as a measure by itself, and that is why I agreed that the clause should be struck out. Without discussing the merits of the matter, I may say that, as to the Wanganui trust, although it was, in my opinion, greatly abused eight or nine years ago, and was a standing reproach to the trustees, yet since then the management of the trust has been wonderfully reformed, and perhaps no trust in the colony is now better fulfilled, or doing more useful work. I think it would be satisfactory if the Motueka trust were placed on the same foundation, and then I should be very glad indeed to see the trust kept in its present hands. I make the suggestion to the honourable member for Motueka that efforts should be made to so improve the management of the trust as to best secure that its objects shall be properly carried out; and then it will serve a great purpose. As to a point specially raised by the honourable member for Picton, the case is very simple. Twenty-three years ago a man owning sections in the Township of Waipawa died intestate, and since then the rents of the sections have accumulated in the hands of the Public Trustee, who has paid to the man's widow or her representative a certain sum for a number of years. The proposal now is that the land may be diverted for local purposes, the Public Trustee to have power to make arrangements to that end without injuring the interests of any person, and still securing the annual payment to the widow. I shall be prepared to discuss the various sections of the Bill as we come to them in Committee.

Bill committed.

IN COMMITTEE.

First Schedule.—Paragraph 18, first column: Thermal Springs leases may be extended to a period of forty-two years.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the paragraph stand part of the schedule."

AYES, 32.

Atkinson	Hatch	Parata
Ballance	Hursthouse	Pearson
Beetham	Ivess	Reese
Brown	Joyce	Richardson, E.
Bruce	Kerr	Smith
Buckland, W.F.	Lake	Tole
Cadman	Larnach	Turnbull
Fraser	Levestam	Walker.
Garrick	Locke	*Tellers.*
Guinness	McKenzie, J.	Grace
Hakuene	Moss	Whyte.

NOES, 13.

Conolly	O'Callaghan	Trimble.
Fulton	Peacock	
Hislop	Rolleston	*Tellers.*
McMillan	Russell	Richardson, G.
Newman	Thompson, T.	Wilson.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Macandrew	Mitchelson

Stout	Bryce
Vogel.	Johnston.

Majority for, 19.

aragraph retained.

aragraph 196.—Lease to Mokau Coal Com-
y.

he Committee divided on the question,
at the paragraph stand part of the sche-
."

AYES, 29.

lance	Ivess	O'Callaghan
wn	Joyce	Parata
man	Kerr	Pearson
ican	Larnach	Reese
ser	Levestam	Smith
rick	Locke	Turnbull
ce	McKenzie, J.	Wakefield.
ruene	McMillan	*Tellers.*
ch	Moss	Bruce
lop	Newman	Hursthouse.

NOES, 9.

kland, W.F.	Mitchelson	*Tellers.*
olly	Richardson, G.	Beetham
ton	Russell.	Rolleston.
te		

Majority for, 20.

'aragraph retained.

'aragraph 43.—Site for town-hall and muni-
al offices at Invercargill.

'he Committee divided on the question,
hat the paragraph stand part of the sche-
e."

AYES, 22.

llance	Kerr	Reese
ncan	Larnach	Richardson, E.
ice	Levestam	Tole
inness	McKenzie, J.	Walker.
kuene	McMillan	
rsthouse	Newman	*Tellers.*
ss	O'Callaghan	Hatch
ce	Parata	Turnbull.

NOES, 10.

wn	Lake	
olly	Richardson, G.	*Tellers.*
lton	Rolleston	Bruce
lop	Thompson, T.	Pearson.

Majority for, 12.

'aragraph retained.

Bill reported with amendments, and read a
rd time.

MINING BILL.

Mr. LARNACH brought up the following
sons for disagreeing with the amendments
de in this Bill by the Legislative Council:—

'Clause 11. A consequential amendment is
quired on page 8, line 17—namely, the inser-
n of the words 'or licensee' after the word
ssee.'

'Clause 42, subsection (3), page 17. In line
, the words 'either' and 'or any adjoining
nd' have been struck out. It is submitted
at these words are essential and necessary in
nnection with the resumption of land for
ning purposes, as frequently cases have oc-
rred where ground could not have been used
r mining had not the adjoining land been
ailable.

"Clause 110, page 32. The marginal note to this clause requires alteration by the substitution of the word 'occupation' for the word 'registration.'

"Clause 139, page 38. In respect to this clause it must be borne in mind that the law allows private lands to be resumed for mining purposes, but the law is defective, as there is no power at the present time to test or prospect on private lands for the purpose of judging, before resuming any land, whether it contains gold or silver. It is therefore submitted that the provisions of clause 139 are reasonable and necessary in the interest of mining, and at the same time the interests of the owners of land are sufficiently guarded and protected.

"Clause 207, subsection (18), page 63. It is submitted that for the safety of miners and others engaged in deep-sinking of shafts this subsection should be allowed to stand. Some very bad accidents have already occurred through the overcrowding of cages by allowing materials of a heavy nature to be lowered or raised in the same cage with the men.

"Clause 219, page 70. It is submitted that this clause is a usual one in connection with mining and manufacturing works, and it merely provides for making the evidence *primâ facie* against the owner in the event of any accident occurring. Owners of such works must be made to realize the responsibility for having their machinery and appliances in safe and perfect order; otherwise accidents will happen much more frequently.

"Clause 274, subsection (4), page 85. In line 34 the words 'or any private lands respectively' should be retained as a consequential amendment to clause 139."

Reasons agreed to, and forwarded to the Legislative Council.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to four o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 11th August, 1886.

Second Reading—Third Reading—Harbours Bill—Counties Bill—Mining Bill—Special Powers and Contracts Bill—Municipal Corporations Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READING.

Stamp Bill.

THIRD READING.

Otago Harbour Board Leasing Bill.

HARBOURS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN moved, That the Council doth insist on its amendments in the Harbours Bill, and that the Hon. Mr. Bonar, the Hon. Mr. Wilson, and the mover be appointed Managers to draw up reasons for such insistance.

Agreed to.

Subsequently the Hon. Mr. McLEAN moved, That the Hon. Mr. Bonar, the Hon. Mr. Wilson, and the mover be appointed Managers for the Council at a Free Conference.

Agreed to.

COUNTIES BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN said he had taken the trouble to go very carefully over the amendments which had been objected to by the House of Representatives, and he thought the Council might very well agree to almost the whole of the proposals which were now made. He would just run over as quickly as possible the amended clauses to which exception had been taken. With regard to clause 46, the operation of that clause related to the readjustment of the representation of the ridings. In the second portion of the new paragraph an unintelligible attempt was made to redistribute the representation of ridings in counties; there were calculations involved in it having reference to the ninth part of a man, the ninth part of revenue, and the ninth part of a county. It was a Government amendment, and was introduced at the instance of the honourable gentleman who had charge of the Bill. He thought they could very well agree not to insist on the amendment they had made. Clause 47 provided for alteration of road districts and ridings, if necessary, by special order. The time in which the order might be made was altered from three months to one month by the Council; and it was complained by the House of Representatives that one month was too short, and the other branch of the Legislature proposed that the time should be two months, as a compromise: this also he thought should be agreed to. The House of Representatives objected to the amendment made by the Council in clause 157, relating to special rates, on the ground that it was "an infringement of the privileges of this House, and the House trusts that will be a sufficient reason to induce the Council to waive its amendment." More than two hundred years ago Selden wrote that Parliament-men were as great princes as any in the world, because whatever they pleased was privilege of Parliament, and anything they did not like was breach of privilege. It appeared to him that that was the kind of doctrine on this subject which was held by members in another place, and also by some members of this branch of the Legislature. He did not think the Council, however, had overstepped its right in limiting the amount of rating—not imposing a new rate, but limiting the amount of rate which could be levied in counties for special purposes. He hoped the Council would insist on its amendment in that clause. The Council had amended the new paragraphs in clause 181 by inserting words imposing penalties upon Chairmen of County Councils for delay in publication of balance-sheet, &c. He admitted that the amendment now proposed to be effected by the House of Representatives was such as could be agreed to. With regard to the amendment made in clause 185, the Bill originally required one-sixth of the ratepayers to sign the petition to appoint a special audit. That was altered to ten ratepayers—for very good reasons, which the mover gave at the time. It was now proposed that the clause should be amended by limiting the number to one-twelfth—a compromise which might also be very well agreed to by the Council. Section 195 was the most important of those which had been brought into question by these amendments. It required that a majority of the votes of the ratepayers should be recorded in favour of the proposal before any special loan could be authorized to be raised. The Council had, he thought, expressed its opinion on this point so often and so strongly that he presumed it would insist on its amendment in this particular clause. It was objected, with regard to clause 289, which purported to enable counties to establish agricultural colleges, that it should not be struck out of the Bill. Similarly it was complained that clause 291, which enabled counties to establish public libraries and atheneums and other educational institutions on their own account, should also have been struck out. He did not know whether the Council would think this of sufficient importance to insist upon their amendment in this direction; but he thought, on the whole, that, as the disposition was to concede in all points which did not involve principle, it would be well to give way in this also. Clause 313 was also amended. It required the Chairmen of the County Councils and Road Boards to make returns by a particular time, which in some cases it might be found impossible to do, and penalties were to be imposed upon them for not doing what could not be done. He thought this amendment of the House of Representatives could also be agreed to. He therefore moved, as an amendment, That this Council doth not insist on its amendments made in clauses 46, 47, 181, 289, 291, and 313, but doth insist on its amendments in clauses 157 and 195.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—Before putting the amendment, I think this will be a proper opportunity for me to state my opinion upon the powers of the Council with reference to amending certain clauses in the Counties Bill; and I may say that the same remarks will apply to the amendments in the Municipal Corporations Bill, referred to in the next order of the day. The regulation of the finances of the local bodies has become an important feature in the general finances of the country, and I do not think this Council has any power in any way to infringe upon the right of the House of Representatives to regulate the general finances. With regard to the question raised by the Hon. Dr. Pollen, as to how far this Council might deal with it, the same rule applies to any question in which the House of Commons claims that it has a right to regulate such finances, and will not brook any interference in dealing with the matter. I believe that will be found to be sound constitutional doctrine; and that applies both to the rating clauses in

ounties Bill and to the rating clauses in [unicipal Corporations Bill.

Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI thought the Dr. Pollen had agreed to give up a num- amendments to which objection had been l which were of far more importance than of those which he wished to insist on— e 195. This clause in the Counties Bill ntirely different from that in the Municipal orations Bill; because in the latter case hole of the ratepayers were in a compact , and could easily attend the polling- ; whereas sometimes in the case of a ty the district extended over two or three red miles, and it was not expected that e ratepayers would go to the booth and d their votes. He thought there should ome difference made between counties municipalities. The honourable gentle- had conceded the clause which allowed counties to establish agricultural colleges, allowed the people to be taxed so that the ey could be borrowed; and yet he objected e other case. The honourable gentleman ed to have conceded every other honour- member's amendment, but insisted on his being carried. He begged to move, That Council do not insist on its amendment in se 195. He hoped the honourable gentle- would reconsider this.

he Hon. the SPEAKER.—The honourable leman cannot move an amendment on an ndment.

otion, "That the Council doth not insist ts amendments made in clauses 46, 47, 181, , 289, 291, and 313," agreed to.

n the question, That the Council insist its amendments in clauses 167 and 195,

he Hon. Mr. LAHMANN said that, after explanation which the Hon. the Speaker given as to the right of the Council in this tter, he was in hope that the Hon. Dr. len would concede this amendment; but he nd that such was not the case, and he ld not for his life see what it would lead The other House had given it as their nion that the Council had no right to alter clause, and the Hon. the Speaker had in- sed that opinion; and yet the Hon. Dr. llen proposed that the Council still insist on amendment. He could not see why they uld insist on the amendment in clause 195. fully agreed with the statement of the Hon. . Shrimski that in many cases it was al- st impossible to get the number suggested ratepayers to vote for the proposal to raise loan. As had been stated, some of the unties covered over three hundred miles.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—Where?

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN said his district vered one hundred and fifty miles.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—That is only lf.

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN said he took the tement of the Hon. Mr. Shrimski as correct, d no doubt that honourable gentleman knew hat he was talking about when he said that ere were counties which covered two or three ndred miles. It would be impossible, therefore, to get half the ratepayers in such a district to go to the poll; and what would be the result? Those would vote who were against the loan, and the others would not go to the trouble of voting. He hoped a Conference would take place between the Managers of the two Houses, and, if the Managers on behalf of the Council could not convince the Managers of the other House, that they would not insist on their amendments.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN said his faith in the privileges of the Council was a very simple one. The Constitution of the New Zealand Legislature was a statutory Constitution, and the privileges of Parliament were defined by statute —by an Imperial statute and by a statute of the local Legislature. It seemed, therefore, that the privileges of the Council were strictly defined by statute, and he had no doubt whatever that such was the case. He was sure that, if the matter were referred to the Supreme Court, the Court would uphold the view which he had always taken. If the Council was not to have a voice in questions such as this,—if it was to sit quietly by and see the debt of the colony increased and the burdens placed on the people increased to such an extent that they became intolerable, and no word could be said in defence of the people in opposition to such a course,—then the sooner the Council closed its doors and members abdicated their functions the better. There was no one in the Council more disposed than he was to respect the traditions which were supposed to cover the transaction of business in another place. As long as he had been in the Council he had always done what he possibly could to prevent any unpleasant relations or differences between the two Chambers; but it was a mistake to raise this question of privilege on so unimportant a point as that contained in this Bill. Those privileges which were claimed by the House of Representatives rested upon usage in England, no statutory provision existing at Home, as here. Here were men, with beards on their faces and responsibilities on their shoulders, who could take a rational view of things, and were not going to be tied down by the cobwebs of customs and usages, which, when mischievous, ought to be swept away with a very big broom indeed. He did not want to raise this question; but, as it had been raised, he should like to have an opportunity of discussing it with the best men in the other House, whose names he saw attached to the reasons submitted. He thought it was better, if it was to be raised at all, that they should as soon as possible come to some understanding on the subject. He, for one, would not be content to sit there passive, and to see things done that ought not to be done, and to which he had not power to say Yea or Nay. No one sitting there and feeling the responsibilities of his position could sit down quietly under such circumstances.

The Hon. Mr. ACLAND suggested, in reference to clause 195, that some compromise might be arrived at by saying that the votes of absentee proprietors who had no agent resident

in the county who could vote for them should not be counted.

Motion, "That the Council insist on its amendments in section 157," agreed to.

On the question, That the Council insist upon its amendments in section 195,

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said he hoped that the Council would insist on its amendment. It might be that one-half the number of ratepayers was too large a number in the case of counties; but some provision of that sort should be in the Bill. It was for the Managers to consider what compromise should be made, and therefore the Council should allow it to go to a Conference, and let a fair compromise be arrived at. As much had been said about absentee votes, he might say that, as far as his part of the country was concerned, there were very few absentee voters.

The Council divided on the question, "That the Council doth insist on its amendments in clause 195."

AYES, 20.

Acland	Johnson, G. R.	Walker
Bathgate	Martin	Whitaker
Brandon	McLean	Wigley
Brett	Miller	Williams
Dignan	Pollen	Williamson
Fraser	Robinson	Wilson.
Grace	Swanson	

NOES, 12.

Barnicoat	Lahmann	Reynolds
Bonar	Mantell	Scotland
Buckley	Peacock	Shephard
Kenny	Reeves	Shrimski.

Majority for, 8.

Motion agreed to.

On the motion of the Hon. Dr. POLLEN, the Hon. Mr. McLean, the Hon. Mr. Miller, and the mover were appointed Managers to draw up reasons to be submitted to the House of Representatives for such insistance.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN subsequently brought up the following reasons for the Council insisting on its amendments in clauses 157 and 195 of this Bill:—

"Clause 157. The burden of rates and taxes being already so heavy, and the provisions for the levying of general rates in section 157 so liberal, it appeared to the Council that, in the interests of the ratepayers, it was desirable that a reasonable limit should be put to the amount which could be levied by special rates. As the amendment in the clause does not impose additional taxation, it is not certain that the Legislative Council can in this instance have infringed the privileges of the House of Representatives.

"Clause 195. The object of the Legislative Council, in the amendment made in this section, is to obtain the real opinion of the ratepayers so far as that can be made evident by a recorded majority of exercisable votes upon any proposal for raising a special loan. The whole number of absentee proprietors will not be found to be in any case so large as to control the majority of voters and votes. A similar provision in the Napier Harbour Board Empowering Act and in 'The Gisborne Harbour Act, 1884,' has been found in practice to be workable and fair; in both instances the districts were large and the population scattered, yet in each a vote of the ratepayers, almost unanimous, was readily obtained, because the project commended itself to the people concerned."

The reasons were ordered to be transmitted to the House of Representatives.

MINING BILL.

On the reasons assigned by the House of Representatives for disagreeing with the amendments made by the Council in the Mining Bill being read,

The Hon. Mr. BONAR said he believed there were some amendments which the Council need not insist on, and there were others, probably, which the Council would like to insist on, as there was a strong expression of opinion in some instances. He might divide the motion by agreeing to certain clauses, and leaving it to the Council to say whether they would agree or not with the other clauses.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN hoped the Council would not be asked to come to a decision on this question just now. They wanted time to see what the amendments were.

Debate adjourned.

SPECIAL POWERS AND CONTRACTS BILL.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—Before reading the Special Powers and Contracts Bill the first time, I think it my duty to state to the Council that this is a kind of legislation that is entirely contrary to the spirit of all legislation in any country, on the ground that it joins together things that are very dissimilar. Also, so far as I have been able to give cursory attention to the schedule of the Bill, it is a bundle of local Bills; and the most important observances and regulations of this Council have been to examine each of these local Bills as they have come before us, and to refer them to different Committees, to each of which certain duties have been assigned. I think it my duty to say so much on this question.

Bill read a first time.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—In asking the Council to read this Bill a second time, I must say that I agree entirely with what you, Sir, have just said; but I think this is the last of the Bills of this kind we shall see in this Council. The procedure, after reading such a Bill a second time, is to refer it to the Waste Lands Committee for careful examination. I admit that this is a class of legislation which I do not agree with myself; but this is necessary at the present time, until we can put a stop to it by some means or other. I am very glad of the expression of opinion that you have given; and, no doubt, effect will be given to it in other quarters. But, for the present purpose of carrying out some of the agreements referred to in the schedule of this Bill, it is considered necessary. There is no doubt that it is the outcome of the abolition of the pro-

- Some of the old engagements entered y the Provincial Councils have not been ed, and are outstanding. I hope that we see no more of these Special Powers and acts Bills passed through the Legislature. ver, the present one is considered neces- and I propose to submit it to the usual l, and, as soon as it is read a second time, er it to the Waste Lands Committee, with v to its receiving from that Committee close scrutiny which Bills remitted to Committee receive on every occasion. I , That the Bill be read a second time.

e Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD.—I do not pro- to object to the second reading of the Bill, is going to the Waste Lands Committee, . must take exception to that part of the ment of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary ein he said that this Bill is essentially ne- ry. Portions of it may be necessary, but it ot be necessary to the extent that we should id general Acts in this Bill, in a place e no one would ever think of looking to see was the state of the law. To go no further clause 6, there is an amendment of the l Act. Is that necessary in any way? I that when the Bill comes down from the te Lands Committee it will have been nded by having had struck out all those ses which interfere with existing Acts.

ie Hon. Mr. WIGLEY.—The Bill has not circulated yet, so that it is not before us iscussion.

ie Hon. Mr. ACLAND.—I move, That debate be adjourned till to-morrow. It onstrous to ask us to read it a second now, especially after what has been said it it.

otion for adjournment of debate lost.

ill read a second time.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS BILL.

he Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said it appeared im that the principal questions which had a raised in reference to the Counties Bill ld probably be the same as that which ld be raised in regard to this Bill—the nicipal Corporations Bill. He therefore nally moved, That the Council doth not st on its amendments. He had no doubt t he would not be successful in his motion, ause the same principle was involved; and would suggest that the same Managers who been appointed to draw up reasons for greeing with certain amendments in the nties Bill should be appointed in the sent case, inasmuch as it was practically same question to be decided, and time ld be saved by adopting such a course.

'he Hon. Dr. POLLEN did not know why duty devolved upon him of conducting the osition in the Council to this and other asures, when there were so many other nourable gentlemen so much more capable n himself of taking a leading part on such stions. However, as no one else seemed be sufficiently interested to take such a rt, he was always ready to do so; and, ving looked over this Bill, and the reasons given for insisting on the amendments made in another place, he found, as the Hon. the Colonial Secretary had said, that the questions raised were practically the same in this Bill as in the Counties Bill, and could be determined by the same Committee. The 135th and 137th sections were amended in passing through the Council in this direction: The amount of general rates to be levied in any one year was originally fixed at 1s. 3d. in the pound, but was reduced in Committee in the Council to 1s. in the pound, and afterwards so passed by the Council. Upon that had been raised a question of privilege; and the matter could be discussed and decided on that point. Clause 219 was one which affected a local body—the Borough Council of Auckland. In a general Act, the amount of rates, general and special, which could be levied for any purpose within that borough was limited to 2s. in the pound. That limitation was altered to this extent: that, in case any portion of a borough required a special loan for a specially local work to be constructed in that particular portion of the borough, "separate" rates might be levied independently of the other levy. It was that to which the House of Representatives objected. The other objection referred to the schedule. In the schedule certain Acts were repealed—namely, "The Town Districts Act, 1881," and "The Town Districts Act 1881 Amendment Act, 1883," except in respect of existing town districts, so long as they continue to exist—and that repeal was struck out. The House objected that the creation of town districts weakened county government, and that these bodies were not required, since the creation of a borough could be easily obtained. He moved, as an amendment to the motion of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, That the Council insist on its amendments made in the Municipal Corporations Bill.

The Hon. Mr. SWANSON was pleased to hear a few words that had been addressed to them by the Hon. the Speaker at the commencement of that sitting, which were to the effect that it was no part of their business to lay on rates, or give permission to the local bodies to lay on rates, in opposition to the will of the House of Representatives. The 219th clause was a distinct case of that kind. It came out that the Auckland people had made an agreement with the lenders of money that the rates should be confined to 2s., and it was understood by the Council that they should have power to collect library and charitable-aid rates in addition. The House of Representatives had insisted on the words "separate rates or" being struck out; and the Council still insisted on that clause, compelling an unwilling City Council to collect a separate rate. He thought that was too much, and that they might agree to reduce the rating-power, and to withdraw these very objectionable and oppressive three words. If Managers were appointed, he hoped that they would not insist on the amendment made by the Council in the 219th clause.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER thought his honourable friend was mistaken. What the House of Representatives had done was to strike out these words: "separate rates or." They were limited to a particular sum; but now these were struck out of the limit it gave the local body a greater latitude in raising rates than would have been given if the words had remained in.

The amendment was agreed to.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the Hon. Mr. Miller, the Hon. Mr. McLean, and the mover be appointed a Committee to draw up reasons for such insistance.

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN rose in order to rectify a slight mistake which had been made. When the Bill was under discussion it was moved by the Hon. Mr. McLean that the Council insist on its amendments; whereas it should have been, that the Council did not agree with the amendments made by the other House. There were no amendments made by the Council in this Bill.

Motion agreed to.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN subsequently brought up the following reasons for the Council insisting on its amendments in clauses 135, 137, 182, and 219, and in the First Schedule to the Bill:—

"As to sections 135 and 137. The Legislative Council, although desiring to avoid the raising of a question of privilege, cannot admit that—in seeking to limit the imposition of burdens upon the ratepayers in municipalities—it has transgressed the limits of its constitutional authority. No sufficient reason has yet been shown for the extension of the existing limit of one shilling in the pound for general rates to fifteenpence, as proposed.

"As to section 182. It is admitted that the proposed amendment is contrary to what has been the law in reference to borrowing in Municipal Corporations for many years; but the question is, whether it is an improvement upon that law. It affirms the democratic principle that in future the majority, and not, as now, a minority—possibly small, of interested, and therefore active, individuals—shall impose permanent burdens upon municipalities. The objection as to absentees is even weaker in regard to a municipality than to a county or a road district, and, judging from experience, if their votes could be properly said to count, their votes could not seriously affect the result of obtaining the true opinion of the ratepayers at the poll.

"As to section 219. The limit of two shillings in the pound appears to refer to general and special rates only, and not to exclude the levying of a separate rate for strictly local purposes in a particular portion of the municipality.

"As to the First Schedule. The operation of the Town Districts Acts appearing to be satisfactory, it was not considered desirable to deprive persons who desired to take advantage of their provisions of the opportunity to do so."

The reasons were ordered to be transmitted to the House of Representatives.

The Council adjourned at a quarter p[illegible] eight o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, 11th August, 1886.

Harbours Bill—Counties Bill—Municipal Corporations Bill—Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Bill—New Zealand Agricultural Company—Rabbit and Small-bird Pests—E. Nehua—Manganui Kaitaia Telephone—Sinking Fund—South Kaitaia Vaccinator—Bobin Creek Siding—Gibbs Siding—Election Petitions and other Acts—Ohangina Bridge—Acclimatization Societies—Fish—Sir William Fox—Old Men's Home, West Coast—Brunnerton Police-station—Greymouth—Land Agents—Representation Bill—Rabbit Bill—Property Assessment Bill—Settled Land Bill—District Railways Purchasing Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

HARBOURS BILL.

A message was received from the Legislative Council asking for a Free Conference on the subject of the amendments made in the Harbours Bill by the Council.

On the motion of Mr. LARNACH, this proposal was agreed to, and Mr. J. McKenzie, Mr. Macandrew, and the mover were appointed Managers on behalf of the House.

COUNTIES BILL.

A message was received from the Legislative Council stating that it insisted on its amendments in clauses 157 and 195 of the Counties Bill.

On the motion of Sir R. STOUT, it was resolved to request a Free Conference on the subject; and Major Atkinson, Mr. Macarthur, Mr. Walker, and Sir R. Stout were appointed Managers on behalf of the House.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS BILL.

A message was received from the Legislative Council stating that it insisted on its amendments in the Municipal Corporations Bill.

On the motion of Sir R. STOUT, it was resolved to request a Free Conference on the subject; and Mr. W. D. Stewart, Mr. Seddon, Mr. Macarthur, and Sir R. Stout were appointed Managers on behalf of the House.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS BILL.

The House proceeded to the consideration of amendments made in the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Bill by the Legislative Council.

Sir R. STOUT.—I move, That the amendments made by the Council be agreed to except that in section 37, which separates Piako from the Thames and unites it with Waikato. The other amendments are entirely technical, but I move that that be disagreed with.

:. WHYTE.—I beg to move, That the ıdment in that clause also be agreed to. House has had this matter before it so ı that I need not do more than simply ıin that the motion which I made : time ago in this House, and which was rejected by one vote, proposed to make County of Piako into a separate county; the Council has done something else, ıh, I think, will to many members be less ɔtionable than what I proposed. They ı taken it from one district and put it into ıher. The position of the Council seems to his: They found two districts adjacent to ı other, one containing fifteen thousand ıbitants, and the other only nine thousand. he action they have taken they have, by ng the Piako Country from the Thames adding it to the Waikato, adjusted that as ıh as possible, and at the same time put ıther districts which have a community of rests—districts which can work together cably and pleasantly, and with fairness of tributions, and, moreover, districts which connected by railway. In adding Piako to Waikato District they have added it to a rict with which it has railway communica- ı by two branch-lines, which open it up ıost completely. Therefore I think the ıse will see the fairness of what they have e, and will now agree with the amendment his clause as well as with the previous ones. ɔase it should be stated that there is at pre- t no hospital in the Waikato District, I may that they have not been able to institute one ough want of funds, but that they are now ing steps towards the establishment of one, l it will be established within a short time.

Colonel FRASER.—I hope the House will : agree to this amendment. Honourable mbers have often heard and are familiar ıh the history of the purchase of the cele- ıted Piako property, which has been spoken frequently in this House by the honour- le member for Auckland East. Honourable mbers know what that purchase was, and this time they know whether it was a good a bad one, from the point of view of the lony. The Piako County is now following the footsteps of the proprietors of that pro- rty. They could not succeed in getting their ject accomplished in this House, and they ve had to go to another place, where there ɔ some of the proprietors of the land, and it ɔ been done there, contrary to the wish of is House. The Piako County wished ori- nally to be joined to our district. I had no jection to it, and they were joined; but now ey want to be joined to a district which has t no hospital, no orphanage, no old men's fuge, nor any other charitable institution. ıey merely want to evade the payment of fair share of the taxes by joining another unty which is in exactly the same position as ıey are themselves in; and I hope this attempt ı allow the landed interest of the country and ıe wealthy people to escape contributing fairly ı hospitals and charitable aid will not be ɔlerated by this House.

Mr. LAKE.—I have heard with some surprise the statements of the honourable member for the Thames. I only wish to remind the House that the district now constituted under the amendment of the Upper House is exactly the district which was created by this House unanimously last session, and was accepted by the honourable member for the Thames; for I myself asked him if he had the least objection to have the Piako County attached to the Waikato County, and he said he had not. It is connected with the Waikato County by railways, and also by community of interests in every possible way; and, as to there being no hospital and no old men's refuge existing in the Waikato County, it is for that reason that we wish to be separated—because we wish to start such institutions within a reasonable distance and in some central position in our own district. The districts are traversed by a railway in four different directions. And, further, Hamilton is as nearly as possible a central township, from which railways and roads go in every direction; whereas Piako is separated from the Thames by a large tract of difficult country, and any one who had to be taken to the Thames would have to travel over the same railways to Te Aroha and thence down the river.

Mr. MOSS.—I really do not see why the district should not be separated from the Thames, in the same way that Waikato is separated from Auckland; but I think this question ought to show the House what the Hospitals and Charitable Aid Bill really is. There is no doubt a great deal of truth in what has been said by the honourable member for the Thames—the burden of supporting the poor will fall chiefly on the large centres of population, while the rich country districts will escape; and the larger the estates in those districts are the more readily will they escape under this Bill. I hold very strongly that the support of the poor of the country ought to be borne, at all events, by what are called the provincial districts, as they were, and that you cannot localize it without doing great injustice in one direction or another. I hope this pressure for separation will convince this House that the Act itself is fast becoming unworkable, and that it is throwing on the centres of population a burden which they not only ought not to bear, but which I am sure in time they will not be able to bear. Wherever population is concentrated there must necessarily be more poor people—more people who are unable to support themselves—than there are in the country. In the country one can live on very little; but in towns a man must have a considerable sum of money at his command, to pay rent and many other charges which he cannot evade. While I regret very much to see this division going on, it seems to me the natural consequence of the attempt to create small hospital and charitable-aid districts, and I hope it will convince the House that the Bill is, in its principle, unworkable.

Mr. CADMAN.—I hope the House will not consent to this alteration made by the

tive Council; and if there has been a majority whipped up to consent to this I trust the Premier will simply drop the Bill. If this amendment is carried it means the ruin of the County of Coromandel. It will make such a difference in the amounts we have to pay towards those institutions that it will take away every particle of the three-farthings rate we raise in the district. At present the local authorities are about to strike a rate; but if this amendment is carried I shall have to wire to them to refuse to strike more rates, because it simply means striking them for these institutions. I think if this rich district stands out its doing so will impose extra burdens on the other districts; and to the Coromandel County it means ruin, I believe.

Mr. WALKER.—As I have the judicious amendment of this measure greatly at heart, I should, of course, do everything in my power in support of reasonable amendments; and if I did not support this amendment—providing not separation, but reconstitution of the district—I should not be consulting the true interests of the districts concerned, and should be false to all my previous action in regard to these measures. Although I am not so fortunate in regard to my own district, I feel that this is only one step toward what must come in the future; and therefore I congratulate the honourable member on his success, and trust that he will get this reconstitution affirmed by this House.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I cannot but hope that the Government will see from the whole of these proceedings that the steps they have taken in localizing the burden of hospitals and charitable aid has been a mistake from the beginning. They will see on every possible occasion a repetition of the struggle that has taken place in this House to free a certain portion of the community from the burden of taxation; and it is evident, from the power that wealth has in this House and elsewhere, that it will be the wealthy classes that will escape the imposition of these burdens. I hope the Government will abandon this Bill rather than adopt so retrogressive an amendment, after the determination the Premier has expressed against these subdivisions. The proposal now before the House may be in itself a fair one as between the two districts; but I do not know how the honourable gentleman who advocates it can reconcile that with the statement made by the honourable member for the Thames, who said distinctly that the object was to take away a portion of his district and join it to a district where there was no hospital and no charitable institution, with, of course, a result that it is clearly seen that it is the struggle of an isolated district to escape maintaining the poor, to escape contributing towards charitable aid. I should have liked the Premier to have expressed his opinions a little more freely than he did on moving that this amendment be not agreed to. I hope that the Government will abandon the Bill—withdraw it altogether — and give us in the place of it something like a national provision for the maintenance of the poor.

The House divided on the question, "That the words 'save the amendments made in clause 37' stand part of the question."

AYES, 28.

Ballance	Ivess	Richardson, E.
Bevan	Larnach	Seddon
B.-Bradshaw	McKenzie, J.	Stout
Brown	McMillan	Taylor
Dargaville	Menteath	Tole
Duncan	Montgomery	Turnbull.
Gore	O'Callaghan	
Grey	O'Conor	*Tellers.*
Guinness	Parata	Cadman
Hatch	Reese	Fraser.

NOES, 39.

Atkinson	Hirst, H.	Richardson, G.
Barron	Hislop	Rolleston
Bechtam	Hobbs	Russell
Bruce	Johnston	Samuel
Bryce	Lance	Stewart, W. D.
Buchanan	Levestam	Sutter
Buckland, J. C.	Locke	Te Ao
Buckland, W. F.	Macandrew	Thomson, J. W.
Conolly	Macarthur	Walker
Fisher	Mackenzie, M.	Wilson.
Fulton	Mitchelson	*Tellers.*
Garrick	Moat	Lake
Hakuene	Pearson	Whyte.
Hamlin		

Majority against, 11.

Amendment agreed to.

Amendments made by the Legislative Council agreed to.

NEW ZEALAND AGRICULTURAL COMPANY.

Sir G. GREY.—I desire to bring a personal matter before the House. A few nights ago the Minister of Lands, in speaking, used, I believe, the following words. He said,—

"I say, from my recollection, that there were promoters and promoters of the Agricultural Company. There were persons connected with that company who possibly did receive certain commissions for organizing the company, and there were promoters like the honourable member for Auckland East, who, I have no doubt, did not receive one farthing for commission or anything of the kind."

I believed at the time that such words had been used, but I could hardly credit that such a statement should be made regarding myself, and I waited for some confirmation of it. Having had his speech sent to me—I got it yesterday—I found this in the report. After a conversation which passed in the House, these words that I have just read out having been uttered by the Minister of Lands, I applied to you, Sir, in the evening, wishing to bring it forward immediately; but at your suggestion, and to meet the convenience of the House, I arranged that I would bring it forward to-day. In the first place, I would ask the Minister, did he use language of that kind or not? Does he admit using it? And I put it to him because

derstand that this has been put into the spapers—that the report has gone from here. refore I wish to know whether he does or not admit that he used that language.

r. BALLANCE.—In reference to this ques-, I believe, from my recollection of what I , and also from a reference to the *Hansard* rt, which came before me in the usual rse, that I did use the words now read out the honourable member. I also explained sense, I think, in which I used the words, ch the honourable member has not quoted. h regard to the other point—that this re- has gone to the newspapers—I have to say t it has not been sent to the newspapers by or at my instigation. I know nothing of h a report having been sent to the news-ers. I merely state the fact, without any her comment upon it.

ir G. GREY.—Referring to the last part t, I answer that, if the honourable gentle-n used those words, clearly it was at his in-ation that it would go to the newspapers.

Ir. SPEAKER.—I do not see that that ows at all. It is optional with the Press publish or suppress what is uttered in the use. It is the newspaper correspondent, I uld think, in most cases, who causes the lication in the papers.

Sir G. GREY.—I simply mean that they re necessarily reported. They originated m him. There can be no doubt that he was originator of these words.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Question.

Sir G. GREY.—I am not aware that I am nmitting a breach of order. I think I may ak in my own defence without being spoken in that manner. Mr. Speaker will, I have doubt, interfere if I do wrong. Now, I have rply to say this: that I give that statement positive and absolute denial, and I do this cause I conceive—I hardly know how to ex-ss myself, but I should be very sorry indeed be a promoter of such a company. That is I say. I ask the honourable member if he ll have a Committee appointed, with a view prove his words before it. I think that uld be the proper course to take. He makes is statement. I say it is positively contrary fact, and I give an absolute denial to it. at is the position I take now.

Mr. BALLANCE.—First of all, I should like ask you, Sir, whether—after I have stated at I did not send a report of that kind to the wspapers, and have given a most positive nial of having done so—the honourable ntleman is in order in persisting in saying at I instigated that report being sent to the wspapers.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I at once said that I ought that that remark was not in order. f course, if words are uttered in this House, ey may be reported in the newspapers, but at does not imply that the member using the ords instigated the report.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Now with regard to the her part. I gave my recollection of what took lace in 1878. I have appealed since to one r two of my colleagues, and they have the same recollection. They have the same recollection as myself, that the honourable gentleman did give his sanction to the company; and it was upon that fact or recollection of his sanction being given to the company that I made the statement that he was one of the promoters.

Sir G. GREY.—Name the gentlemen who say this.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I will. I have referred to my colleague the Premier, who was also a colleague of the honourable gentleman at the time. I referred also to Sir George Whitmore. The recollection of both those gentlemen is that the honourable gentleman did give his sanction at the time to the company. Now, with regard to a Committee, I do not think the onus is upon me to ask for a Committee—I rather think the onus is upon the honourable gentleman; because it must be in the mind of the House that the honourable gentleman has made repeatedly, from time to time, grave charges against his own colleagues with regard to this Agricultural Company, while he has not attempted to prove them, and they have only reflected upon himself. I have given my impression, and I am satisfied that my recollection is correct; and I would say, further, that I never had any interest whatever in the company, direct or indirect, of a pecuniary character. I said that the only interest I had in the company was to see it successful, on the ground that it was performing colonizing operations. That is all I have got to say.

Sir G. GREY.—The honourable gentleman has not stated whether Sir George Whitmore and the Premier have said that I was a promoter of the New Zealand Agricultural Company.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I have stated the sense in which that term was used. I said "sanction." My own recollection was that he gave his sanction to the company; and I think if he will read from *Hansard* the report of my speech the other evening he will find it was upon the fact that he had given his sanction that I used the term that he was a "promoter;" and he will also see, and the House will see, that I used that term in no offensive sense. I pointed out that his motive was the same as my own—to promote colonization.

Mr. SPEAKER.—We have now had assertion and counter-assertion, and I feel certain I should not allow the matter to go any further.

Sir G. GREY.—May I move for a Committee?

Mr. SPEAKER.—You must give notice.

Sir G. GREY.—May I have an opportunity of reading to the House part of the papers laid on the table yesterday, which fully controvert what the honourable gentleman has said?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member will have to put himself in order by the usual course of moving the adjournment of the House, much as I decry that course, which, used as it now is, is an abuse of a valuable privilege.

Sir G. GREY.—Then, Sir, I move the ad-

journment of the House. I wish very much to set myself right with the House on the subject, because I believe this New Zealand Agricultural Company has worked evil to a great many persons, and I should think very meanly of myself indeed had I been a promoter of that company. First of all, I should like to have heard what Sir George Whitmore said; for I can hardly understand that he could have made such a statement as the Minister of Lands alleges, and I think there must be some misunderstanding as to what he said, because it is directly contrary to his speech made at the time. I would point out this: The question was distinctly put to the present Treasurer—whom, I must say, as far as I am concerned, in reference to this company, I have not known as in any way pushing himself forward in it. I positively assert that I never knew he was connected with the company until after the receipt of his telegram. The Agent-General was wired to——

Mr. BALLANCE.—What date?

Sir G. GREY.—There is no date. [Telegram read.] I think that will convince the House that there was a consensus between Sir Julius Vogel and the present Premier as to who were the Ministers who knew the Agent-General was to join the company. The Agent-General states, in precise terms, "Stout certainly, and, to the best of my belief, Macandrew and Ballance." The Premier himself says, in reply, "Sir Julius Vogel's telegram is correct." Now, I rest upon that. Sir, I think that is conclusive evidence as to what was the impression at the time; and Sir George Whitmore's speech says the same thing. These are the witnesses I call in my defence. Furthermore, the Premier has stated that he came to me and proposed that I should join the company; but he did not state that I knew nothing about the company at that time, which I certainly did not—at that period I did not know anything at all about it. I therefore simply leave it to honourable gentlemen whether there is the slightest proof of any kind of my having been concerned in promoting the company—whether, in fact, there is not the direct testimony of the best authorities that I knew nothing whatever about this matter. Then, it is quite clear that I refused, on being applied to by the Attorney-General, to have anything to do with it; and it is quite clear that, a day or two after that, the Attorney-General and the present Minister of Lands, who were provisional directors of the company, retired from their offices. Now, is it likely that, if there had been a consensus of opinion between us previously that they were to be in office in the company, or that the Agent-General was to be in it,—if I was a promoter and consenting party,—they would have unhesitatingly retired without saying a single word to me on the subject? Then, I put this to the House: The Agent-General, when writing to the Government on the 13th February, 1879, informing us that he had become a director of the company, said not a word as to its having been arranged with us. There is not a word in his letter to say that I was cognizant of the matter, or that an arrangement of the kind had been made. That is the first point. And on the receipt of his letter, what did I do? I immediately wired him this telegram:—

Wellington, 22nd April, 1879.

"Agent-General appointed additional [illegible] inscribed stock. Instructions by next mail."

—and I can state what the object of that was. I felt that the rest of the telegram might be very unpleasant to him, and I wished to show there was no lurking ill-feeling in my mind in what I did. Then came these words:—

"Government cannot approve connection Agricultural Company. Request you arrange early retirement therefrom. "GREY.

"Vogel, London."

The moment I heard he had taken office that was the telegram I sent. Could I have done that if I had arranged with him to take the office, and would the Cabinet have consented to such a telegram going in that case? I send it to the House. Further correspondence passed, and the Agent-General, in point of fact, was unwilling to retire: I found delay was taking place. The next telegram I sent—considering his letter was not definite—was this:—

"Wellington, 20th September, 1879.

"Government considered letter 17th June. Still holds former opinion. Now requests you resign director Agricultural Company at once. Reply 'Yes' or 'No' by telegram. Government cannot allow Agent-General take part in any politics at Home, or in private business.

"Vogel, London." "GREY.

Could anything be more definite than that?

Mr. BALLANCE.—What is the date of that?

Sir G. GREY.—The 20th September, 1879. All these telegrams were sent with the knowledge of the Cabinet, and no remonstrance was made to their being sent. I can positively affirm that, until I was spoken to by the Attorney-General on the subject, I had no knowledge whatever that such a thing as the New Zealand Agricultural Company existed; and yet it has been stated in plain and direct terms that I had been a promoter of the company; and it has further been directly stated that I had authorized the Agent-General to take the office of a director of that company. Sir, I leave it to the House to judge between myself and my accusers.

Sir R. STOUT.—I wish to say one or two words. I will give my recollection of the matter, and correct something that has already been said to the House which is incorrect—namely, that when the company was floated in London my name and that of the Minister of Lands appeared in the prospectus. That is entirely incorrect.

Sir G. GREY.—I never said that. I said the honourable gentleman had been a provisional director; and, further, I said that he had been, and continued for a long time to be, the legal agent of the company.

Sir R. STOUT.—My firm was. That is quite correct. When the company was formed to buy a large estate, on which it was proposed to

small settlements, I was exceedingly to see it started, and I did everything I to help it forward. That was the object e company: in fact, it was to do what onourable gentleman proposes the Govern- should do under his Land for Settlement -exactly the same thing. I was asked if uld be a provisional director; and, inas- as the terms of sale to the company fixed lower than those at which ultimately and was sold to the company, I agreed, as Ir. Ballance; but we afterwards ceased to ovisional directors. The honourable mem- or Auckland East was asked if he would —myself and Mr. Sheehan being present him—and he stated that he cordially ap- d of the object of the company, but that, a he could give his full time and attention e matter, he would not become a pro- nal director. The honourable gentleman, efore, knew early in 1878 of the fact of the pany being floated, and of myself and Mr. nce being provisional directors, and he ially approved of the objects of the com- . I do not say that we went into the tion of price or profit, or anything of that ; but what I have said is what took place. ll say one or two words further. The pro- nal prospectus, drawn up in the colony, tained our names as provisional directors; that prospectus was quite different from prospectus actually issued in London, a copy which I hold in my hand now. Neither name nor the name of my colleague ap- rs in it. As to the connection of the Colo- l Treasurer, as Agent-General, with the npany, I certainly thought that not only three members of the Cabinet, but that the inet as a whole, knew about the matter. t was my impression; and I said in my tele- m that I knew, and I thought the other mbers of the Ministry were aware, of his ention to join the company as a director. as under the impression that none of the mbers of the Ministry were ignorant of it. course, I will not say positively that the nourable member for Auckland East knew. hought Mr. Sheehan explained the matter him. But if he says that it was not so I willing to accept his statement. As to the her matters in reference to this company, I lieved then, and I believe now, that if the ice of land had kept up this company would ve been a financial success, and would have ne an immense deal of good to the district. e has only to look at the census returns now d compare them with the returns before the mpany started to see the enormous increase the number of people on the land compared ith the number before the company took over e estates. As to the honourable gentleman nding a telegram to London requesting the gent-General to cease his connection with e company, he will remember that he did ot send that telegram, but that it was after onsultation with the Cabinet that it was sent. le will also remember, if he wishes to go back o Cabinet matters—and I think it is undesir- ble to do so—that there were other reasons urged why that telegram should be sent. He was aware that some members of the Cabinet wished another Agent-General appointed. I will not go further than that. The first tele- gram that he sent, I think he will find—I am speaking from memory, but I think my me- mory is correct—must have been sent during the month of April, 1879. That is my recol- lection of the matter. I could give my recol- lection of the whole matter right through. I should like the honourable gentleman to say whether my recollection is correct—that the first telegram was sent in April, 1879, that the Agent-General must not be a director of the company.

Mr. KERR.—I really cannot understand why this discussion goes on. I can make neither head nor tail of the matter. The Premier makes some slight reference to what was said in the Cabinet, and says that the Agent-General was asked to resign. What was the reason of that? There is something behind that, I have no doubt. The honourable member for Auck- land East reads bits of telegrams, but we do not get to the bottom of the matter. If those honourable gentlemen want us to be judges between them, why not tell us the whole of the facts? I have paid attention to both sides, and, whether or not it is that I am very dull of comprehension, I can make nothing of it what- ever; and I say there are very few people in the House who can judge of the matter.

Sir G. GREY.—I wish to make one or two remarks further on this subject, in reply to the Premier. The Premier makes the assertion that the object aimed at by the New Zealand Agri- cultural Company was the same thing as that of the Land for Settlement Bill. They are two totally distinct things. Were any persons connected with the Land for Settlement Bill, if they got it floated or brought into operation, to receive immense sums of money? Was there a company to make a profit out of it, a large profit? Nothing of the kind. There is no relation at all between the two things. The Land for Settlement Bill was to enable people to get land with the greatest possible ease, only paying a rental, and to enable us to get possession of valuable lands for the sake of putting settlers upon them. Here was a totally different project. And, then, another thing I may say. The Premier said that I stated that I cordially agreed with the company. I said nothing of the kind—because immediately after, within an hour or two of when I was requested to join the company, I was informed that £40,000 was to be shared between the promoters. I was informed of that, and I immediately formed this opinion in my own mind: that to give so large a sum for persons to promote a company showed that there was some extraordinary profit to be made.

Sir R. STOUT.—That is entirely incorrect.

Sir G. GREY.—Well, I was told that that was to be the case, and I believe large sums were shared. Believing that such large sums were to be shared, I felt that it could not be a very good transaction to be carried on: and I could not have approved of the company. That

I did not approve of its principles is plainly shown, because two Ministers retired from it the moment I knew of it.

Sir R. STOUT.—No; absolutely incorrect. The honourable member has been misinformed.

Sir G. GREY.—They did retire.

Sir R. STOUT.—I will explain, if the honourable gentleman will allow me. Among the provisional directors proposed in New Zealand our names were included, but when the company was transferred to London that prospectus was entirely departed from, and a new prospectus was issued, and we were never asked to allow our names to be put in it.

Sir G. GREY.—I understood at the time that the honourable gentlemen retired. I was certainly told at the time that they had retired.

Sir R. STOUT.—By whom?

Sir G. GREY.—It was by some member of the Cabinet; I could not say by whom. The honourable gentleman can give the dates of the retirement, and prove it.

Sir R. STOUT.—They never did retire. The honourable gentleman misunderstands me.

Sir G. GREY.—I have simply to say that I did not cordially approve of the Agricultural Company. From the first, and especially when I believed that large sums were to be paid to the promoters of the company, I formed a very strong prejudice against it; and also, on finding that Government officers were to be employed in it, I thought the whole transaction was a wrong one. I never had anything to do with it, from the first. My sole knowledge of it was in a conversation with the present Premier, when he came to me and sought my support, and I felt offended at his having done it. I felt offended at the application that was made to me. I never had anything to do with it from that time, and I did not know about it until some one sent me a report of the New Zealand Agricultural Company; and during the last recess I went thoroughly into it.

Sir R. STOUT.—Will the honourable gentleman allow me to explain?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I really must request the honourable members not to waste the time of the House with these criminatory and recriminatory remarks. The House has still a great deal of public business to get through, which cannot be reached unless I interpose and check the bandying of personalities between the two honourable gentlemen.

Sir R. STOUT.—The date of the conversation with the honourable member was about April or May, 1878, and at that time there was no mention to me of any person getting any money whatever for floating the company.

Motion negatived.

RABBIT AND SMALL-BIRD PESTS.

Mr. O'CONOR asked the Premier, Whether the Government will, during the recess, submit to M. Louis Pasteur, of the Academy of Sciences, Paris, particulars of the rabbit and small-bird pests of this colony, with a view of obtaining his advice as to the introduction of the virus of some disease or virulent malady for their destruction? The attempts which had hitherto been made to get rid of the rabbit-pest, and also of the small-bird pest, had been to a great extent ineffective. Anybody who had watched the advance of scientific research in the hands of M. Pasteur must have been struck with the extraordinary results which had been developed from his discoveries, and must have been amazed at the astonishing way in which he treated the virus of different diseases. It appeared quite plain that this was the way in which they should seek relief from the rabbit-pest in New Zealand. He believed that if the Government or anybody else would, during the recess, communicate with M. Pasteur he would point out some means by which the rabbit and small-bird nuisances could be got rid of.

Sir R. STOUT thought that the matter was worthy of consideration, and he would consider it during the recess.

E. NEHUA.

Mr. HAKUENE asked the Government, What steps they intend to take with regard to the report of the Native Affairs Committee on the petition of Eru Nehua?

Mr. BALLANCE said that, in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee, the matter was being inquired into, and the Resident Magistrate, Mr. Clendon, had been requested to report on the question.

MANGONUI-KAITAIA TELEPHONE.

Mr. HAKUENE asked the Government, If they will favourably consider the advisability of erecting a telephone or telegraph line from Mangonui to Kaitaia? This line was not a branch-line: it was part of the main telegraph line to the North Cape. There were a large number of Natives and Europeans living in the district. He would like to see the telegraph line carried through the Islands, like the backbone of a fish—that was to say, a line running from one end of the Island to the other—from the head to the tail. As Wellington was the seat of Government it was very desirable that it should be in direct communication with all parts of the Island.

Sir J. VOGEL said this question had already been asked by the honourable member for the Bay of Islands. He had gone into the matter, and quite agreed with the honourable gentleman who had just spoken that it was desirable very much to extend the telephone and telegraph system; but the Government had only a certain amount of means at their command, and could only proceed with the work from time to time as circumstances justified their doing so. They had first to select those parts of the country which would yield the most revenue. Unfortunately, however desirable, for other reasons, it might be to make this connection, the cost would be so large in proportion to the probable revenue that he could not at present grant the request of the honourable gentleman: in fact, the department was making no more extensions this year. He was told that the cost of making this connection would be £1,500, while the depart-

; could not reckon on a revenue of more £20. An offer had been made to the ict to construct the work for a subsidy of per annum, which would be reduced from to time if the receipts justified it. He l not help thinking that this was a liberal , and it would be well worth the while of ıonourable gentleman to advise those who interested in the district to agree to it.

SINKING FUND.

r. NEWMAN, in the absence of Mr. John-, asked the Colonial Treasurer, If he can any information to the House as to the when any considerable portion of the ued sinking fund will be set free, and be-e available for public works? He would lad if the honourable gentleman would also e the amount that would be set free.

ir J. VOGEL had no more information to on the subject than was contained in the ancial Statement.

SOUTH RAKAIA VACCINATOR.

Ir. IVESS asked the Government, Whether y will consider the desirability of making ıe arrangement with one of the medical ctitioners residing at Ashburton to visit ıth Rakaia periodically, with a view to ›rding the public in that district facilities vaccinating their children? He asked the ation at the earnest request of the inhabi-ıts of the district, who were seriously incon-ıienced by having to send their children to hburton, a distance of eighteen miles, at a st of 5s. each trip, to have them vaccinated. ıere were some six or seven hundred people iding in South Rakaia, and he trusted the ›vernment would extend the same facilities that place as he understood they were giving other places.

Mr. TOLE said steps were being taken to rry out this arrangement.

BOBIN CREEK SIDING.

Mr. DUNCAN asked the Minister for Public Vorks, Why the siding at Bobin Creek, on the gapara Railway, has not been constructed st, although promised two years ago? It was ow three years since a promise had been ıade to do this work. A former Minister of he Crown had got a siding put up for his own onvenience.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Certainly he did not.

Mr. DUNCAN said a public meeting had ıeen held to request that the siding should be ıut in the proper place, and he hoped it would ıe done.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that the con-lition on which the promise had been made ıas that about a half or three-fourths of an acre of land should be given for the siding. A large amount of correspondence had taken place on the subject, but the owner had not yet been able to convey the land to the Govern-ment.

Major ATKINSON wished to say that the honourable member, in asking his question, had made a statement, no doubt unintentionally, that a former Minister of the Crown had got a siding put up on his own land for his own convenience. The honourable member was entirely mistaken, and a denial of that state-ment had already been given once or twice in the House. The whole matter had been thoroughly gone into, and it had been shown that there was not a particle of truth in the statement. Therefore he hoped the honour-able member would withdraw the statement made against an absent man, who could not defend himself.

Mr. DUNCAN said the statement was ab-solutely true. The siding was placed where there was not even a public road leading to it, and it remained so to this day—any one could see that for himself.

Mr. SPEAKER could not allow this alter-cation to go on. He had permitted a denial to be made, and there the matter must end.

GIBSON'S SIDING.

Mr. DUNCAN (who was inaudible in the gallery), asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will cause a shelter-shed to be erected at Gibson's Siding, on the Duntroon Railway?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said there was no objection, of course, to this shed being put up, except on the score of expense. He was informed that the traffic at this place was ex-ceedingly small: in fact, there was scarcely any. He would, however, have the matter further looked into, and if there was a reason-able amount of traffic he would have the shelter-shed put up.

ELECTION PETITIONS AND OTHER ACTS.

Mr. MACARTHUR asked the Premier, Whether, in view of the approaching general election, the Government will bring down Bills early next session to amend "The Election Petitions Act, 1880," "The Corrupt Practices Prevention Act, 1881," "The Regulation of Elections Act, 1881," and "The Registration of Electors Act, 1879"?

Sir R. STOUT would, before next session, look into these Acts, and if any amendment were required in them he would bring it down. He was not aware that the Election Petitions Act required amendment, except, perhaps, in re-gard to the question of costs, and even in that respect he doubted very much whether any alteration should be made, for it seemed to him that a rich man should not be placed on any better footing than that of a man of small means.

POHANGINA BRIDGE.

Mr. MACARTHUR asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will order the ne-cessary timber and also the ironwork for the cylinders of the railway-bridge across the Po-hangina River, on the Napier–Palmerston Railway, at once, so as to avoid delay in the completion of this important connecting-link of railway between Napier, Taranaki, and Wellington?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said he thought that

the funds at the disposal of the Government would not permit of the bridge being put in hand at present.

ACCLIMATIZATION SOCIETIES.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked the Government, Whether they will issue regulations for the guidance of acclimatization societies' actions, and to regulate their importations into the colony; also, whether they will, in future, require the several acclimatization societies to furnish annually a detailed statement of their receipts and expenditure? He put the question because he thought it was very desirable that the acclimatization societies should act under fixed regulations, and not in an altogether irresponsible manner, as they were doing at present. There was a clause in the Animals Protection Act which required that the acclimatization societies should advertise their intention before importing any animal or bird; but he had never seen that done, and thought it should be insisted upon. As to the second part of the question, he thought there should be a detailed statement of the accounts of those bodies published every year. They were virtually taxing bodies, as they levied license-fees, and spent the proceeds without any responsibility to the colony. It was only right, therefore, that some statement should be made annually, so that it might be seen how the money which was thus raised by taxation was spent.

Mr. TOLE said that, so far as he had been able to ascertain, there was no statutory authority for making regulations for these societies; but further inquiries would be made after the session, to see what effect could be given to the suggestions contained in the question.

FLAX.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked the Minister of Lands, If the Government will offer a bonus for the encouragement of the flax industry? He did not ask this question only in reference to the *Phormium tenax*, but also with regard to the production of Irish flax, which was already being cultivated in some parts of the South. He also wished to include other products from flax, such as linseed-oil.

Mr. BALLANCE said the honourable gentleman would remember that two bonuses were offered some time ago, amounting to £1,000, for the production of five hundred gallons of linseed-oil and fifty tons of oil-cake. These bonuses were paid to Messrs. Singer and Co. in January, 1884. As the farmers in Otago did not respond to the invitation to cultivate flax, the Government assisted Mr. Singer to obtain fifteen hundred acres of land near Hindon on the small grazing-run system, where flax had been cultivated extensively, thereby showing that its cultivation could be conducted profitably. An account of Mr. Singer's operations would be found in the Crown Lands Report for 1885. The Government did not think that any further bonus was necessary. With regard to the *Phormium tenax*, he might say that it was cultivated with great success as a small industry in the neighbourhood of Auckland, where it was a source of considerable profit to the small farmers. He had visited some of these farms, and seen the quantities which were sent into Auckland. He therefore did not think any bonus was necessary to aid that industry; but he admitted that it might be well to give some kind of encouragement to the cultivation of Irish flax. The honourable member for Wellington South had been good enough to place in his hand a correspondence which the honourable gentleman had had with a gentleman in the North of Ireland with regard to a new flax-machine which, it was said, would revolutionize the industry. It was invented by one of the large manufacturers in that country, who said that if it were introduced into the colony, and people would cultivate flax, that would be found to be the most profitable industry they could engage in. For the information of honourable members he would read an extract from an Irish paper describing this new machine:—

"Cardon's patent, as it is named, seems really about to effect a minor revolution in the flax and linen industries, and will prove a source of wealth to the country, as the same bulk of rough flax when dressed ready for the spinner will yield 50 per cent. more fibre than when dressed by the old process. This remarkable increase in the quantity of fibre will be pure gain to this country, as it will displace a like amount of foreign flax. The cost of the machine, which is £400, will indeed prove a barrier to its rapid spread in the country, and the matter of cost appears more formidable when it is stated that it is far more expeditious to have two machines working at the same time."

It would be very desirable to encourage this industry, and he had no hesitation in affording Mr. Singer every facility in his power by asking him to get land under the small grazing-run system. Mr. Singer had been perfectly satisfied with that title, and there was every reason for believing that the venture into which that gentleman had gone would be a success. He (Mr. Ballance) proposed to get further information with regard to these machines, and to distribute that information by means of the Agricultural Department. He had every hope that the flax industry would soon be one of the most valuable of the colony's industries.

Mr. BUCHANAN would like the honourable gentleman to explain how it was that Mr. Singer had been able to get a small grazing-run for such a purpose as flax-growing.

Mr. BALLANCE thought that it would have been better had the honourable gentleman given the ordinary notice of the question. However, he should be happy to explain the matter at once. Mr. Singer had been allowed to occupy a portion of Crown lands in the experiment of growing flax. Having proved the suitability of the land for that purpose, and wishing to extend operations, and secure the buildings, fencing, and other improvements made by him, he came to the Government and asked them for a title. The Government said that they could not give him a title to the land,

except in this particular way: that the value of the improvements he had made might be added, and the land put up to auction in the ordinary way. An officer was sent up, and carefully valued the improvements; they were added to the upset price of the run; and then it was put up to auction, and bought in by Mr. Singer.

SIR WILLIAM FOX.

Major ATKINSON asked the Government, If they will place a sum of money on the supplementary estimates to enable this House to recognize in a substantial manner the valuable services of Sir William Fox as Commissioner under the West Coast Settlement Act? At the conclusion of Sir William Fox's duties as Commissioner on the West Coast the late Government proposed to ask Parliament to recognise his very valuable services by placing a sum of money on the estimates; but Sir William Fox declined to receive any pecuniary recognition. But he (Major Atkinson) believed that circumstances had somewhat altered now, and that if a sum were voted by the House it would be accepted. Therefore he should like to know whether the Government would give the House an opportunity of expressing its opinion on the subject.

Sir J. VOGEL said the Government had been informed that, on the completion of Sir William Fox's labours on the West Coast, the honourable member for Egmont proposed, on behalf of the Government, to place a vote on the estimates for £2,000 as remuneration for the services which had been rendered, but that Sir William Fox at the time asked the honourable member not to do so. But since then Sir William Fox had come to the conclusion that he would like to have the payment; and this had been intimated to the Government. The Government replied that the sum should be placed upon the estimates, so that the matter might be brought before the House if the honourable member for Egmont requested it.

OLD MEN'S HOME, WEST COAST.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Premier, Whether the Government will grant to the Grey District Hospital and Charitable Aid Board a subsidy of pound for pound on the cost of erecting, establishing, and maintaining, in some central position on the West Coast, a home for the aged and infirm miners and other residents in that part of the colony? In asking this question he wished to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the West Coast was a very much isolated part of the colony, and also to the fact that the miners on the West Coast from the time the gold-diggings first broke out had contributed most liberally towards the maintenance of hospitals and other charitable institutions. But nothing had been done by the Government towards erecting or establishing a home where these aged and infirm miners, who had been the pioneers of that part of the colony and some of whom were now unable to support themselves through old age, accident, or infirmity, could reside during the few years of their life left remaining to them. Therefore he had put the question, with the view of getting the Government to assist in providing such a home; and he hoped that a favourable reply would be given to him.

Sir R. STOUT might say that Dr. Grabham had looked into this matter, and did not think that a separate institution was necessary. As the honourable gentleman was aware, the Government, under the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act which had been passed, gave not merely pound for pound on voluntary contributions, but £1 4s. for every pound so subscribed. It would be for the residents in the district themselves to arrange for an institution of this character. He thought, however, that there was no need for such an institution. The men would be much better cared for if they were boarded out. That seemed to be the best way of carrying out the honourable gentleman's idea. Contributions would be payable by the Government towards such an object under the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act.

BRUNNERTON POLICE-STATION.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Minister of Defence, Whether the Government intend to erect a police-station at Brunnerton? A police-station for this place had been promised for the last twelve months, and, as the population of the district was now over two thousand, it was time that something was done. He might say that there were two constables stationed at Brunnerton: one of them lived in a lean-to, and the other had to sleep in the Government stable. It was therefore on that account high time that the Government took some action towards erecting a police-station suitable for the wants of that rising and flourishing township.

Mr. BALLANCE said the honourable gentleman had drawn upon his imagination in stating that the constable had to sleep in a stable. The fact was that he slept in a lean-to adjoining the stable. However, he had to reply that instructions had been given for the erection of a police-station, and the matter was now in the hands of the Public Works Department, so that the work would be proceeded with immediately.

Mr. GUINNESS might say that he had not drawn upon his imagination. He had merely stated what had appeared in the public Press.

Mr. BALLANCE. — Sometimes the Press draws upon its imagination.

Mr. GUINNESS.—No doubt the honourable gentleman speaks from experience as a newspaper man.

GREYMOUTH.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Commissioner of Customs, Whether the Government will appoint the Port of Greymouth to be a port of registry for ships, as great delay and expense is incurred by shipowners residing on the West Coast having to register their ships and transfers at different ports in the colony? He would only point out that, owing to the valuable en-

dowments given to the Greymouth Harbour Board to increase the facilities at the port, the shipping-trade there was largely increasing, both in respect of steamers and sailing-vessels, and a large number of boats were becoming locally owned. A great loss of time and some expense were incurred by having to register and transfer shares in those vessels at either Dunedin, Wellington, Lyttelton, Nelson, or Auckland. Therefore he hoped that the honourable gentleman would see his way to accede to the request contained in the question.

Sir J. VOGEL thought that the honourable gentleman was mistaken in saying that "great delay and expense was incurred by shipowners residing on the West Coast having to register their ships and transfers at different ports in the colony." At any rate, he was informed that that was not so. A memorandum before him stated that very little inconvenience could be felt by the shipowners of Greymouth from that port not being declared a port for registration of shipping. They could procure the requisite forms prescribed by Act at any Customhouse, and all that was necessary was to fill them up and transmit them to the port of registration —either Nelson or Wellington—where registration was effected without charge, so that the only cost would be that of postage. He was not aware how many shipowners there were resident at Greymouth. If the honourable gentleman knew, perhaps he would kindly say.

Mr. GUINNESS said one gentleman owned an interest in ten or twelve vessels there.

Sir J. VOGEL did not think that that gentleman was subjected to much inconvenience. It was stated in the memorandum to which he had referred that it was inadvisable to do what the honourable member asked should be done, because the responsibilities of registration of shipping were very great, and it should be done by officers who had experience in the work of registration; and this could only be gained by men in the large ports, where registration transactions were numerous. An error in entries might be fraught with most serious consequences to owners of shares in shipping. For these reasons the Secretary of Customs thought that, until there were more ships owned at Greymouth, it would be inexpedient to make such an alteration as the honourable gentleman suggested. He had only to say, further, that he was not aware that any application had been made to the Government on the subject; but should such an application be made he would be happy to give the matter consideration. He felt certain that Greymouth would become a very important port, and that it was only a question of time as to when this request should be acceded to.

Mr. GUINNESS regretted that he could not move the adjournment of the House, because he was certain the Collector at Greymouth was quite competent to do the work; and he (Mr. Guinness) had never before heard such extraordinary reasons for refusing a request as those which had been made by the Commissioner of Customs.

Mr. Guinness

LOAN AGENTS.

On the motion of Sir G. GREY, it was ordered, That copies of all correspondence relative to the appointment of Mr. Larnach as Loan Agent for the Colony of New Zealand be laid before this House.

REPRESENTATION BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. ROSS.—Sir, I will not detain the House many minutes in making remarks upon the provisions of this Bill. It appears to me that the main principles of the Bill are contained in the 2nd and 3rd clauses, to which I wish to direct attention for a few moments. First, there is the constitution of the Board. My opinion is that we might add to the Controller and the Surveyor-General the Registrar-General of the colony. The number of unofficial members might then be reduced to two, and the number of the Commission remain the same. I think that, with a view to population being made the basis of representation, the services of the Registrar-General upon the Board would be very desirable. There are three bases which have been alluded to in the House, any one of which might be taken as the basis of representation. There is the territorial basis; then the honourable member for Hawke's Bay says there should be no taxation without representation, so we might take taxation as the basis of representation; and the third is the population basis. The territorial basis, I believe, has been recognized by the Government in regard to the constitution of the Upper Chamber. I find the Colonial Treasurer justifying the appointment of certain members to that Chamber on the ground that it would require a very large number of members to be added to that House if there was to be anything like a fair territorial representation in it. So that in the constitution of the other House that principle has been recognized by the Colonial Treasurer, and also by the Premier. If population is to be taken as the basis, then it appears that the population of the North Island has increased, and that the North Island is entitled to an increased number of members. It is said that any departure from that principle would be a breach of faith —that a compact was entered into when the present Representation Act passed to the effect that, if the next census showed that on a population basis the North Island was entitled to increased representation in this House, the representation should be readjusted according to population. If taxation is to be taken as the basis of representation, then we find that the South Island has still a claim for increased representation in the Legislature. I find that the total revenue raised in the colony amounts to £2,687,606 17s. 9d.: of this, the North Island contributes £1,268,504 14s. 8d., and the South Island £1,419,102 3s. 1d.; so that, of the total amount of revenue, the South contributes the largest quota. The property-tax contributed by the North Island amounts to £116,231, and by the South Island £210,045. In territorial revenue the difference is most marked: the

North Island only contributes £3,955 17s. 8d., while the South Island contributes £177,877 4s. 9d. In land revenue there is also a great difference. The total contributions towards land revenue are £141,923 15s., of which £51,886 5s. 6d. is contributed by the North Island, and £90,037 9s. 6d. by the South Island. The Customs receipts for the North Island are £677,292 1s. 4d., and for the South Island £737,532 11s. 6d.; the stamps, for the North Island £394,033 8s. 1d., and for the South Island £173,550 12s. 3d.; and the beer-tax, for the North Island £25,106 2s. 1d., and for the South Island £30,059 5s. 1d. On all the items, with the exception of stamps—which, in consequence of Wellington being the locality in which the head offices of the Government are situated, show greatly in favour of the North Island—the contributions of the South Island are largely in excess of those of the North Island; so that, if taxation is to be made the basis of representation, the South Island is entitled to a preponderance in the Legislature. But I think the House has come to an opinion that population is the proper basis of representation, and in that opinion I coincide; and I think that whatever compact has been entered into with the North Island there will be no difficulty in preserving it intact. Then as to the number of members. That is a question I should have liked to see considered in connection with the reform of the other Chamber. We were promised, in the Speech from the Throne at the beginning of the session of last year, that a Bill dealing with the reform of the other Chamber should be submitted to the Legislature. Such a Bill has never yet been submitted.

Sir R. STOUT.—Yes; it was submitted to the other House.

Mr. ROSS.—Yes; I believe the other House was asked to reform itself; but amongst those who objected to the alteration of the tenure of office, and to the reduction in the number of members, were some of the gentlemen who were appointed with the view of reforming the constitution of that body. The next point is the amalgamation of districts. It has been alleged, against the amalgamation of constituencies, that minorities will be deprived of their representation here. I do not see how amalgamation affects the question at all; and certainly in this House at the present time minorities are not represented. We find in Dunedin four city electorates, and all the members for the city go in one direction. One is the Premier, and the other three are supporters of the Government; so that, if the minority is represented at all politically, they must be of the same opinion as the majority. As to Christchurch we find the same thing—all the representatives of Christchurch City are supporters of the Government. As to Wellington we find the same thing—the three city members all pull in the same direction: only that direction is contrary to that in which the members for the southern cities go. As to Auckland, I believe, all the city members also pull in the same direction; and I think that minorities would be more likely to be represented if the electoral districts of the city were amalgamated; because, supposing for Dunedin there were five candidates, four members being required, any particular class, by plumping for one man, might return the fourth man on the poll. In that way, I think the amalgamation of districts is more likely to secure the representation of minorities in this House, for it is evident that with single electorates minorities are not now represented. As to the number of members, I am quite of opinion that the number ought to be reduced. But the question has not been sufficiently ventilated: public opinion has not been formed—at any rate, it has not been indicated upon that very important point. I shall support the second reading of the Bill, but I should strongly advise that, after the Bill has been read a second time, further progress with it be deferred until next session. In the meantime honourable members will be addressing their constituents, and they can bring the salient features of this Bill before them, and can come back armed with an expression of opinion from their constituents upon this subject.

Mr. PYKE.—I really cannot allow the motion for the second reading of this Bill to pass without a few observations. I confess that, when I first took the Bill in my hand and endeavoured to make myself acquainted with its contents, the idea in my mind was that I had received a document from the Kingdom of Laputa—a country so admirably described by Dr. Lemuel Gulliver, where the tailors take the altitude of their customers with sextants, and the bootmakers construct their wares on the most approved geometrical principles. I believe the main principle of this Bill is an automatical arrangement to provide for the representation in this House. Now, I am not at all enamoured of automatical representation. It appears to me to be only fit for a nation of automata. It is a great right and a great power which this House possesses within itself of directing in what manner the people of the country should be represented, and I think I could devise a much better, a safer, and a more dignified scheme than anything which is to be found within the four corners of this Bill. What does it propose? It proposes to appoint certain Commissioners, two of them to be officers in the public departments. The first of these is the Controller and Auditor-General, the selection of whom seems to me to put the matter in a still more arithmetical shape as a general proposition. Then there is the Surveyor-General. Now, if there be one man in the whole colony who is better acquainted with the geographical circumstances of the colony than another I believe it is the Surveyor-General. For that I give him full credit. Then there are three gentlemen to be nominated by the members of this House; and I really wonder what that would amount to. The delegation to Commissioners of such powers as these means that we are actually invited to strip

ourselves of one of the functions pertaining to representative Chambers in every part of the Empire ever since representation was accorded to the people. But here the principle is carried so far that, in addition to delegating these high functions to irresponsible persons, the Bill absolutely seeks to invest them with discretionary powers, for I find that in subsection (5) of section 3 the lines run thus: "The Commission *may*, in making any such division into districts, take into consideration," *et cetera*. To first divest ourselves of our functions, and secondly give a discretionary power to irresponsible persons in this matter, is proceeding farther than I care to go in the line of automatical change. I do not know why a Committee of this House, limited to ten members—impartial men—should not be appointed at the beginning of next session, with the usual power to take evidence, in a room where every member of this House could go and represent the effect which every change must necessarily have in the colony, and where the Surveyor-General could give his very valuable testimony. I think we could then complete a scheme without throwing the whole thing on the floor of this House to be scrambled for, as was done on the last occasion; and it could be so brought down that it would be very difficult for any member or members to disturb it. I trust that is the course the Government will adopt. I cannot for a moment believe it possible that it is to men unacquainted with the country that it is intended to delegate our own function. Even the Surveyor-General, with his great knowlege of the country, has only geographical knowledge of it. He knows that there is a mountain here which would make a good boundary; that over yonder there is a river which might be a good boundary: but that says nothing, because people on both sides of a river sometimes have diverse interests and sometimes have joint interests. People on both sides of a mountain are often similarly situated. Therefore something more is required than knowledge of the geographical divisions of the country. I presume—or rather, not to beat about the bush, I know—that there is an intention to fill in this blank in the first subsection so as to reduce the number of members of this House. I could have wished that the Government had been sufficiently unanimous to have put, at least in italics, the number of which they considered this House should be constituted. In their discretion they have not done so; and I have no doubt they have good, solid, satisfactory reasons for not doing so. However, as it has been advocated that the number of members should be reduced, I take it for granted that that is one of the objects which the Bill proposes to compass. I do not hesitate to say that the number of members in this House is not too great at the present time. I will show why. This House consists now of ninety-one members—excluding, of course, the Maori members, who are omitted from the operation of this Bill—though, by-the-by, they will vote upon it. In 1876 the provinces were abolished. Before they were abolished there were 240 members of Provincial Councils in New Zealand. Adding the seventy-six members who were in this House in 1876, there were, in all, 316 persons at that time doing the work which ninety-one men do now,—with this difference: that since this Legislature have been cast all those parochial functions which formerly devolved entirely upon Provincial Legislatures; and they are so thrown upon this House because the promise made at the time that Parliament was induced to accept the proposal to abolish the provinces has been carefully evaded or altogether broken. We have been given no full measure of local government, and we have none now. If by any words of mine I could induce the House to go back upon its steps and repeal the Abolition Act I would do so to-morrow. We have no local government in New Zealand; and, parochial affairs being thrown upon us, we must have men with parochial—that is, local—knowledge, to explain those affairs. Let the Government, if they are in earnest in reducing the number of members in this House, bring down a full and fair measure of local government such as we have not yet had offered to us; let them take off this House all those things which take up the time of the House to the exclusion and injury of matters of greater and more national importance; and then we could consent to reduce the number of members to fifty or to a smaller number, if need be. At present we have not too many members, and we cannot, with any wisdom, make them fewer. It is often said, and justly, that a member is not a delegate: nor was he a delegate until abolition of the provinces took place, since when this House has been converted, by a retrogressive step, from a Parliament into something more closely approaching the character of a parish vestry or County Council, and we have to undertake those small things necessary to be dealt with, because there is no other power to deal with them except that which exists in the highest legislative Assembly. I said, just now, that there was something more to be taken into consideration than mere geographical features; and there is. I may say, for myself, that I cannot possibly be injured or benefited in any change that may be made in the distribution of representation, because at the present time I represent three separate districts, really, in one—the people in any one of which do not know the other two—they have no interest in common with the other two. They have interests absolutely diverse in each district. I do not think you could place a member of any district in a more difficult position than that. I would ask, why should population be the basis?—a thing never contemplated by the founders of the Constitution of the colony, who absolutely made it part of the Constitution Act, only lately repealed, that the representation of the people of the country in this Chamber should be as nearly as possible approximated to the number of electors on the various rolls of the country. I will enter more

Mr. Pyke

into that question presently. In the ıtime I wish to show that New Zealand is ver-represented in comparison with other ies. Ninety-one members, as I said be- is the number of European members in House. Victoria has eighty-six members th a larger population, I shall be told; Victoria is simply a handful, because it is act—a man can attend Parliament and ome a hundred miles to his bed. Here he prisoner in Wellington for three months. ı, again, I question if there be a single in this House or out of it thoroughly ainted with the whole of New Zealand, we necessarily must have local men in r to understand from them the application he local questions that come before us. will please remember that, notwithstand- he compactness of Victoria: and the scat- l geographical character of New Zealand, e is only a difference of five members. South Wales has 121 members—that is, y more than we have. South Australia only fifty-two—thirty-nine less than we); Queensland, fifty-five—thirty-six less ı we have: but it must be remembered in those two colonies the population is half that of New Zealand, and if a strict hematical rule were applied you would see they have too many members there even omparison with what we have now. New land is not so largely represented, consider- the geographical configuration of the coun- as the largest Australian Colonies, and it ot so largely represented in proportion as other colonies are in their separate Houses he same character. It has been said in the rse of this debate that the number of mem- s must necessarily be increased with the rease of population. I do not see that at because six thousand people living in one ghbourhood, compactly inhabiting the same trict, are as well and easily represented by ı member as only two thousand would be, their interests are identical. That is why bject altogether to a population basis. I fer sticking altogether to the old Constitu- n Act, and I am extremely sorry that it uld ever have been repealed. I think mem- s of this House ought to be well and roughly acquainted with the Constitution t, and it is quite unnecessary for me to quote e particular clause I refer to; but, with gard to Provincial Councils, as well as with gard to this Legislature, the absolute rule s that the number of electors was the basis cording to which members were to be elected. some localities women and children super- ound. I have no objection to women being presented. To the great annoyance of the esent Minister of Lands, I once moved that person" should be struck out of a Bill; but venture to say now, with a little more ex- rience, that I will not attempt to put that person" out again if he puts her in. But, th regard to children, no one has yet ven- ured to propose that they should have ting-papers thrown into their cradles. That is the consequence if you take population as the basis? You virtually give votes to the children. You give each man, in his capacities of father, husband, or brother, six or seven votes. I hope the opponents of plural voting will remark that, because that is plural voting, with the additional iniquity that so many votes are conferred on one man under one franchise. If you want to enfranchise babes in their cradles, do so straight and honestly, not indirectly and by a side-wind. Members who look at the recent census returns will see that the largest proportion of women and children are in the town districts, and therefore with a population basis a larger proportion of representation is given to those districts than is given to the country districts. That is altogether contrary to what should be. I say that we should take the number of electors or the approximate male adult population as the basis of the distribution of the representation of the people; and, if six thousand was the number for the large town districts, then five thousand should be enough for the country districts, and four thousand for the sparsely-settled districts, so as to have something like an equal representation of the interests and requirements of the country. Something in that direction, I have to admit, is professed to be an object of this Bill; but the framers have apparently upset the thing, and put it exactly the converse way. The Bill says,—

"In no case whatever, at the time of making any such division, shall the population as aforesaid of any district exceed or fall short of the quota—

"(*a.*) By one thousand if a borough or city; or

"(*b.*) By five hundred in any other case."

I think and hope the framers of the Bill meant it to be exactly the opposite. These words would have exactly the contrary effect to what has been stated to be intended. For instance: if six thousand were the standard number for a borough or city, it might be left at five thousand; but in any other case there must be five thousand five hundred. Having pointed out that population does not mean electoral capacity, I will give another and more philosophical reason why electors rather than population should be accepted as the basis of representation. It is this: There is a far larger degree of political intelligence in the country districts than exists in the towns.—(Oh!)—I do not want to be misunderstood about that—I will not be misunderstood about it. I do not say the people are more intelligent, but I use the word in its legitimate and grammatical sense—intelligence, information, knowledge; and I say there is more of that in the country districts than exists in the towns. Proof: Who are the readers of *Hansard?* Are they the townspeople? Who are the readers of the parliamentary papers? The townspeople? Not a bit of it. But these things are read from beginning to end in the country districts—by the farmer at his fireside, and by the miner always: they are read everywhere, their substance is committed to memory, men

talk over them, and I venture to say there is not a member of this House who could stand before a mining constituency without getting a pretty good "heckling" as to what he had done for years past.

An Hon. MEMBER.—You know it.

Mr. PYKE.—Yes: I speak feelingly; and I also speak thankfully, because a constituency which understands political questions and studies them, as mine does, it is an honour to represent. I would not give a fig to represent a constituency of people who take no interest in politics. I have heard it said again and again by people who live in towns, by men of education and position in the world, men in what is called good society, that they do not care for politics—they will declare ostentatiously that they do not dabble in politics. Why, the humblest man in the country ought not to care to represent such people as that. Are advantages to be given to these over people who take a keen and intelligent interest in politics? Are you to give most power to those who know least and care least about public matters? I say every possible advantage should be given, every concession made, to the people who take an interest in politics, who know what politics mean, and who know that, in a young country like this, politics are, or should be, part of the business of every man's daily life. Unless the people understand these things they are not worth representing. There is another and direct proof of the want of interest in politics shown in the town districts. Look at the census records placed before us a few weeks ago, and see, in the towns, how few men take the trouble to put their names on the electoral rolls in proportion to the total male adult population. Compare that with the care and trouble nearly every man in the country districts will go to to see that his name is on the roll. Those figures show in what parts of the community the greatest interest is felt in the work and proceedings of the country. I could give comparative figures showing the number of those who take the trouble to register as compared with the total number of male adults in the different town and country constituencies—figures that would startle even the members of this House. I could show one electorate where the male population is between six and seven thousand, and yet where there are less than a thousand voters on the roll. In another case, with as large a population, there are a few over a thousand. Does that show much interest in the affairs of the country? Are those the men to whom should be given most power to make the laws of the land? No. Let us turn it the other way about. The greatest men in England have been furnished by her country districts, and New Zealand's truest politicians are also furnished by the country districts. I am bound to say that the Government have made an attempt—I trust the Premier will pardon me for saying that it is a very clumsy attempt — to carry out some of the ideas I have enunciated with respect to representation. They say,—

"The Commission may,"—a phrase I strongly object to—"in making any such division into districts, take into consideration—

"(*a.*) The proportion which the number of male inhabitants of the district, other than Maoris, of or above the age of twenty-one years, bears to the entire population, other than Maoris, of the district; and

"(*b.*) The locality of the district, and the facility or otherwise of access thereto."

I should have preferred to see this more plainly stated in accordance with the considerations I have mentioned as to the various kinds of districts, and all that is to be done should be understood by the House before it accepts any redistribution of the present representation. "The locality of the district" and "the facility or otherwise of access" are such very vague terms that if the Bill be carried—as I trust it will not be—the Commissioners "may" at once do this, that, and the other—they may do just as they please with the constitution of this House. I think the word "adult" must have been accidentally omitted before the words "male inhabitants" in what I have just read. We do not recognise boys in our electoral laws, and therefore we have no right to consider them as carrying any weight in the election of members of this House, which this clause, as it stands, undoubtedly would do. I hear an honourable gentleman say, "We will not have it at all." Probably he will not have the chance of having it. I can quite understand that. I look at the census returns of that honourable gentleman's district, and I can understand why he so strongly objects to some of the views I have been enunciating. I invite the attention of the honourable gentleman to the records. Illness prevented my being present during the earlier part of this debate; but I was sorry to notice from the reports that a question was raised of North against South, which, of all things in the world, is a question the raising of which I most deprecate. There should not be, and there cannot be, any such question as that of hostility between the two Islands which constitute this colony. There can be no true colonial feeling, there can be no honest political feeling, if such a question as that is allowed to arise. Are we tied together like two angry dogs fastened by a chain? Are we tied together like a would-be divorcer and a would-be divorcee? No. If we cannot work together harmoniously for the good of the whole colony it is time, I say, for us to part company altogether. But, while we do form one colony—some day, I trust, to be incorporated in an Australasian federation, and afterwards in an Imperial federation—I go further, and say, with the honourable member for Port Chalmers, a federation of the English-speaking people all over the globe—I say, in the meantime, any attempt to arouse feelings of hostility between the inhabitants of the two Islands ought to be deprecated by every man who loves his country, and any Bill introduced in this House which contained one word calculated to advance one part of the colony as against the rest I

ould most strongly oppose, no matter how vatageous I might consider the rest of the sasure to be. Any man who seeks to arouse ıtagonism between the North and the South no friend of New Zealand. Therefore I ›pe that nothing of the sort will come into e consideration of the question before us. r, there is a strong impression prevalent at the smaller electorates are unequally vided as between the two Islands. I do ›t agree with that. I find in the report the Legislative Expenditure Committee st presented—a curious place to find such thing — that there are twelve electorates ıving less than one thousand electors, and, of ıese, four are in the North Island and eight the South. There are eight with over two ıousand, half being in the North and half ı the South. The remaining seventy-one ectorates, each having from one thousand to vo thousand electors, are so ranged that it is npossible to separate them for any political urpose. Therefore the present representation not altogether so unfairly distributed as it ıight appear to be from merely looking at the ıturns of population in the different districts, ıcluding those who are not entitled to the anchise. Now, I just want to say one word s to the amalgamation of city electorates. I ant to know on what principle town electorates hould be amalgamated more than country lectorates. If you are going to adopt that rinciple, carry it out to its proper extent, and malgamate the whole of the country into one lectorate; or let each island or each provincial rovincial district be one electorate; or let here be some other basis of amalgamation. f you do that, I am prepared for the issue. ut why is this additional power to be iven to those who have already unduly ırge power? Why is this additional power f co-operation to be given — a power by hich the large towns can each send to this ouse three or four members banded to work ogether for one constituency, as against four nen working for four scattered districts so eparated, in interest and requirements, that hey cannot possibly work together? If we take he proper test, I should say that really and ruly one man can as well represent a city of orty thousand inhabitants—because they are ll on the spot, and their interests are all alike —as another man can represent a country istrict of four thousand. Do we want to go ackwards? The action we are taking is etrogressive. New Zealand was, I think, the irst colony to adopt the single-electorate prinıiple, which is just and wise, and which gives a hance to the minorities to be represented.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. PYKE.—Yes, undoubtedly it does. The ther system smothers the minorities. Engand has adopted the system, I will not say ecause of our example; but the Imperial Parliament is not too proud to take an example rom experiments in the colonies, although this House sometimes pretends to be too proud to take an example from the Imperial Parliament. I objected for many years in this House to the city electorates, and in 1881 I got the support of the Government of the day in that direction. I do not hesitate to say—and nobody knows it better than the Premier—that when there is an amalgamated city constituency they return one man and three satellites, or one man and two satellites, as the case may be, and therefore they simply get three voices at one man's beck and call. In a Parliament so constituted it often happens that you find members get into this House in the same manner as the fleas got into Noah's Ark. They were not able to get in themselves, so they got on a monkey's back and were carried in; and that is exactly how men got into this House in the olden time when there were amalgamated city electorates: three men were returned at the instance of one. I hope this House will never allow that again. I have only one word to say, and that is this: I think if Ministers are wise they will tell this House at once that if the House consents to the second reading the Bill shall go no further. I am perfectly certain they will find it a very difficult matter to pass such a Bill as this, and, if it does go through, it will be in such a shape, to use a familiar phrase, that "its own mother won't know it." I really prefer to attribute the origin of this Bill to the softer sex. I only ask Ministers to regard for one moment the actual position. Do they remember the division that took place on this Bill the other night, when twenty-two of their strongest supporters voted against them, and I think one Minister voted against the rest, and eighteen of their staunchest opponents voted with them? Can they not see that? It is said that "in vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird." But for the gallant rescue of the honourable member for Egmont the Premier and his colleagues would have suffered the fate of Actæon. For my part, I shall vote against the second reading, and thus save Ministers from themselves; for I am perfectly certain that, if they pass this Bill, as surely as they are sitting on those benches now, they will not sit there very long next session.

Mr. J. C. BUCKLAND.—I shall not detain the House more than a few moments. If the Government had placed any number of members in this Bill I should have been in a very much easier position as to the matter of my vote; but, when they leave out what I think is the most important feature of the Bill, I feel in some doubt as to what course I should take. If they had fixed the number of members at eighty, or, better still, a less number, I should have followed them through all the stages of the Bill, and I should have been ready to remain here a month longer to help them to carry the Bill through the House; but when they throw the Bill down to be dealt with in this way, I think it would be better to put the measure off to another session, when they or another Ministry may take a firm stand on what should be a very important principle in the Bill. If the present number of members is to be maintained in New Zealand—and from the speeches of various members I think that is likely to be the general wish—then I think it

is not necessary to bring in a measure to disturb the present electoral districts. If the Bill passes its second reading and goes into Committee, there are so many points which are matters of argument that it can never possibly become law this session. The question of amalgamated city electorates is one of these, and there is the question as between country and town representation. I would say to those honourable members who will support the second reading in the hope that it will be thrown out in Committee, If you hold the view I do,—that it will be impossible to put this Bill through Committee even if we stay here another month,—instead of voting in favour of the second reading, face the matter properly, vote against the second reading, and let us have done with this question. There is one argument which appeals to me — the Ministry is divided against itself, and is taking no interest in the matter. For a Ministry to face this question, it must come down and state the number of members we are going to have; but to say that we are to pass a Bill, and then in a jaunty sort of way to leave the number of members to be settled afterwards, is in my opinion a wrong position to take up. For a Government in dealing with a question of this kind to give no expression of opinion, it seems to me, is simple absurdity.

Bill read a second time.

On the motion, That the Bill be committed next sitting-day,

Mr. SEDDON said,—I move, That the words "next sitting-day" be struck out, and that the words "this day month" be inserted in lieu thereof.

Mr. SPEAKER.—This is a merely formal motion,—the sequel of the Bill being read the second time,—on which debate is not allowed. The next debate on the Bill may be taken on the question, "That I do leave the chair," when the order for the committal is read.

Mr. SEDDON.—I quite understand; but the only question that arises is, that it is in the power of honourable members to vote in the negative, and I invite those honourable members who do not desire the Bill to proceed further this session to vote in the negative.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Yes; of course a division can be taken on the question.

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be committed next sitting-day."

AYES, 39.

Ballance	Hamlin	Reid
Barron	Hirst, H.	Richardson, G.
Beetham	Johnston	Rolleston
Bruce	Lake	Russell
Bryce	Larnach	Stout
Buchanan	Mackenzie, M.	Te Ao
Buckland, W.F.	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, T.
Cadman	Mitchelson	Tole
Conolly	Montgomery	Whyte
Dargaville	Moss	Wilson.
Fergus	Newman	*Tellers.*
Fraser	Peacock	Hobbs
Fulton	Pere	Macarthur.
Grey		

NOES, 29.

Bevan	Ivess	Reese
B.-Bradshaw	Joyce	Ross
Brown	Lance	Samuel
Buckland, J. C.	Levestam	Sutter
Cowan	McMillan	Thomson, J. W.
Dodson	Menteath	Turnbull
Gore	O'Callaghan	Walker.
Hakuene	Parata	*Tellers.*
Hatch	Pearson	Guinness
Hursthouse	Pyke	Seddon.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Atkinson	Steward, W. J.
Fisher	Holmes
Hurst, W. J.	Coster
Locke	Allwright
Moat	Taylor
Ormond	Harper
Smith	O'Conor
Trimble	Duncan
Wakefield.	Kerr.

Majority for, 10.

Motion agreed to.

RABBIT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE moved the insertion of a new clause providing that stock-owners may vote by deputy.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 23.

Ballance	Hatch	Richardson, E.
Beetham	Lance	Richardson, G.
Bruce	Larnach	Stewart, W. D.
Buchanan	McKenzie, J.	Tole
Buckland, J. C.	McMillan	Walker.
Cowan	Menteath	*Tellers.*
Fergus	Parata	Hislop
Garrick	Pearson	Mackenzie, M.

NOES, 35.

Atkinson	Grace	Ross
Barron	Guinness	Smith
B.-Bradshaw	Hobbs	Steward, W. J.
Brown	Hursthouse	Sutter
Bryce	Ivess	Taylor
Buckland, W.F.	Joyce	Thomson, J. W.
Conolly	Kerr	Trimble
Dodson	Levestam	Turnbull.
Duncan	Montgomery	Wakefield.
Fraser	Moss	*Tellers.*
Fulton	Newman	Hirst, H.
Gore	Rolleston	O'Callaghan.

Majority against, 12.

Motion negatived.

Bill reported, with amendments.

PROPERTY ASSESSMENT BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—Property of religious societies and incorporated bodies liable to rate.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 35.

Atkinson	Guinness	Richardson, G.
Ballance	Ivess	Russell
Beetham	Joyce	Stout
Bevan	Kerr	Taylor
Brown	Lake	Thompson, T.
Bryce	Levestam	Trimble
Buchanan	Menteath	Turnbull
Conolly	Moat	Wakefield
Dargaville	Montgomery	Wilson.
Duncan	Moss	*Tellers.*
Garrick	Pearson	Fulton
Gore	Richardson, E.	O'Callaghan.

NOES, 17.

B.-Bradshaw	Hatch	Rolleston
Buckland, J. C.	Hobbs	Ross
Buckland, W.F.	Johnston	Walker.
Cowan	Lance	*Tellers.*
Grace	McMillan	Bruce
Hakuene	Newman	Macandrew.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Hislop	Mackenzie, M.
McKenzie, J.	Hakuene
O'Conor	Grey
Sutter.	Stewart, W. D.

Majority for, 18.

Clause retained.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

SETTLED LAND BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 7.—Capital money under Act: investment, &c., by trustees or Court.

Mr. GARRICK moved the omission of subsection (2), "In purchase of land in fee-simple."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the subsection be retained."

AYES, 30.

Atkinson	Gore	Ross
Ballance	Hobbs	Stewart, W. D.
Barron	Macarthur	Stout
Beetham	McKenzie, J.	Tole
Bevan	Montgomery	Trimble
B.-Bradshaw	Parata	Turnbull
Bryce	Reese	Wakefield.
Buchanan	Richardson, E.	*Tellers.*
Cowan	Richardson, G.	Conolly
Dargaville	Rolleston	Smith.
Dodson		

NOES, 26.

Bruce	Larnach	Steward, W. J.
Buckland, W.F.	Levestam	Sutter
Duncan	Macandrew	Thompson, T.
Fergus	McMillan	Thomson, J. W.
Fulton	Menteath	Walker
Guinness	Moat	Whyte.
Hatch	Newman	*Tellers.*
Ivess	O'Callaghan	Garrick
Lance	Russell	Peacock.

Majority for, 4.

Subsection retained.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

DISTRICT RAILWAYS PURCHASING BILL.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—I move, That this Bill be recommitted for the purpose of reconsidering clauses 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. With regard to clause 4, the House will remember that when this Bill was in Committee the amount of £35,000 was altered to £27,000. That was not done, certainly, in a full House, and many honourable members have expressed a desire to have another opportunity of explaining their opinions on this point. The clause itself is also to be amended by striking out the latter portion of it altogether, to enable other clauses to be put in, and to work out a different system of raising debentures. The clauses proposed to be put in have been on the Order Paper for some days.

Mr. PEARSON.—Do I rightly understand that the Minister for Public Works wishes the House to take into consideration the amount of £35,000 which was struck out the other night? If he does, would he be kind enough to say what he proposes to do in the matter? Does he want the original amount to be inserted?

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—The Minister has said that, owing to the thin House there was at the time this clause was passed, he wishes it to be reconsidered—to be reconsidered between the hours of twelve and one in the morning, when there is a much smaller House. And with what hope? Is it with the hope of convincing honourable members; or because there has been lobbying going on, and a majority is likely to be secured to reverse the decision arrived at the other night? If that is the case, I think it behoves honourable members who hold a decided opinion on this matter to state their views, in order that those views may go to the country through *Hansard*. I shall state my views. At this late hour of the night we are called upon to reverse a decision deliberately arrived at the other evening; and we have got a notable precedent for that in the Waimate Railway case last year, in which the amount of lobbying and buttonholing was not very creditable to this House. And my belief is that the Minister would not come down and ask that this decision be reversed unless it had been conveyed to him that there was some probability, or almost certainty, of this alteration being made. We are asked to reverse the decision of the other night. For what purpose? In order to make good the rates due by a company which has done nothing, as far as I know, to advance the welfare of the colony—in order to absolve the company from paying rates that it has refused to pay. We are going to reverse the decision, in order that the colony should pay those rates which the company has endeavoured not to pay. If I understand the position of the other night, it was this: that we were to give £110,000 as the purchase-price of the railway, and let the company collect the rates. Now the proposal is that they should forego those rates; and I entirely object to that. It was as a compro-

mise, after mature consideration, that the honourable member for Taranaki proposed the amount of £27,000; but he knows as well as I do—because he stated it with great clearness—that the amount he proposed was far in excess of what the Government ought to pay. What he did was what any other man in political life would have to do—that is to say, when he could not get the best thing he took the best thing he could get, and so he moved that resolution and carried it. And yet we are now asked to reverse our decision! We were told the other evening that the railway company did not wish to sell, and that the Agricultural Company had no particular feeling about this matter. We are told now that the secretaries of these two companies are up here. I do not blame them. They are gentlemen following their profession, and endeavouring to do their best for the companies that employ them. But I ask this: Does that look as if the railway company did not wish to sell, or as if the Agricultural Company has no feeling in the matter? Why do they come to Wellington? It is because they find that the Agricultural Company would have to pay their part of the rates, and also that there was a chance of the railway company having to take something nearer to the true value of the line than they had sought to obtain from the Government. I ask honourable members to bear that in mind. Let them make no mistake about it. If the company were not putting on the Government the obligation to redeem those debentures, and to pay at least £13,000 for them, or to pay the difference of 2 per cent. interest on them for twenty-three years and ten and a half years respectively, then this railway would not cost the country what it is now proposed it should cost. Instead of paying only £110,000, we are now called upon to pay £123,000. I speak because I hold the opinion very strongly that we are doing a wrong thing. It would be very much pleasanter for me if I could agree that we should give this money; because no one likes to make enemies; and if you prevent these persons making such an arrangement with the Government as they think satisfactory, but which you do not consider to be so, they will, in all probability, say that it is done merely out of some desire to prevent the conclusion of a satisfactory arrangement. I consider that a very great wrong is being attempted to be done to the colony, and I am astonished that the Minister, after getting the deliberate opinion of the House, should, at this hour of the morning, attempt to reverse that decision. There are not many members here, for many have gone away without pairing, and we have not so large a House to consider this matter as we should have if it were brought on earlier. I shall vote against the proposal. I have no objection to going into Committee to arrange about the debentures, but I most decidedly object to going into Committee to attempt to reverse the decision which this House deliberately arrived at only a few days ago. I trust that other honourable members will feel the necessity of impressing on the Government, as I have done, that this is a great wrong.

Mr. SUTTER.—I, too, must make my protest against this attempted reversal of what we did the other night. I am astonished that the Minister for Public Works should venture to again bring this matter before the House. I spoke of the decision having been arrived at in a small House, and late; but what is the case now? Not only is the House small, but it is nearly half-past twelve o'clock. The House very deliberately, the other evening, stated most clearly what its intention was in connection with this railway; and I cannot see what plea of justification the Minister for Public Works has to relieve this company of two-thirds of the rates that should be paid. He did not explain that in any possible way, or show that the company had any claim for such relief. There is no doubt that, if we allow the Bill to be recommitted in order that the £8,000 may be reinserted in the clause, we shall never get one penny of these rates. I say that is not only the intention of the company, but of the Government themselves. The honourable member for Akaroa has stated that we should remember what took place in connection with the Waimate Railway, when the Bill was recommitted to insert that line, after a deliberate vote of the House had been taken in the opposite direction. We should remember that, and we should remember also the result of what took place in connection with that railway since that time. I asked the Minister the other night what state that railway stood in; but the honourable gentleman never attempted to describe its financial condition. I can only repeat again now what I have said over and over again, that the recommittal of the Bill to insert that railway in the schedule was a wrong to the colony; and the same thing is attempted to be done in this case. It is clear that, if we reinsert this £8,000, the sum we shall have to pay for this railway is £131,000, in round numbers. That is to say, there is the £110,000, and the £13,000 for the bonus on the debentures held by the Insurance Company, and then there is the £8,000 of rates due; making, in all, £131,000: when our own officials tell us that the railway is not worth more than £102,000 to the colony. I wonder what possible excuse the Minister can offer for recommending the reversal of the decision of this House. I cannot see any just plea at all that he can give for the country entering into such a speculation as this. I understand that my honourable friend the member for Hokianga argues that it will relieve a large number of ratepayers of heavy burdens which they cannot meet. But it has been repeatedly shown that the average payment to be made by these ratepayers is about 5s. each a year. I have seen the list of these ratepayers, but have not been able to get hold of one this session; but I believe such is the case, and, if so, there is no force whatever in the argument that the step proposed should be taken to relieve the ratepayers. The people connected with the company have known for the last twelve months

; we were going to do to-day. Therefore it nply a relief of a wealthy company, with h we have nothing whatever to do that ld entitle them to any such consideration. should have paid their rates long ago. I ot blame the gentlemen whom they have here as a deputation to try and get this recommitted; but I say to honourable bers that they have no right to listen to lemen knocking about the lobbies and ying them on this subject. We have had igh of that in connection with railways ady, and we have a report brought up to -day saying that it would be well to leave e district-railway questions over till next ion. I think this one also might very be treated in the same manner. I am that, if we leave the Act as it stands now, company will be only too glad to accept offer which has been made to them, pro- d we hand over the rates to them and let n collect those rates. We have no right ake the rates and liabilities belonging to company upon our shoulders. If this e a transaction in which honourable mem- were venturing their own money they ld do nothing of the kind, and I hope ourable gentlemen will treat it as they ld treat it if they were dealing with their money. I am sure there is not a mem- here who would go into a speculation like with his own funds, and we should not it with the funds of the colony. I shall detain the House longer. I have made my test, and I shall do my best to prevent this ng done.

fr. BRYCE.—I also wish to enter my pro- against this attempt to squander the public ney of the colony. I suppose that noses e been carefully counted, or this attempt ld not be made, and therefore no more n entering one's protest can be done. Still, hould have thought that, considering that Premier of the present Government is so concerned with this company that he has abstain from voting on the question, and sidering how far other members of the Go- nment have been concerned with one or er of these companies, the Government uld have been particularly careful to abstain m doing anything that carried the stain of spicion upon it. But it is a case of the erests of the colony *versus* the interests of e company; and what can we expect, from e experience we have had, but that the Go- nment should throw its full weight into the terests of the company? The honourable mber who now proposes that we should re- ind the decision which we have already come spoke of that decision having been arrived in a thin House; but I would point out that ty-seven members besides yourself, Sir, voted that occasion, and I would ask, can that be lled a thin House at this time of the session? oes the honourable gentleman expect a fuller ouse now? If so, I say it must have been refully arranged on the one side and as care- lly concealed from the other. I would call ecial attention to the fact that it was ten minutes past twelve o'clock before the honourable gentlemen attempted to revive this question which has already been decided by the House. They have kept this motion hanging on, deliberately watching their opportunity—securing and arranging their opportunity, in order that they might reverse the decision which the House deliberately arrived at, and which I, at any rate, expected the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill would have loyally accepted, from the words he then used. We know what has taken place within the last day or two in this place. We know that the company or the companies—shall I use the singular or the plural form in making this reference?—have sent up gentlemen to use what influence they can with the Government and with members to get this thing done. I do not blame those gentlemen, but I do blame the Government and members who could submit to that influence. It is not long ago that we were very virtuous with regard to another matter. Is our memory so short that we have forgotten it; or do we not now see going on in the lobby what went on then? I mean earwigging and lobbying of members; and what a thing that is that the Government should make themselves a party to by attempting to rescind a vote of the House! I have said it is impossible now to do more than protest against this; but I do enter my emphatic protest against an attempt to reverse a deliberate vote of the House, arrived at under much fairer and more straightforward circumstances than are likely to attend the present vote.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I can only say that I must, with the last speaker, protest in the strongest manner against this matter being brought on again. I know all about this railway, having sat last session for a considerable time on the Public Petitions Committee, when the evidence which came before us showed us most distinctly that the amount proposed to be given for this line now is very full value for it, and even more than full value. The evidence given was for the purpose of determining the value which the railway should be considered to have for rating purposes. The amount claimed was from £105,000 to £107,000; but the Committee, after looking into the matter very carefully, reduced it to £95,000. If it could not be shown that the value was more than that when the question was one of raising taxes from the people, I should like to know how it can be said to be worth more now. I voted for the second reading of the Bill because I thought it necessary that these district railways should be done away with; but I voted, when we were fixing the amount, for the sum which it was decided to give for the line; and I think that we fixed a very fair amount indeed. If it goes into Committee I shall vote to-night in the same way. I am not of the opinion of the last speaker, that this is going to be carried. I do not think that it will be carried, and I say that I am prepared to make one, if necessary, to stop here for another fortnight to prevent it being carried. I do not want to delay the House; but that is my intention in re-

this Bill. I am prepared to assist any members who will resist the Bill to the utmost. I think it is a most unfair thing to try and force this upon the House at this time.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—In common with honourable members who have just spoken I must also enter my protest against the action of the Government in this matter. I thoroughly agree with the remarks that have been made as to this attempt to reverse the vote which this House has already come to upon this question; and I would ask honourable members to realize that the responsibility does not end with the settlement of the present question. There are other railways now in existence in the colony and other railways to be built that this House will be forced to deal with in the future, and we should be very careful how we make precedents. Against great opposition the Government forced the country to enter into heavy liabilities with regard to district railways last session. I am not now going to detail what took place with regard to those railways. The subject is anything but a savoury one, and we have had references of a very unpleasant character to those transactions this session. I would therefore urge the House to adhere to the resolution already arrived at, and not to consent to the increased price which is now being attempted to be forced on the House. I am satisfied that influences of a most unfair character are being brought to bear in order to induce honourable members to give more than a fair value for this railway. If the company, as has been said, does not wish to part with it, what have we had all this lobbying for? Why does the company not stick to its property? Why is this pressure attempted to be put upon Parliament to purchase this railway? Where is the Premier this evening? Why is he not supporting the promises made to this House a short time ago, when he appealed to us to assist him in cutting down borrowing and in tapering off? What is this but heaping further borrowing on the country? and, if we make a precedent like this now, what are we to expect when similar subjects come up before this House in a future year? I shall be very glad to assist in the direction indicated by the last speaker, and remain here a fortnight, if we can only prevent this injustice being done to the colony.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I hope the Government will see what the temper of the House is, and, in view of the speeches which have been made, even at this eleventh hour, recognize that it is desirable to withdraw from the position into which they are getting the House and themselves before the country. I do not wish to say anything that would aggravate their position at the present time. There is no doubt that great pressure has been brought upon this House for which they are scarcely responsible; but in giving way to it they make themselves responsible: and it seems to me that the Government would do well now to agree to the adjournment of this debate. I, for my own part, feel strongly that, after what has taken place, there ought to be an adjournment, and I shall move the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. SPEAKER.—You cannot discuss the merits of the Bill in moving the adjournment of the debate. And if you fail to obtain an adjournment when you move it you will lose your right to speak again.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Cannot the honourable gentleman give reasons for the adjournment of the debate?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Yes; but the honourable member has been discussing the merits of the Bill, and, my attention being awakened to this by the interposition of the honourable member for Akaroa, I decide that I cannot allow the honourable member to move the adjournment now; so he had better make his speech now upon the measure.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Very well, Sir. I have not much more to say, for I cannot add anything to what has been said so well by the honourable members for Akaroa and Waitakara and other honourable members. I think that the House would be acting very unwisely to itself if it acceded to the request to reopen this question at all. If this is done the country will feel, from one end of it to the other, that wrong has been done. The Minister for Public Works, on a previous occasion, if not in so many words, yet impliedly intimated to this House that he was prepared, in a matter of this kind, to accept from the House an indication of what it thought would be a fair price to give. He placed before the House documents with relation to the matter; and those documents, together with the evidence of officers of high standing, showed, by very able arguments, what price should be paid for this railway. In the face of that evidence I cannot conceive that honourable members can justify to their constituents going beyond the terms of the arrangement which has been proposed—that is, that the railway should not be purchased if it cannot be got for £102,000. I confess that I do not see where the necessity arises for proceeding with this expenditure at all. If the company do not want to sell we do not want to force them to sell. That seems to be the position; and the Bill, if they do not like to avail themselves of its provisions, will become a dead-letter, and the matter need not come up again. But I feel, with regard to the present position of the colony, that we should be doing a very wrong act in increasing its liabilities in the straits—I was going to say—in which it at present stands. I do not think that we should at this juncture place further taxation on the people. We are at the present time in this condition: that from end to end of the colony there is distress in every class. We have distress among the mercantile class and among the storekeepers, and we have this cry from the unemployed from one end of the colony to the other; and yet we do not hesitate here, in this House, to advocate the private interests of a company at a time when the public interests are suffering throughout the community. I do hope Ministers will see their way, at this late hour, to desist from going

ith this proposal. The very fact that it is on one o'clock would itself reflect dis-it on Ministers if they tried to force this g on. It would almost seem as if they ted to do a deed of darkness in dark hours. k them, if they are determined to do this, ny rate to let daylight shine upon it.

r. PEACOCK.—I shall move the adjourn-t of the debate, and I do so upon these nds: that the House ought not to be n by surprise at this late hour of the night. s is an attempt to reverse a decision of the se arrived at at a time when the House was er than it is at present. No notice has n given of this in the ordinary way. The al course is to put such amendments as on a Supplementary Order Paper, so that mbers might know what is coming on; but hing of the kind has been done in this in-nce.

Mr. ROSS.—I beg to second the motion for adjournment. I have no objection what-r to the question being reconsidered if fresh guments can be adduced; but I do protest ainst the House being asked to reconsider question at this time in the morning, espe-lly considering the small number of mem-rs who are present. When there is a full ouse is the proper time to bring forward a atter like this.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—With regard to this estion of the adjournment, I can only say at ce that I have no wish to force any decision on the House to-night. It is said that we ve brought this question on suddenly, and ithout the knowledge of members; but that not correct, because it has been known roughout the House that we were going to al with it. There has been no secret about it all.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—There was no notice ven about this particular clause.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Half the members the House have spoken to me about this atter during this afternoon and this evening, nd every one knew perfectly well that this atter was to be reopened. I would simply peat that I will take the vote of the House on he question of adjournment, as I have no wish t all to take the House by surprise in this atter. As I cannot allude to the debate that as taken place, I shall not continue my re-narks.

Major ATKINSON.—I should just like to ay that I think the Government would be ise to take the adjournment, and I think it ould be well that a time should now be fixed hen the order can come on to-morrow, so that here shall be no question as to whether the House has to decide it or not.

Motion for adjournment agreed to.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—I think the honour-able member for Egmont has made a good suggestion. Let us have no uncertainty about it, and have it as the first order of the day for to-morrow. The Premier is not here, but I have no doubt he will consent to that.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 12th August, 1886.

First Reading—Second Reading—Third Reading—Counties Bill—Municipal Corporations Bill—Mining Bill—Local Bodies' Loans Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Property Assessment Bill.

SECOND READING.

Property Assessment Bill.

THIRD READING.

Stamp Bill.

COUNTIES BILL.

A message was received from the House of Representatives, requesting a Free Conference with the Legislative Council on the subject of their amendments in clauses 157 and 192 of the Counties Bill, stating that they had appointed four Managers on their behalf, and requesting the Legislative Council to appoint a like number.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That a Free Conference be agreed to; and that the Hon. Mr. McLean, the Hon. Mr. Miller, the Hon. Mr. Wilson, and the mover be appointed the Managers on behalf of the Council.

Motion agreed to.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS BILL.

A message was received from the House of Representatives, requesting a Free Conference with the Legislative Council on the subject of their amendments in the Municipal Corporations Bill.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the Council agree to a Free Conference; and that the Hon. Mr. McLean, the Hon. Mr. Miller, the Hon. Mr. Wilson, and the mover be appointed the Managers on behalf of the Council.

Agreed to.

MINING BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR moved, That the Hon. the Speaker leave the chair, in order that the Council may go into Committee to consider the reasons assigned by the House of Representatives for disagreeing with certain amendments made by the Council in the Mining Bill.

Motion agreed to.

On the Council resuming,

The Hon. the SPEAKER said the question was, "That the amendments made by the House of Representatives be agreed to."

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD moved, as an amendment, That the Council doth insist on its amendments in clauses 139 and 274; and that the Hon. Dr. Pollen, the Hon. Mr. Miller, and the mover be appointed a Committee to draw up reasons for such insistance: and that the Council agree with the remaining amendments.

Amendment agreed to.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD subsequently brought up the report of the Committee appointed to draw up reasons for insisting on the Council's amendments in clauses 139 and 274 of the Mining Bill, the reasons being as follow:—

"The provisions already made in the Act for the resumption of land for mining purposes are amply sufficient to secure to the mining interest the use of lands found to be auriferous or to produce silver ores. The new and exceptional power proposed to be given by clause 139 to authorize prospecting parties to invade the lands of private individuals would lead to great inconvenience and injury, and the possibility of the exercise of such a power in a mining district would seriously affect the value of private property.

"It is understood that a contract has been made with an English company for the construction of the East and West Coast Railway, and that a large proportion of the land proposed to be granted to the company lies within the West Coast goldfields. To expose this tract of country to the danger of being operated upon in the manner which this clause renders possible would seriously deteriorate its commercial value, and might be held to amount to a breach of the public faith if, after the contract having been made with the company, it were now passed into law.

"As to the clause 274, the amendment is consequential, and need not be considered if clause 139 is excluded from the Bill."

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD moved, That the reasons be agreed to.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK thought the Council ought to give general reasons, not special reasons. The reference to the West Coast Railway looked like sarcasm.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—The general reasons were given before.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON said in a case like this special reasons and special reasons only ought to be given. The question had been debated, and the matter had afterwards been referred to Managers to draw up reasons. These were now before them. His honourable friend Mr. Peacock seemed to dislike the reference to the Midland Railway; but he ought to be pleased at that reference, because they were all very much interested in that railway, and were trying to protect the interests of the company in every way. This was the first time he had known the honourable gentleman to get up and take exception to interests that were really his own interests.

The Hon. Captain FRASER thought the reasons given were clear and explicit, and all that were required.

Motion agreed to, and message ordered to be transmitted to the House of Representatives accordingly.

LOCAL BODIES' LOANS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said the Local Bodies' Loans Bill was in a rather peculiar position at the present moment. The Bill was in the Council. Some time ago he moved that a second Free Conference should be asked for with Managers to be appointed on behalf of the House of Representatives. The motion was not agreed to. The point involved in this Bill was, however, the same as that raised in the Counties Bill and the Municipal Corporations Bill, for which a Free Conference had been appointed. He thought it was very desirable to get the present Bill passed into law; and therefore, with the leave of the Council, he would move, That a second Free Conference be asked for on the Local Bodies' Loans Bill, and that the Hon. Dr. Pollen, the Hon. Mr. McLean, the Hon. Mr. Miller, and the Hon. Mr. Wilson be the Managers on behalf of the Council.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN said there could be no objection to this course; but the question was, whether it was in order. All these things should come on in the regular way. If it were the regular course that they should now approach the other Chamber he had no objection at all to make; but they should not go out of the ordinary course in their transactions with the other branch of the Legislature.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said the position was this: There was a Free Conference. The Managers disagreed. The Bill was now with the Council. The matter had been discussed, and the point turned on the question as to whether the same Managers should be appointed for a second Conference, or whether there should be new ones. He knew he was not strictly in order; but the Bill had caused them a great deal of trouble and anxiety, and he asked the indulgence of the Council in endeavouring to pass it into law.

The Hon. the ACTING-SPEAKER said it was quite within the powers of the Council to adopt the motion of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary. They could approach the other House by the process he had indicated.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON would like to ask whether the proposed Managers were in accord with the opinion expressed on this question by a majority of the Council.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said they were. There was no doubt about that, because the points raised in these Bills were exactly the same.

The Hon. the ACTING-SPEAKER said on having the division-list turned up he found that the names of the proposed Managers were with the majority that voted on this question.

Motion agreed to, and a message ordered to be transmitted to the House of Representatives accordingly.

The Council adjourned at eight o'clock p.m.

on with this proposal. The very fact that it is close on one o'clock would itself reflect discredit on Ministers if they tried to force this thing on. It would almost seem as if they wanted to do a deed of darkness in dark hours. I ask them, if they are determined to do this, at any rate to let daylight shine upon it.

Mr. PEACOCK.—I shall move the adjournment of the debate, and I do so upon these grounds: that the House ought not to be taken by surprise at this late hour of the night. This is an attempt to reverse a decision of the House arrived at at a time when the House was fuller than it is at present. No notice has been given of this in the ordinary way. The usual course is to put such amendments as this on a Supplementary Order Paper, so that members might know what is coming on; but nothing of the kind has been done in this instance.

Mr. ROSS.—I beg to second the motion for the adjournment. I have no objection whatever to the question being reconsidered if fresh arguments can be adduced; but I do protest against the House being asked to reconsider the question at this time in the morning, especially considering the small number of members who are present. When there is a full House is the proper time to bring forward a matter like this.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—With regard to this question of the adjournment, I can only say at once that I have no wish to force any decision upon the House to-night. It is said that we have brought this question on suddenly, and without the knowledge of members; but that is not correct, because it has been known throughout the House that we were going to deal with it. There has been no secret about it at all.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—There was no notice given about this particular clause.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Half the members of the House have spoken to me about this matter during this afternoon and this evening, and every one knew perfectly well that this matter was to be reopened. I would simply repeat that I will take the vote of the House on the question of adjournment, as I have no wish at all to take the House by surprise in this matter. As I cannot allude to the debate that has taken place, I shall not continue my remarks.

Major ATKINSON.—I should just like to say that I think the Government would be wise to take the adjournment, and I think it would be well that a time should now be fixed when the order can come on to-morrow, so that there shall be no question as to whether the House has to decide it or not.

Motion for adjournment agreed to.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—I think the honourable member for Egmont has made a good suggestion. Let us have no uncertainty about it, and have it as the first order of the day for to-morrow. The Premier is not here, but I have no doubt he will consent to that.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 12th August, 1886.

First Reading—Second Reading—Third Reading—Counties Bill—Municipal Corporations Bill—Mining Bill—Local Bodies' Loans Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

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The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That a Free Conference be agreed to; and that the Hon. Mr. McLean, the Hon. Mr. Miller, the Hon. Mr. Wilson, and the mover be appointed the Managers on behalf of the Council.

Motion agreed to.

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The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the Council agree to a Free Conference; and that the Hon. Mr. McLean, the Hon. Mr. Miller, the Hon. Mr. Wilson, and the mover be appointed the Managers on behalf of the Council.

Agreed to.

MINING BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR moved, That the Hon. the Speaker leave the chair, in order that the Council may go into Committee to consider the reasons assigned by the House of Representatives for disagreeing with certain amendments made by the Council in the Mining Bill.

Motion agreed to.

On the Council resuming,

The Hon. the SPEAKER said the question was, "That the amendments made by the House of Representatives be agreed to."

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD moved, as an amendment, That the Council doth insist on its amendments in clauses 139 and 274; and that the Hon. Dr. Pollen, the Hon. Mr. Miller, and the mover be appointed a Committee to draw up reasons for such insistance: and that the Council agree with the remaining amendments.

the House has taken on an infringement of the privileges of the House.

Mr. LARNACH.—The difference is simply this: that if it stands as a matter of privilege the Managers do not agree, but if they are willing to waive privilege they can agree by effecting a compromise.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think we should receive the report of a Conference unless the three Managers show that they had coincided in their views when the Conference agreed to their report.

Mr. LARNACH.—What position, Sir, will this Bill then be in?

Mr. SPEAKER.—These Managers of ours were appointed because they were considered not only to coincide with one another in their opinion, but also in the opinion held by the House. If they have not done so, it will be a matter for the House to consider as to whether they should not forfeit their position.

Mr. LARNACH.—The honourable member for Port Chalmers is the dissenting Manager.

Mr. MACANDREW.—As the dissenting Manager, I wish to explain that I agree with all the clauses of the report with the exception of the one referring to the imposition of taxes. I maintain that the amendment of the other branch of the Legislature in this respect is altogether *ultra vires* on their part, and I declined to discuss it. I did not recognize their right to alter, raise, or reduce the rate of any tax; and upon that ground I thought I was justified in the action I took. Having due regard to maintaining the privileges of this House, I declined even to discuss the question. I produced the highest authority—the latest edition of May.

Mr. SPEAKER.—We cannot go into that branch of the question now. It appears to me that the Managers have failed to stand together in the maintenance of our privileges.

Mr. LARNACH.—The contention taken by the Managers for the Legislative Council was this: that this taxation did not go into the Exchequer or the hands of the Crown. It was merely taxation in connection with local bodies.

Mr. SPEAKER.—They have no right whatever to vary, either by addition or reduction, the amount of rating-powers we wish to bestow. But I do not think that is the point at the present moment. The point now is, Were our Managers at liberty to disagree with one another? I see our Managers failed to stand together on behalf of our privileges when this report was drawn up.

Mr. MACANDREW.—This is the point: The reason agreed to by the House the other day reads as follows:—

"Regarding clause 23, the amendment proposed by the Legislative Council in the new clause 23 is an infringement of the privileges of this House; and this House trusts that will be a sufficient reason to induce the Legislative Council to waive all its objections to the clause."

I take the same view of it. I hold that we had no right to go outside the injunction of the House. Although, in itself, this is a paltry matter, there is an important principle involved; and I hope the House will insist upon maintaining its privileges.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the position now is that the House should not receive the report from the Conference unless all our Managers have agreed upon it. Evidently, they have not agreed; and I think the House should decline to receive the report. We can find some way out of the difficulty provided we do not receive the report. If we receive it we shall have to consider whether we shall deal with it. Two other Conferences have been appointed on exactly similar rating clauses in two other Bills. Even if the Managers in this case had agreed, I should have suggested to the House to not deal with this single report until we had the two other reports also: so that we should have the fate of three important Bills hanging on this question of privilege. Very important questions of our exclusive rights in matters of rating are involved in the Counties Bill, the Municipal Corporations Bill, and this Harbours Bill; and I think they should all be considered together.

Mr. LARNACH.—Then, Sir, shall I be in order in asking that this matter stand over?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I decide the House should not receive the report at present.

Mr. BRYCE.—I wish to put a question to you, Sir, on a point which is of great interest, and very pertinent to this matter. I always understood that the members of a Conference were not at liberty to urge their own views as distinguished from the views of the House, even if they had taken a different view in the House. It appears to me that the honourable member for Port Chalmers is right, and that the other two Managers are wrong.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I have no doubt of that at all.

Mr. SPEAKER.—They should uphold the views of the House, and they should not be at variance with one another, or with the opinions of this House which they have been appointed to maintain. They are appointed to represent the House.

Mr. MACANDREW.—My position was all the more strengthened by the fact that the reasons which were drawn up for disagreeing with the amendments of the Council stated that it was a matter of privilege.

Mr. CONOLLY.—I wish to ask a question involving a point of order in regard to Conferences. I understand the House cannot sit during Conferences, because the two Houses are supposed to be meeting together. A question arose this morning as to whether Select Committees of the House could sit at the same time that Conferences were going on.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think it may be presumed that Committees have no knowledge that Conferences are being held. It is competent for Committees to sit at any time except when this House is sitting.

CORRIEDALE SIDING.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I wish to draw attention to a matter that transpired yesterday in the House affecting a colleague of mine in the

late Administration. I wish to bring before the House what, I think, will bear out entirely the denial that I made when this statement was made affecting him. I wish to put on record the statement made in 1883 by the honourable member for Waitaki, and his withdrawal of that statement in the same session; because that will place the matter in a right position, both in the House and in the pages of *Hansard*. In July, 1883, Mr. Duncan rose to make a personal explanation. He said,—

"In speaking to the motion of the honourable member for Akaroa on Friday he stated that the Hon. Mr. Oliver, being one of the members of the Government, had got a private siding constructed in a place not advantageous to the public, which would lead people to suppose that he had used his position to secure this siding."

That, I understand, was the impression also conveyed to the House yesterday by the words of the honourable member. The explanation continues,—

"Papers had been placed before him to show that the application was sent in for this siding on the 20th September, 1877; it was granted on the 21st November, 1877; approved of by Mr. Lawson on the 31st October, 1877; and authorized by Mr. Larnach on the 15th November, 1877."

The Government of which Mr. Oliver was a member did not come into office till October, 1879, nearly two years later; and Mr. Oliver was not a member even on the last date quoted. The remainder of the explanation reads,—

"That was a date antecedent to Mr. Oliver's accession even to the House, so that, as far as that was concerned, it could not be put to Mr. Oliver's charge that he made use of his position as Minister; but, seeing that this siding was constructed after Mr. Oliver took office, he was naturally led into the belief in the direction he had stated."

I have nothing more to say. This places before the House the facts in reference to the accusation made by the honourable gentleman yesterday.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I may state how this explanation came about. I had stated, when speaking on a motion by the honourable member for Akaroa two days previously, that I was trying to get the Robin Creek siding erected nearer to the place where it was wanted than this one made on the ground of Mr. Oliver, when I was met by Mr. Walter Johnston, the then Minister for Public Works, with the statement that there was a siding within one half-mile of that, and therefore this other siding could not be erected. I had only urged this siding being put in because it would be of more convenience to the district, and the siding in the other place was not in the right situation: it was in Mr. Oliver's paddock, with a flat swampy piece of land between it and the public road, without any communication for the public whatever, there being no access to it by any public road even yet. I stated in the House that I knew the siding was put up during the time Mr. Oliver had been a Minister of the Crown: and the siding, with cattle-yards and pens, is there now as a monument of political jobbery and as a memorial of the Atkinson Administration, as the only accommodation is for the Hon. Mr. Oliver. I cannot call it anything else. It stands there in his paddock, without any public road to it. The cause of that explanation was this: Mr. Oliver, seeing what I had said an hour or two before, came to me in the lobby and asked me how I came to make the statement, and I explained the matter to him. He then showed me the papers I referred to in my explanation, and asked me if I would make a statement and refer to those papers, and so put the matter clearly before the House. I said, "I do not agree with that statement at all: that statement is nothing to me." I said, "The siding was erected during your term of office as a Minister of the Crown, and you have done a wrong thing in erecting it there and not in its proper place." But he urged upon me that, if I would make this statement, he would get the other siding put in. That was in his own Cabinet-room. He urged that, if I would read these papers and make the statement, he would get the siding put where I wanted it. I agreed to do that, because I was very anxious to get the siding put in a proper place for the district: and that does not affect anything I said at all.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Did you get the siding?

Mr. DUNCAN.—No. I being a stranger, he took me in—yes, into his Cabinet-room. The old siding is there yet. I may say that I was "young" at that time; I was scarcely so old in politics, and not so well up in Ministerial connivances as I have been lately.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I think the matter may very well stand upon the explanation given, and——

Mr. SPEAKER.—Both sides having made their statements, I cannot allow further discussion.

RABBIT NUISANCE.

Mr. BEETHAM asked the Government, If they will place a sum on the supplementary estimates for the purpose of subsidizing voluntary contributions raised by associations for the purpose of importing the natural enemies of the rabbit? On the 13th July he asked a similar question, as follows:—

"If they will place a sum of money on the supplementary estimates for the purpose of importing the natural enemies of the rabbit—(1) for the purpose of importing on account of the Government; (2) for the purpose of subsidizing the efforts of associations, by assistance calculated at pound for pound on amounts raised for the above-mentioned purpose?"

The Treasurer said then that the matter was before the Rabbit Committee, and that on that Committee reporting he would consider it. Since then a Bill had been introduced the principle of which, he was glad to say, had been acknowledged by the Government and the House, and there had been inserted in it a provision under which a subsidy of pound for pound would be insured on the amounts raised by trustees and the amounts raised by County

Councils from rates. He might assume that the Bill would become law, because the House had approved of its provisions. An association in the Wairarapa District had been working energetically for some time past, and the association had already £500 in hand for the purpose of carrying out measures for the mitigation of the rabbit-pest. He asked whether or not it would be possible to place a sum of money on the supplementary estimates for the purpose of subsidizing these voluntary contributions, say, at the rate of pound for pound.

Sir J. VOGEL said the Government proposed to give certain subsidies, as provided in the Bill, to the bodies mentioned there, and he did not think he could recommend a further appropriation. He believed the local bodies were not hampered in the way they might expend their funds under the Bill, and no doubt they would use their means to the greatest advantage. By the Bill before the House they would get pound-for-pound subsidy, and they could spend the money in the way they considered most judicious. He thought the Government would also go to the expense of making inquiries as to the best means of coping with the pest by the introduction of disease. This further proposal of the honourable gentleman had not been before the Cabinet, and he was unable to say whether the Government would agree to any further appropriation for the purpose.

Mr. BEETHAM would be glad to postpone his question for a day, so that the matter might be considered by the Government.

Sir J. VOGEL thought that to postpone it for a fortnight might perhaps be more satisfactory. If the honourable member thought it desirable to repeat the question he had no objection; but, he had in the meantime, given the best answer he could give.

BAY OF ISLANDS SPECIAL SETTLEMENT.

Mr. HOBBS asked the Government, Whether they intend to pay Mr. John Lundon's expenses in travelling through the Electoral District of the Bay of Islands explaining the details of the special-settlement regulations; and are they going to make arrangements for other persons to visit other parts of the colony on the same mission?

Mr. BALLANCE.—The Government agreed to pay Mr. Lundon the expenses incurred in going to the district in order to explain to the people the village-settlement system, and to try to induce as many people as possible to apply. The cost to the Government was confined to the coach and steamer fares and other expenses actually out of pocket incurred in trying to place people on the land under the system. With regard to the last part of the question, we have made arrangements of a similar character in Canterbury, and we shall probably do so in other parts of the colony where land is available.

Mr. HOBBS.—This is a very important matter, and I move the adjournment of the House, to enable me to make a few remarks upon it. I would not do so if I did not feel it to be my duty to bring this subject before the House. It will strike honourable members at once that this is a very extraordinary arrangement. While I am away attending to my parliamentary duties, here is an ex-member of the House, who, during his tour through my district at the public expense, announces that he intends to be a candidate at the coming election: he is electioneering against me while going through the district at the cost of the Government to explain the special-settlement regulations. I could understand it if this person had been sent to a district where there were people who had not got land, to explain the special-settlement system to them; but to send an intending candidate at the next election, at the public cost, among a number of electors who are already settled on land, to explain the land regulations to them, will strike the House at once as something very singular, to say the least of it. I may say that, though this may not come within the Corrupt Practices Act, I believe I am correct in saying it very nearly approaches it; and it should be one of the duties of this House to see that the Act is not contravened in this way by persons who have been acknowledged by Ministers to be friends and supporters of theirs. The telegram which appeared in the papers here a day or two ago, stating that the Minister had written to Mr. Lundon thanking him for his exertions, will show the House that gentleman's very friendly relations with the Minister, which are further shown by the facts I have stated. I think it is very important that this matter should be brought under the notice of the House. I myself, in common with many other members, take very great interest in seeing the out-districts settled; and possibly I ought to feel highly flattered that the Government have paid me this attention. But I would much rather, if the Minister wishes me displaced, that he himself would come down and oppose me, and I should have no objection at all: I should feel complimented; but, as I regard this as a very serious case, and one involving a great principle, I feel that I ought to bring it under the notice of the House. I have no doubt that, in time, if such practices are allowed to grow up, very serious consequences will result from it. The other night we passed a vote of £5,000 for special settlements, and the House can easily understand where this will go if persons are to be employed in going about the country in this way — ex-members intimating that they are going to be candidates for the districts in which they are canvassing. If this gentleman had been sent to another district altogether, and where he did not intend to be a candidate, I should have no fault to find; but to send him into a district to inform the electors of the interest he takes in their welfare, and to announce that he intends to be a candidate, is, I think, too barefaced, and I think the House ought to know it. I have no objection to fighting, but I do not intend to be murdered in cold blood. I intend that the

people throughout the colony shall know it. I hope Ministers are not conniving with this gentleman. I have, in letters from the district, a good deal of valuable information, which would be very interesting; but I refrain from giving it, because time will develop what is being done. But I was determined that the House and the country should know what is going on, and hence I have made these remarks.

Mr. BALLANCE.—The honourable member says that he would not have been displeased if Mr. Lundon had extended his attention to the centres of population. That is exactly what Mr. Lundon has done. He commenced in the City of Auckland, where he addressed meetings of the unemployed. He has had resolutions passed in favour of the village-settlement scheme, and he has induced hundreds of people to go upon the land under this scheme. We have had intimation from Government officers in Auckland that there are thousands of acres of land, all ready surveyed, waiting to be settled upon, and that Mr. Lundon has induced hundreds of people to put down their names. The only object that we had in view was to endeavour to make the scheme successful; and Mr. Lundon said that he thought he could do a great deal in the matter, and he proposed to address meetings on the subject. All that he is to be paid is actual money out of pocket, such as the cost of hiring halls in which to deliver addresses, and payment of steamboat fares. I am not aware that he is devoting his attention to one district in Auckland more than another. He was to go and induce people to go upon the land wherever land was available, and he was not to confine his attention to the honourable gentleman's district, but he was to go to other districts in the North. There is nothing political about it at all. I have read his speeches, and I have not seen anything in the nature of politics introduced. I have no doubt that the honourable member for the Bay of Islands has seen reports of Mr. Lundon's speeches, and I defy him to bring me a report which contains allusions to politics. His addresses have been purely on the question of settlement, and I think that he has done his work remarkably well.

Mr. BARRON.—What inducements was he authorized to offer?

Mr. BALLANCE.—None beyond those contained in the regulations, which have been duly gazetted, and with which honourable members are well acquainted. The regulations provide for sections not exceeding fifty acres being taken up, the selector to receive a certain amount for improvements, and for the erection of a house. No other inducement has been offered.

Mr. SUTTER.—I think it would be much better if the Government had sent one of their own officers. I do not think it was a proper thing to employ Mr. Lundon, who is pretty well known in this House. Let the Government employ one of their own clerks to do this work. There is sure to be an impression among members, and also outside this House, that the Government is doing something under the rose in employing Mr. Lundon for purposes of this kind.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I entirely agree with the last speaker. I think that the Government will get this land-question into great difficulty if they do not employ persons who are absolutely under their control as officers of the Government.

Mr. O'CONOR.—There were two complaints made by the honourable member for the Bay of Islands. He seemed, in the first instance, to be afraid that his district would be over-settled; and, in the next place, he objected to the person who was employed. With regard to his first objection, I have to say that I should be very glad if the Government would give the same facilities for advancing settlement in the district I come from as they appear to be doing in the honourable gentleman's district. I feel certain that if Mr. Lundon or some other person were sent down to the West Coast to draw the attention of the people to the question of settlement, and to show the people the advantages of going on to the land, it would be an excellent thing for the district and for the people themselves. I sincerely wish that the Government would do something of the kind on the West Coast. As to the other point, I do not think that a better man than Mr. Lundon could have been sent to do this work. Having some knowledge of Mr. Lundon, I can say that he is a man of considerable experience, and is thoroughly acquainted with the requirements of settlement — much more so than any man whom the Government could send out from their offices. He has been a working-man all his life, and possesses a fluency of speech and a ready way of reasoning which must have struck every one acquainted with him. I think that the selection shows sound judgment; and, since the honourable member for the Bay of Islands finds fault with the employment of Mr. Lundon, I would suggest that Mr. Lundon be permitted to go to other parts of the colony, for I believe that his efforts would be very successful.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—The question at issue seems to be entirely overlooked. It is this: that the Government are employing as agent a gentleman who is doing electioneering on his own hook.

Mr. BALLANCE.—That is not proved.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—But that is the charge.

Mr. BALLANCE.—The charge is not proved.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—It is a Scotch verdict. The point at issue is that the Government has appointed as its agent in this matter a gentleman who goes about the country stating that for the particular locality in which he is engaged he will be a candidate for a seat in Parliament at next election. That is the point; and I am sorry to say that it is not the only instance in which men have been employed in a similar way. For instance, gentlemen have been employed in the purchase of Native land, though they have announced themselves to be candidates for Parliament in the neighbour-

hood of the districts in which they are being employed. Such charges as these ought to be met in a more explicit manner.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I will point out a way to get out of the whole difficulty—transfer Mr. Lundon to the South Island. Let him come down to Otago, and advocate not only this village-settlement but also the homestead system. I have a great fancy for the homestead system, and I believe that, if he had been in Otago for the last six or nine months, before now a hundred families would have been upon the land instead of being among the unemployed. I should like to see some one like Mr. Lundon down our way, inducing people to go on the land. I look upon the land as the kingdom of heaven; and if the Government did right they would take a leaf out of the book of the parable wherein it is related that a certain king made a feast, and sent his servants out into the highways and byways to compel the the people to come in. Something of that kind is wanted, and I believe Mr. Lundon is the right man to accomplish it.

Mr. BRYCE.—I do not know why the honourable member for Port Chalmers should have given us that quotation from the Scriptures; but I think, if he considers the matter, he will see that that one command to go out into the highways and byways, and compel people to come in, has led to more abuses, cruelty, and bloodshed than any other that is mentioned in the Scriptures. I only want to point out that it is by no means certain that Mr. Lundon would take the same delight in doing his work down in Otago that he evidently does take in doing it in the Bay of Islands.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I should like to add to what has fallen from the honourable member for Port Chalmers that I should like to see the Minister of Lands as anxious to make a success of the various other parts of the Land Act as he is to make a success of that part relating to village settlements. If he sent an emissary down to the South Island to lecture upon the value of the homestead system, I am quite convinced that much good would be done, especially if he were a lecturer of the ability of Mr. Lundon, quite apart from all political matters. I am convinced that, if the advantages of the homestead system had been pointed out to the people in the South Island, by this time we should have had not only hundreds, but thousands, of people on the land. I firmly believe that; and I shall refer to it again and again, because I believe the surest way of settling people on the land is to give it to them on the homestead system.

Mr. WHYTE.—I think I remember this gentleman, Mr. Lundon, when he was a member of this House, saying that the best way to act was to keep your friends on the roll and your enemies off it. I hope that that is not his errand at the present time. I think that some years ago the honourable member for Waitotara was sent into that district to investigate the roll of the district.

Mr. BEETHAM.—I think it is quite right that this matter should be called attention to; but I wish to address the Minister of Lands on another point: If he will not send emissaries through the North Island, at any rate he might afford conveniences to the settlers for obtaining information about the land. I have asked him to open a small land-office at Pahiatua, so that there might be an opportunity for the people in that district to obtain information as to land available, and as to the advantages of the present system for settling land.

Mr. BALLANCE.—There is an agent there.

Mr. BEETHAM.—There is an agent there, but there is no land-office—no office where people can find the agent. With respect to the remarks from the honourable member for Waikato as to Mr. Lundon, I, too, have a lively recollection of something he said in this House. He said that "dispirate diseases requoired dispirate rimidies." In this case he is called in, I presume, to have the opportunity of taking "dispirate rimidies" to turn out the honourable member for the Bay of Islands.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—It seems to me that Mr. Lundon's mission resembles what took place when Noah was in the ark, and a dove was sent out to see if it could find a place on which to rest its foot. I know of another "dove" having been sent out: another ex-member of this House has been employed as a Government insurance agent, and he has gone through electorates in the North trying to get political support for himself. I protest against persons being employed by the Government of the country to do this sort of thing—canvassing for the Government as against the sitting member. It has been done in my district by this gentleman, and it has been done in others. I think that this sort of thing should not be done. The Government have quite enough to do in this House without interfering with members in their districts. The honourable member for Port Chalmers has likened land to the kingdom of heaven. I am sure I do not know how he makes that out. We are told that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven; but it is much easier than that for a rich man to obtain land, but when a rich man has secured land he does not always find that it is like the kingdom of heaven. In fact, it is sometimes the reverse. I can only say that I agree that wrong has been done in this case, and I hope that the Government will not make any more appointments of this kind.

Mr. GUINNESS.—This question of persons who are employed by the Government interfering with elections which are coming off touches a very important principle; and it is this: Under the Disqualification Act no person who has been a member of this House can accept a Government appointment until after he has been out of the House for twelve months. Now, if we are going to give the Civil servants a right to contest elections, a man should be disqualified from entering the House until twelve months after he has ceased to have any Government appointment. If a guarantee of that sort were required from every person en-

ed by the Government we should not hear t complaints as those which are now brought re us. I do not think there is anything in complaint, judging from the source whence ame; but, still, the point is interesting.

ir G. GREY.—Without touching upon this icular appointment, what I think we are tled to is a return from the Government wing the number of persons they have emred in this way and the salaries they are ng them. I think we are entitled to ask that at once; and I would just point out to House that unusually large sums are placed he sole disposal of the Minister of Lands on present estimates in the way of purchasing ds, and purchasing Native lands, and in ious ways of that kind. I am not sure that s good to send persons about the country to to get people to adopt particular systems of tling on the land. For example, I believe that roposed an infinitely better plan for settling se lands than Ministers have put forth in ir regulations. I believe in my heart that ir regulations are oppressive and will injure country, and will really produce great disass ultimately to the persons, and to the dendants of the persons, who are put on the nds under those regulations. I think it is ong that the Government should have the wer of commissioning people to go about the untry, and receive salaries, to induce persons acquainted with their rights to come under ose regulations. I think it is unfair to the ople of the country—who have a right to t land on much more favourable terms—that is should be done. I object to the whole ing; but, in the interim—I think, if possible, morrow—we should have a return laid on the ble showing the names of each of these pernns employed in this way and the salaries they ceive. I understand that the Minister of nds agrees to that.

Mr. BALLANCE.—If the honourable memr will move for a return I will produce one.

Sir G. GREY.—I have no opportunity of inging forward a motion. The honourable ntleman must know that I have never had a opportunity of bringing a motion forward ssion.

Mr. HOBBS.—As to the point raised by the onourable member for Auckland East, I may y that it is not in that kind of way they are mployed, but liberal travelling expenses are aid. I wish him to take a note of that. That how this is done. I may also say that there a Wellington member now in the House who net me in Queen Street, Auckland, and who old me all about this arrangement before I ame to Wellington, and how this thing was oing to be managed, so that people need not hink that I am raising a hornets' nest about othing. In reply to the honourable member or Port Chalmers as to sending Mr. Lundon o Dunedin, I hope the Minister will accept the honourable member's suggestion, and take him there and keep him there. I have no objection t all to his lecturing in the centres of population, but I object to his going about the thinlyscattered districts, appealing to the electors as to what he has done for them in the past, and saying that he is going to be a candidate. I have a letter here from a man whose word I take, informing me that what I state is the fact. I think I have said quite enough on this matter to show the House that, at any rate, I do not intend to be so easily disposed of; but I would like a foeman worthy of my steel: I would like the honourable gentleman himself to come down and oppose me. I do not want persons simply to apply for land, and then immediately to have their names put on the electoral roll, and then vote against me at the next election. I want to see *bonâ fide* settlers placed on the land—men who are likely to stay there. In conclusion, I may say that the Government have not heard the last of this scandal.

Motion negatived.

BALLAST-WAGONS.

Mr. DUNCAN asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will lower the charges on road-metal and gravel in the summer months, so that the ballast-wagons may be employed and the various railways made to pay, especially the Ngapara line? He desired again to draw the Minister's attention to this matter. The lines were not paying well at the present time. He believed there was any amount of work to be done if the rates were made reasonable.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that this matter had been over and over again considered by the department, and a proposal in connection with this question had been made a few days ago to one of the local bodies. At present the rate for wagons was very low, and if the rates were made any lower it would result in a loss to the railways. He still thought that some arrangement might be come to with the local bodies in connection with this matter.

NEW PLYMOUTH-AUCKLAND STEAM SERVICE.

Mr. SAMUEL asked the Postmaster-General, Whether the Government will, on the completion of railway communication between Wellington and New Plymouth, arrange a special steam-service between New Plymouth and Auckland, so as to reduce the time of transit between Wellington and Auckland to about thirty hours? In a very short time there would be through-communication by rail between Wellington and New Plymouth, and, as probably some years yet must elapse before New Plymouth would be connected with Auckland by rail, it seemed to him to be a matter of public convenience that some arrangements should be made for a fast steam-service between New Plymouth Breakwater and Onehunga, so that the time of transit between Wellington and Auckland might be considerably shortened. Of course it was possible that new arrangements might have to be made other than those indicated in his question; but he trusted that the Government had not lost sight of the importance of through-communication between Auckland and Wellington.

Sir J. VOGEL was glad that the honourable member had brought this question forward, because it was one of the greatest importance. He was not able to give any definite assurance at present; but this he might say: that, if he understood the present service, the boats ran on two days following each other in the same week, the rest of the week being left a blank as far as the departure of steamers north from Wellington was concerned. At present there was an arrangement with the Union Company for a special service to catch the mail-steamers; and that was all. After the session he proposed to look into the question, and see if the Government could arrange for services so as to give greater convenience both in regard to communication with Auckland and also in regard to communication with Nelson and the west coast of the Middle Island. He hoped the honourable gentleman would be content with that assurance.

FOXTON WHARF.

Mr. MACARTHUR asked the Minister for Public Works, If, seeing the large profit derived from the Foxton Wharf, as shown by the return laid before the House, the Minister for Public Works will now remit the exceptional charge of 1s. per ton charged at the Foxton Wharf?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON was sorry to say that he could not see his way to grant the request.

H. FRIEDLANDER AND O. M. CREAGH.

Mr. GRACE asked the Native Minister, Whether the Government will take into early consideration the report of the Native Affairs Committee of this session on the petition of Hugo Friedlander and Oliver Mason Creagh, with a view of advising His Excellency the Governor to remove the restrictions on the alienation of the Native lands referred to in the above petition, as recommended in the said report? Owing to rehearings and delays in appointing an officer to inquire into Native-land purchases in the Bay of Plenty District, the petitioners had been kept out of their land for a long time. They had also been put to considerable expense in coming to Wellington and in bringing witnesses to prove their case before a Committee of the House. The Committee had gone carefully into the case, spending five or six days over it, and had given a favourable report. He therefore hoped that the Government would take an early opportunity of settling the matter by removing the restrictions on the alienation of the land, in order to enable the petitioners to register their titles.

Mr. BALLANCE said it was true the Native Affairs Committee had sent in a report which was favourable to the petitioners; but the report of the Royal Commissioner was of a directly opposite character. He believed that the evidence given before the Committee had been reported; but that evidence was of a purely *ex parte* character. He proposed to go into this matter during the recess, and see why the report of the Committee and that of the Royal Commissioner differed. He understood that no evidence had been taken on the other side by the Committee, though the Commissioner said that he was prepared to support his case by books and evidence; but they were not produced.

Colonel TRIMBLE said that they were produced.

Mr. BALLANCE understood that they had not been examined by the Committee.

Mr. GRACE said that all the papers, deeds, and account-books were specially sent down by Mr. Commissioner Barton for the use of the Committee, and they had been fully gone into.

GOVERNMENT TRUCKS ON MANAWATU LINE.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked the Government, Whether it is true that they refused to allow Government trucks loaded with stock to be run on the Manawatu Company's line from Longburn to Otaki? He had reason to doubt the correctness of the statement which had been made to him, and upon which this question was founded. At the same time, the question was of very great importance to stockowners on the West Coast. A further statement had been made to him as to a difficulty in getting timber-poles intended for a tunnel which was being made on the Manawatu Company's line. The Minister would, no doubt, be glad to make a statement on both these points. He would like to point out to the Minister the importance of making arrangements so that special stock-trains could run right through to Wellington.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON had to thank the honourable gentleman for giving him an opportunity of saying something on this question. Having seen several reports in the papers in the direction which the honourable member stated, he had carefully prepared an answer, so that there should be no mistake about the matter. It was not true. The Company had not made any arrangement with the Government for carrying on the traffic. He invited the company to discuss the subject of interchange of traffic before the line was opened, and expressed his willingness to make reasonable arrangements for the carriage of stock, by letter of the 27th July; but the company omitted to take any further steps to come to an arrangement until after the line was opened, and it was not until the cattle were actually loaded up into trucks at Wanganui and waiting that the chairman of the company hurriedly waited on him to get the matter arranged temporarily, which was immediately done by wire. The department only yesterday received a letter, dated the 10th August, from the secretary, expressing his willingness to fix a date to meet the officers of the department to discuss the terms for interchange of traffic. With regard to the other part of the question, he had not heard of the particular case referred to, but he might say that, when application was made by the representatives of the company for assistance to carry material through to the works on the Manawatu line, arrangements had immediately been made to assist them.

C. POPE.

Mr. WILSON asked the Government, If they will give effect to the report of the Public Petitions Committee upon the petition of Charles Pope?

Mr. TOLE said the whole of the circumstances connected with this case were very hard. He would look into the matter, and see if relief could not be given to this petitioner.

GREY VACCINATION.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Government, Whether they will consider the desirability of making some arrangements with one of the medical practitioners residing at Greymouth to visit the centres of population in the outlying districts in the Grey County periodically, with a view of affording the residents in those outlying districts facilities for vaccinating their children? He had been requested to ask this question by several of his constituents who lived at a considerable distance from Greymouth, which was the nearest place at which there was a medical officer who was authorized to vaccinate. Dunganville, which was sixteen miles from Greymouth, had a considerable population, and at Barrytown, about twenty miles distant, there was also a large population, but there was no dray-road from either of these places, and children had to be "packed" in on horses when taken to Greymouth to be vaccinated. If a medical officer could visit Dunganville every fortnight, and Barrytown and Marsden twice a year, it would be a great convenience.

Mr. TOLE would make inquiries with the object of carrying out the suggestion of the honourable gentleman.

GREYMOUTH–CHRISTCHURCH MAIL.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Postmaster-General, Whether he will make arrangements for despatching the mails from Greymouth to Christchurch at the same hour that these mails are despatched from Hokitika? At the beginning of the session he had been intrusted with a petition from a number of commercial men in Greymouth, asking the Postmaster-General to alter the time of the leaving of the overland mail. It closed now on Mondays and Thursdays at three p.m., and was taken to Kumara, a distance of only fourteen miles, from which place it did not start till nine o'clock on the following morning. The consequence was that there was no time for those persons who received letters from Australia, or Canterbury, or Otago, to answer them by return mail. The Postmaster-General had been good enough to say that he would alter the time of the leaving of the San Francisco mail; but that mail only left every four weeks. He would read an extract from a letter from a gentleman who was very much interested in the matter, and who was instrumental in getting up the petition:—

"It is just about time an alteration should be made in the time for the departure of the overland mail from Greymouth. That the mail for Christchurch should be closed here at three p.m., and not leave Kumara until nearly nine o'clock the next morning, or eighteen hours before the coach leaves Kumara for Christchurch, is putting Greymouth at a decided disadvantage. The distance from here to Kumara is only fourteen miles. I believe that the present contract for taking the mails to and from Kumara and Greymouth expires at the end of this year. Cannot you get the Postmaster-General to call for tenders for future contracts to be 'leaving Greymouth in the morning, so as to connect with the Christchurch coach at about nine a.m. in Kumara'? Despatch is what is valued in these times. Nobody wanting to go overland cares to stop a night at Kumara; and if they do like it they can leave here by the afternoon tram the day before, as at present. I trust you will be able to get some further alteration made."

He had only to add that there would be no difficulty in the matter, as it would only require a small additional subsidy to the Tramway Company to induce them to start at six o'clock in the morning instead of eight o'clock, twice a week.

Sir J. VOGEL was quite aware that the times of departure of the mails now were exceedingly inconvenient; but it was the fault of the Tramway Company, who had a monopoly of the traffic, and who had refused, except at exorbitant rates, to enter into any arrangement to run the mails at times suitable for the service. He managed to arrange so far as to get them to consent to give facilities for the carriage of the English mail by San Francisco, and when the contract fell in at the end of the present year he would endeavour again to make arrangements in the direction in which the honourable gentleman suggested. If the honourable gentleman would use his influence in assisting the Government to come to a satisfactory arrangement, he should be very glad.

WAIMAKARIRI BRIDGE.

Mr. PEARSON asked the Minister for Public Works, When and how he intends allocating the contributions from the different local bodies for the maintenance of the Waimakariri traffic-bridge?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON replied that he had addressed a circular to the local bodies interested in the matter, stating how it had been represented to him that the cost of the repairs to this bridge should be allocated. He had not received any reply from several of these bodies, and until he got replies he did not propose to take any action in the matter. The difficulty was mainly brought about by the fact that on one side of the river the Counties Act was in force, and on the other side it was not.

Mr. PEARSON was understood to say that the allocation proposed by the honourable gentleman did not give satisfaction, and was thought unfair. It was considered that the cost should be allocated half to the local bodies on one side of the river and half to those on the other side.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON wished it to be distinctly understood that the allocation was not

his proposal, but that it had been suggested to him by some of the County Councils.

COST OF RETURNS.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON said he found that a return of the cost of engineering and supervision in connection with the public works expenditure for the past year had been placed on the table of the House in reply to his motion of the 16th of May, and the cost of it was stated at five guineas, although it only covered one sheet of paper. He thought the return might have been made without difficulty from simple inspection of the books of the department; and he wished to know whether the five guineas was paid to some one outside the department for the preparation of the return, or whether it represented the time the officers of the department were engaged in making the return.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said the preparation of this return involved dealing with an immense mass of figures in order to take out the items the honourable member thought it necessary should be shown. He could show the honourable member the details of the returns, and could assure him that its preparation had taken a very considerable time. The return represented a large amount of extra work to the department; and he might add, in connection with this, that one honourable gentleman in connection with one of these Committees had during the session cost the country over £100 for the preparation of returns.

JOINT LIBRARY COMMITTEE.

On the motion of Mr. GUINNESS, it was agreed, That the name of Mr. Fisher be added to the Recess Joint Library Committee.

PROVINCIAL DISTRICT AUDITORS' REPORTS.

On the motion of Mr. BROWN, it was agreed, That all reports by Provincial District Auditors for the current year be laid before this House.

DISTRICT RAILWAYS PURCHASING BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Before the debate is resumed on the recommittal of this Bill I wish to state the exact position of the matter, because I feel that last night I did not make myself understood. The position is this: The Government were practically instructed by the House to endeavour to buy this railway, and to make the best arrangement they could with the company. When we brought the matter before the House in Committee, as honourable members are aware, the amount was reduced from £35,000 to £27,000. As soon as that was done I communicated the fact to the company. The company did not signify their willingness to accept that, but asked that the House should have an opportunity of reconsidering the matter. Consequently I have given the House an opportunity. I wish also to state that, should the House not see fit to alter the amendment that now stands in the Bill, I shall advise the Government to drop the Bill altogether. I shall certainly object, on behalf of the Government, to have any further negotiations in the matter. It was stated last night—not by me—that it was my intention to move the reinsertion of the words struck out in Committee. That is not my intention. Seeing that the words have been struck out, if the Bill again went into Committee I would move that the original amount that the Government proposed—£33,000—should be put in.

Major ATKINSON.—Do you move that now?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—If the House allows it to go into Committee I shall propose £33,000.

Mr. PEACOCK.—I am glad that the debate was adjourned to give the Minister an opportunity of making this statement, which I thought, myself, ought to have been made on the motion for going into Committee. I think it is all the more necessary that the Minister should make himself clear, as I believe there is a very considerable misapprehension existing amongst members who voted for the reduction of the amount as to the result of that action. When this matter came before the Public Accounts Committee the proposition was to pay £110,000 for this railway. Evidence was given by the Under-Secretary for Public Works that the value to the Government, in view of the fact that they could work it more cheaply than a company, was £102,000—£8,000 under the amount which the Government proposed to give. It was also, however, stated by the General Manager of Railways, Mr. Maxwell, that £110,000 was not an unreasonable sum to pay for the railway, taking into account the fact that under Government management it would pay £2 17s. per cent., which is equal to the amount paid by the working railways according to the last Public Works Statement. A minority on the Committee took up this position: Presuming this sum of £8,000 at issue was to be given over and above Mr. O'Connor's estimate, it would be equivalent to giving half the arrears of rates to the ratepayers. Assuming that £110,000 was to be paid, we ought to take into account the fact that the debentures in the possession of the Government Insurance Association were bearing such a high rate of interest that, if the Government had to redeem those debentures, it would have to pay a very considerable sum of money, varying according to the rate at which interest on money was calculated. That is, if the rate of money was calculated at 4 per cent., the amount required to redeem those debentures would be something like £18,000. If the rate was calculated at 5 per cent., it would be £8,000. Presuming we take an intermediate amount, 4½ per cent., I understand the premium likely to be given to the Insurance Association to get those debentures into the hands of the Government would be something like £13,000. Now, bearing in mind that the ratepayers under the Bill now before the House

would have to pay half of any deficiency of the profits to meet the interest, half of any premium paid to the Association would naturally fall to be paid by the ratepayers. It is true they would not necessarily require to pay that in a lump sum, but it would come to the same thing, because, the Government having obtained possession of these debentures, the ratepayers would be debited with their share of the rate of interest that is at present being paid on them; so that in the long-run, if the Government did get the debentures out of the increased interest got from the ratepayers, it would recoup itself with half the amount paid. That is the position taken up by the minority in the Committee, and it was that view I gave utterance to on the second reading of the Bill. I then said that if from the amount of £110,000 we deducted half the amount of premium on the debentures—£6,500—that would reduce the amount to be given for the line to £103,500. But the misapprehension which I desire to call the attention of the House to is this: I believe that many honourable members who voted for the reduction of the cash to be paid to £27,000—equivalent to £102,000 as the price of the railway—were willing, if this sum were accepted by the company, to enable the company to collect the whole of the rates now owing, instead of the half only as proposed by the Bill—that is, to collect £15,600. Now, I wish to call the attention of those who voted for the reduction to £102,000 on this understanding to this: that, while the company's accepting that sum would enable it to collect the whole of the overdue rates, the half of the premium on the debentures held by the Insurance Association would still have to be borne by the Government, which would increase the £102,000 to £108,500 as the price to be given for the line. Now, the difference between that and my own proposition is this: The effect of the Bill as it stands at this moment would be what I have stated: taking from the agreed amount of £110,000 the £6,500, being half the premium on the debentures, which will be borne by the Government, that would leave £103,500 to be given to the company. But if to the £102,000—the amount it is now reduced to—be added £7,800, the other half of the rates proposed to be given to the company, we get £109,800—within a few hundreds of the price the railway company are willing to accept. But the ratepayers would have no relief. I hope the Minister will make a clear statement in that respect as to what he understood would be the effect of the reduction to £27,000 which was carried the other night. Before going into Committee, the whole matter, viewed in the light of what I have said, ought to be clearly understood by the House.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Under the present law all liability to rate ceases in ten years; but the draft agreement extends the liability for a reduced maximum rate to twenty years, so that if the company were given the power to collect all the overdue rates instead of only half, and the rest of the draft agreement were carried out, the people would still be subject to this reduced liability for the double period. In that case there would be no advantage to the ratepayers at all.

Mr. PEACOCK.—The point is this: The draft agreement provides that half the rates now due shall be foregone to the ratepayers, while many who voted for the reduction to £102,000 did so with the intention that the company should have the power to collect all the overdue rates. That makes a very considerable difference in the meaning of the resolution passed the other night, and it ought to be fully understood. I am quite willing to admit that there would be no advantage to the ratepayers under that arrangement. I am not stating my own view—I am merely stating that a number of members took that position; and it is desirable that we should all know clearly what we are about. I believe that, as far as the Minister for Public Works is concerned, no one can read the correspondence without feeling that the honourable gentleman has shown a sincere desire to protect the interests of the colony in what has taken place.

Mr. COWAN.—It is perfectly apparent from the debate which has taken place on the proposal to recommit the Bill that very great misconception exists in this House with regard to these powers proposed to be given to the company to collect the whole of the rates. This is a point I would impress on the House. In the District Railways Purchasing Act of last year the remission of half the rates due is made a condition of the purchasing of any railway, and therefore if this company were given power to collect the full rates it would be in direct contravention of the Act of last session. This Bill, as honourable members know, has embodied in it the provisions of the Act of last year; and, if it is made contrary to the provisions of the Act of last year, the ratepayers will be called upon to pay the whole of this amount of between £15,000 and £17,000 of rates owing. I spoke pretty fully on the matter on the second reading of the Bill, and will not go into it now further than to say this, and to try to impress on the House this fact: that, as the Bill has for its object the giving effect to an agreement come to between the company and the Government for the purchase of the line, if the provisions of that agreement are substantially altered the result will naturally be, in ordinary circumstances, that the agreement will fall through—that is, that to any modification of the agreement the House may make by this Bill the company will require to be a party—the consent of the company will be required to the sale of the line under modified terms. I therefore submit that the reduction of £8,000 which has been made in Committee is far in excess of what we can expect the company to accept in lieu of the agreement already come to. Unless this reduction of £8,000 be lessened, and unless some consideration is made in regard to overdue rates, I think it is hopeless to expect that business will ensue. I, as representing the district in which the railway is, ask that the same relief should be given to those ratepayers as

has been given to the ratepayers in all other districts in which district railways have been purchased by the Government. That is the contention I make on behalf of those settlers. As I have said before, it is the misfortune of those people that they have among them this large land company; but, so far as I can see, this large company and the 350 other ratepayers cannot be dissevered, because relief must either be given to them as a whole or not be given at all. Now, there is another point that is perfectly clear, and has not been controverted in this debate, and that is, that the possession of this railway is of consequence to the Government; and I trust the House will agree to the recommittal of this Bill, with a view of increasing the money-consideration to an amount which would be something like the amount agreed on between the company and the Government. Then, again, the cost of redeeming the debentures held by the Insurance Association, which has been referred to so frequently, is misunderstood. I cannot believe that honourable members exactly understand the position of that case, because the redemption of these bonds is not contemplated. The Insurance Association has intimated that it will not take payment, and therefore the cost of redeeming the bonds should not be taken into consideration. This Bill provides that the difference between the calculation of interest at 4 per cent. and of the interest these bonds carry shall be borne equally by the Government and the ratepayers. I therefore submit that that view of the case is really one which should not be given very much attention to, in my humble opinion. I wish to impress on the House that the ratepayers' position will not be improved by this Bill, and therein they will differ from those who have been affected by the operation of the Act of last year. In fact, the position of the Waimea people as ratepayers will be very materially prejudiced, in so far that, under the existing law, their liability to rate ceases absolutely in ten years, and by this Bill the liability to rate is extended to twenty years; and, whereas the liability under the existing law is a maximum of 5 per cent., the extended liability is for a maximum of 2 per cent. *plus* the difference between 4 per cent. and 6 and 6¼ per cent., which is the rate of interest paid on the debentures. The actual result is that the new position will be more adverse to the ratepayers. But these ratepayers are now responsible for an obligation of between £15,000 and £17,000, which they have incurred; and it is in order to gain the immediate advantage of having that liability reduced by one-half that they are willing to accept the extended rating liability. This Bill does not provide better terms to the ratepayers than they have now, but it relieves them of this enormous immediate burden which is pressing upon them —that is, the liability to pay the railway company this large sum of rates overdue. Then, with regard to the value of this railway as an investment for the Government, it is perfectly evident that it is a good purchase at £110,000; but, rather than lose the Bill, I would support a modification of that sum. Then, there is another point that I would impress upon the House—that the Government, under the present law, is responsible for two-sevenths of 7 per cent. per annum, while the ratepayers are responsible for five-sevenths. That amount reduces the valuation of the railway, and, under the operation of the 30-per-cent. clause of last year, that amount is guaranteed as interest by the Government, and reaches within £2 of £1,000 a year — £998. That is the responsibility which the Government have to this railway company, and which responsibility will last for ten years longer. There is £1,000 which the Government will be relieved of; and, in addition to that, there is the 2 per cent. which has been shown as an excess of revenue over the expenses of the railway company. And there is 1 per cent. which Mr. Maxwell showed would be profit made by the Government upon the working of their own railways by obtaining this line; so that there is nearly 4 per cent. clear profit on the purchase. Then, there is this fact, which I would also impress upon the House: that the liability of the Government will not be increased beyond what it is now. The Government will then be in possession of a railway which it is of the utmost consequence to them to possess, not only for the service of the railways, but also for the service of the public, and the ratepayers will be relieved of the immediate payment which is so heavily pressing upon them, and the Government will also make a profit out of the transaction. I therefore hope that this Bill will be recommitted, and that the Minister for Public Works will agree to accept a moderate increase on the amount which now stands in the Bill. I hope that this modified sum will be agreed to by the House, and that the company will be prepared to accept it.

Mr. CONOLLY.—I assume that this House will not divide on the motion for going into Committee, because I admit that it is absolutely necessary that this clause 4 should be recommitted, along with other clauses, with a view of introducing some proposal in respect to the issue of debentures, which would be a material improvement upon the Bill as it now stands; but I say, for myself and for those who are of the same opinion as myself, that I wish to have it distinctly understood that, though we should not vote against going into Committee, we are not going, when in Committee, to consent to this alteration in the amount of money to be paid to the railway company. It appears as if the Government have had great difficulty in finding out what is the exact sum for which they can get sufficient support in the House. We were told last night as distinctly as possible, or, at any rate, the impression was conveyed to us, that, in taking this clause into Committee, it was the intention of the Minister for Public Works to reinstate the sum of £35,000.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—No.

Mr. CONOLLY. — We were led to understand that. I confess I cannot state from memory that the Minister explicitly said so;

if he did not mention it, he gave us the idea ; it was proposed to recommit the Bill for purpose of putting back the sum that was ck out. Now it appears that he proposes ısert the sum of £33,000. They have re- ed the sum which they propose to put in in ıss of the amount voted by the Committee 32,000. Possibly that concession may have bled the Government to come down with e confidence than they had last night of ing the Bill into Committee, for it was e clear that the Government would have a defeated last night, although they had ied that they had a majority. Now, I ld point out that the House has very great ion to complain. I do not say that the osition have particular reason to complain, ause all these blunders that the Govern- ıt are making are to the benefit of the osition; but the House as a House has ion to complain that it has been kept in the k with regard to the proposals of the Go- ament on this head. On the 6th of this nth, when this Bill was in Committee, the ount that it was proposed to pay to this ıpany in cash was reduced to £27,000, king the amount to be given for the railway ctly that which, according to the officers of Government, was the value of the line to Government. Then a suggestion was made the honourable member for Taranaki as to etter way of issuing debentures; and pro- s was reported. On the 9th of this month Supplementary Order Paper was issued, wing that the Government proposed to ommit the Bill for the consideration of uses 4, 5, 6, and 7, for the purpose of king necessary alterations in that direc- ı. In that Order Paper there was no men- ı of any attempt to restore the sum to the ount from which it had been altered; and recommittal of clause 8 was never men- ıed. If that had been the only thing, there ıld not have been so much cause for com- int, for Supplementary Order Papers are ıetimes hastily drawn out and issued. But, some reason or other, this Order Paper been daily issued in just the same shape. an to-day, after the debate of last night, it been again issued in the same form. There ıot shown in that Order Paper any inten- n to recommit the Bill for the purpose of reasing the amount which was previously ed by the House, nor is there any intention ıressed of recommitting clause 8. I do not ow why that is so. The Minister told us t night that one-half of the House were ly aware of his intention. If half were are of it I can only say that it was the half ıt usually vote with the Government. It is e that on this side of the House we have d rumours, ever since this debate took place veek ago, of the intention of the Government endeavour to reinstate the sum which had n struck out; but until this moment—for the nister says that he did not even announce intention last night—the exact intentions the Government have never been made own to us. And now we are told that the sum at which they have arrived as being desirable to put in, and which they are going to attempt to put in, and which, I suppose, they will succeed in putting in, is £33,000, or £6,000 more than the value of the railway to the Government according to the valuation of their own officers. If they do succeed in doing this, I believe that it will be more damaging to the Government than any number of the defeats which they have sustained. We saw them last session suffering defeat after defeat, and still surviving; but I say that it would be far better for them to have put up with the defeat of last week than to carry this larger sum, for they will suffer in the eyes of the country when it is seen that, for the benefit of a private company, they are proposing to this House an expenditure which must mean a loss of £6,000 to the country. To those who are accustomed to deal with millions £6,000 may be a small sum; but, when those in charge of the affairs of the country for the time being, to whom the interests of the country are intrusted, prove false to their trust even in small things, their conduct is not likely to be forgotten by the country. I was very much struck when listening to the observations of the honourable member for Waitaki. He has been in the House for four or five sessions, and has always been a good party-man. I respect good party-men. I have always been a party-man myself. Sometimes, in following your party, you must walk through a little more mud than you would like to do. The honourable member, in following the Government last session, was dragged through a lot of humiliation, which was not very much to his taste; but when a matter like this comes on he says, "I must draw the line somewhere. You may take me through the mud over my boots, but I will not be dragged into it up to my neck." I believe that the division which is to be taken on this question in Committee when we get there will be looked to by the public with great interest, and the country will look very carefully at the names of those who support the Government in this breach of trust in respect to the finances placed under their care. The honourable member for Hokonui has just tried to lead the House away, as he did on the debate on the second reading of the Bill, by referring to an agreement made by the Government. He carefully avoided, as he did on the former occasion, to state that in this Bill the Government only speak of that as a draft agreement. It was wrong of the honourable gentleman to try to make it appear that we are attempting to break through an agreement that had been made. He also said that this purchase was of consequence to the Government. I suppose that means, of consequence to the colony. I assume the line is worth buying. Plenty of evidence has been taken to that effect. But that evidence has also told us at what price it is worth buying. Here we are asked to give exactly £6,000 more than it is estimated to be worth. How has this been brought about, and why? Emissaries from this company have been diligently working and lobbying in this

matter; and, with the recollection of other transactions in district railways, how much suspicion must be cast—in many cases undeservedly—on honourable members who have made themselves very active in canvassing in this direction! What took place last year in regard to district railways? One honourable member made himself extremely conspicuous by canvassing and lobbying in order to get a certain railway which had been struck out reinserted in the Bill. And what happened afterwards? That honourable member, through that railway being reinserted in the Bill, and through the inclusion of other railways in that Bill, managed to receive, by a business transaction connected with it, £1,000. Will not the outside public be asking, "Why are honourable members so active in getting £6,000 or £8,000 extra paid for the Waimea Plains Railway?" Will they not be suspecting that something of the same kind as the matter I have referred to may turn up, and that there may be some one who has soiled his hands in connection with this transaction? This House should keep itself clear from such imputations, and, when this House has had before it evidence of the proper price which this railway is worth, it ought not to give one shilling more; and all the exertions of the agents of the company, however right they may be in the interests of the company, to attempt to get more than the value of the line, ought not to have the slightest effect on members of this House. I hope the House will rise to the occasion, and that the majority by which we rejected the extortionate proposals of the Government will be largely increased when the same question comes before us again.

Mr. BRUCE.—I have no intention of receding from the attitude which I took up on a previous occasion. I am quite willing to give for this railway the amount which a thoroughly reliable officer, and one who holds a high position in the Service, estimated as its value to the colony. Our position and attitude in this matter appear to me to be perfectly plain. We are here on behalf of the colony to make a fair bargain, and I think it should be only very exceptional circumstances indeed that could induce us to give more for this line than it is worth. That value has, I think, been very conclusively shown to be £102,000 or £103,000 at the most, and to that extent I am willing to go, and no further. The whole matter appears to me to lie in a nutshell. It is not a question of amount, but an important question of principle, which is involved. We are here the custodians of the public purse, and have no right to allow any portion of the public money to be wasted. Having said so much, I cannot refrain from taking exception to some of the remarks which have dropped from some of the opponents of the measure. It has been alleged that there has been persistent lobbying and intrigue regarding this Bill. Who are the "lobbyers," and who have been thus "lobbied"? I suppose that as to every measure of importance that goes through this House there is a certain amount of lobbying, which takes the direction rather, in my opinion, of legitimate argument. But in reference to this measure I may say I have never been "lobbied," nor have I seen any one approached on the question. I would ask the House this: What will the readers of *Hansard* think about it when they read the report of this debate? I think they will be of opinion that this House is a nest of corruption, and that we live in an atmosphere of intrigue—an assumption which is absolutely false. I think, considering the great temptation that is put before honourable members by the public works policy, that this House is wonderfully pure: at least, such is my opinion, and I am not afraid to give expression to it. In reference to these "emissaries," I should like to tell this to the country through *Hansard*—and I think the country is not aware of it, though the House is: that all sending of emissaries to Wellington to bring pressure to bear in regard to any local Bill or measure tends, I think, to defeat the object in view. But my reason for rising on this occasion is to protest against the assertions as to intrigue and lobbying, because that has not come under my notice, and I think such assertions will have a misleading effect on the country.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—The honourable member for Hokonui, speaking just now, stated something as to this matter which I was not aware of before. He said this Bill would give no relief to the ratepayers. I thought that the Bill, if it passed, was to have relieved the ratepayers altogether.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The shareholders.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—It only relieves the shareholders. Well, I feel more inclined than ever to oppose the Bill. The honourable member for Hokonui seemed to think that there was a great point in the fact that the line was worth buying. Did he think that the Government which he supports would come down and say that this line was not worth buying? We presume that the line is worth buying. The only question is, What is the price that we should give for it? We know that the shareholders have got into certain difficulties; and the question for the colony is, Are we to take them out, and, if so, at what price? I believe that the Rotorua Railway Company's shareholders paid up 10s. a share, and they only got back 7s. 6d. When one gets into a bad speculation he is glad to get out of it without much loss. These people, though they have burnt their fingers, ought to be glad to get out of their speculation with a loss. I hold in my hands printed papers in connection with this matter, and from them it can be seen that what the shareholders are fighting for is to get back the whole of their money, and the interest too. Mr. Leary, writing from Dunedin on the 23rd December, 1885, says,—

"As the directors contemplate making financial arrangements shortly, which may preclude a sale of the line, they cannot keep the above offer open beyond a month from this date."

They gave the Government only a month to consider the offer. They were in a very independent position then. Mr. Cuthbert Cowan

telegraphs as follows on the 10th February, 1886:—

"Offer of Waimea may lapse on the 15th instant. Does Government wish further extension? Will be glad to try and arrange matter."

He seemed to be anxious about the time expiring. One would almost think that the company were going to withdraw from sale. Then Mr. E. Richardson, Minister for Public Works, telegraphs,—

"The report I advised you I was getting as to the real value of the Waimea line to the Government of course cannot be considered by Cabinet till we meet at end of this or early next month. Probably the company, if they really wish to sell, will not withdraw."

The Minister for Public Works thoroughly understood the position. He was not a bit frightened about their backing out of their bargain. In another letter from Mr. Leary to the Minister for Public Works he says,—

"I understand that Mr. Cowan, M.H.R., has communicated to you the terms upon which the company is prepared to sell the Waimea Plains Railway to the Government. The sum of £108,000 was mentioned to Mr. Cowan as the price which it was estimated would admit of the return of the shareholders' capital. In preparing the statement showing what would be the company's position if the line were sold at the price mentioned, the interest payable by the company for the year ending the 31st March, 1886, was, by an oversight, omitted."

So that the company desire not only to get the return of their capital, but the whole of their interest. In a letter dated the 13th March, Mr. Short, for the Under-Secretary for Public Works, says,—

"I am directed by the Minister for Public Works to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th ultimo, to the effect that the offer which your company recently made, through Mr. Cowan, M.H.R., to sell the Waimea Plains Railway to the Government, will, if accepted, not permit of the return to the shareholders of the company of the whole of the capital which they have invested in the railway."

Then, Mr. Leary says,—

"I may explain that, in preparing the statement giving an estimate of the amount required to be paid for the railway to admit of the return of the paid-up capital, I had assumed that from the 1st August last the working expenses would equal the traffic."

They assumed that the working expenses would equal the traffic on this wonderful line that we were going to purchase; and then Mr. Leary says,—

"I am pleased, however, to find there will probably be a profit of about £700 for that period, making about £2,300 for the year."

Then, there is an approximate return of the working expenses and traffic from the 28th February to the 31st March, 1886, and I gather from that that there was a profit over and above working expenses of £106 4s. 9d. for one month. I do not see in this account any charge for interest at all. If interest were charged there would be no profit—according to this account the thing would be a dead loss. The working expenses almost swamp the whole of the receipts. They may have expected to get the interest out of rates; but, if we are not to give relief to the ratepayers, what is the use of assisting the company? In a letter dated the 11th March, 1886, Mr. Thomas Green says,—

"The existence of the railway-rate has been extremely detrimental to the settlement of the district. Even before the rate was actually levied the fear of it kept many good farmers from taking up the land; and, unless the rate is abolished or something very near it, I fear that settlement may be looked upon as at an end in the district, and, as I have said, even those now upon the land will have to abandon their holdings."

So that, if we buy the railway, and do not give relief to the ratepayers, we have to face the difficulty acknowledged by the shareholders themselves—namely, that the plains will be abandoned. If the settlers are all going to give up their holdings, how on earth can the line pay? It will pay less and less; and the fact is, we are going to buy "a white elephant." If we do not give any relief to the ratepayers, it is quite certain that the whole of the people will leave the district, and then we shall have no one to carry on the railway. There are many other quotations in these papers which go to show that if relief is not given to the ratepayers the district will become depopulated. One person says,—

"I think they will all go. They will throw up their farms or become bankrupt."

Then there is a letter from Mr. Blow, who says,—

"In reply, I am to inform you that the matter of arranging for the purchase of this railway has been under the consideration of the Government for some time past, and that the Government have all along been prepared to purchase the line, but as yet they have been quite unable to make any satisfactory arrangement with the company as to the price to be paid for it.

"The Government, however, intend, shortly to make another offer to the company, which it is hoped will meet with acceptance; but this offer, of course, will have to be subject to the approval of Parliament."

That letter is written "for Under-Secretary for Public Works," and is the first intimation we have that the Government are going to make any offer to the company. While this arrangement was being made, Mr. Cuthbert Cowan telegraphed to the Minister for Public Works,—

"I hear your offer to purchase Waimea Railway has been sent back for consideration of certain points. Earnestly urge you try to meet demands of company as far as reasonable."

So that he was putting pressure on the Government, earnestly requesting them to make arrangements. The Minister for Public Works telegraphs, in reply,—

"We are prepared to deal fairly with the company, and I have, by wire, to-day gone as

far as I can to meet their views. If they now refuse they must take the consequences."

That was the position which the Minister for Public Works took up when he made this offer of £33,000. He told them then that they must take the consequences if they refused the offer. Then we have three more telegrams from Mr. Cuthbert Cowan, putting pressure on different Ministers, all of the telegrams trying to induce them to give a high price for the railway. Now, one of these telegrams is very important. It is dated the 4th May, from Dunedin, and it says,—

"Have met directors Waimea, who will not accept your offer. Am authorized by them to say if you offer £37,000 they will close as from 31st March last, accepting one-half of four years' rates, and other conditions imposed by you."

There they are bringing up this £37,000; and they kept at that amount until a certain time, when they saw that the Minister for Public Works would not give way, and then they proposed—as any ordinary business people would do who found they could not carry all they wanted—that they should split the difference and make the sum £35,000. Then a Mr. F. Fergus telegraphs to the Premier. I am not quite certain to whom the reply to that telegram was sent, but it appears to have been to Mr. T. Fergus, M.H.R. I should like to know whether they are the same.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Yes.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—Very well. Then the Minister for Public Works replies to "T. Fergus, Esq., M.H.R.,"—

"Replying to your telegram *re* Waimea Railway of the 4th, I have only to state that the price offered by me on behalf of the Government is the utmost that the Government, after taking the various interests into consideration, can ask Parliament to give."

So that it appears that £33,000 was "the utmost" that the Minister for Public Works was prepared to ask Parliament to give. Then a deputation came to Wellington, among whom was one of the gentlemen who are here now, and they waited on the Minister for Public Works and persuaded him to put in the £35,000. That is about the history of the affair, as far as it went, up to that time; and now we have the same gentleman coming up here again; and, although I may say that I have not been "lobbied" in any way—as the honourable member for Rangitikei says he has not been—still, there are certain members of the House whom, it is admitted, it is of no use to "lobby," because it is known that they will not alter their opinion. But we know that there are rumours going about that an arrangement has been come to, and, as far as we can see, the proposal which is now made to the House is to carry out that arrangement. Just to show what has been going on, I may say that one honourable member who was very much opposed to the purchase of this railway went away a day or two ago. Before he went away he said that if there was anything which would make him stay till the end of the session it was that he might be able to kill this Bill, so as to prevent any more being given for the railway than the House was willing to give. He absolutely wrote out a pair against the Bill, and left it with another honourable member; but he was interviewed on board the steamer, and he wrote back asking that the pair should be torn up. There is a case in which the Government gained a clear vote in the matter. I do not say it was the Government who persuaded the honourable gentleman to change his mind, but it certainly was some one who was interested in the matter. That shows that in this particular case there has been lobbying going on, which, at all events, has had the effect of influencing the vote of one honourable member. I object altogether to this system — that, after we have mustered our forces, fought the battle, and carried the day, the Government should look through the Order Paper, count noses, and then say to themselves, "All we have got to do is to turn so-and-so, and then we can get the decision reversed." It is impossible to carry on legislation if things of that sort are to be done. We had just the same sort of thing carried on with regard to another Bill. A Bill was absolutely thrown out, and yet the matter was brought up again, and it was then carried. The Government found out in the meantime that if they could get a second division taken they would be able to carry what they wanted. They know that there are always some honourable members who do not take a particular interest in the matter, and who stay away, and if they can only be persuaded to vote on the second occasion it is most likely the Government will gain the day. We know very well, too, that there are always members who, although they vote in one lobby, have their hearts in the other lobby, and then the Government see their chance to get hold of those members, and manage to make the House alter the decision it has just arrived at. If we are to continue having this system of second divisions the consequence will be that we shall be passing legislation which is a mere matter of arrangement. We have a Government of expediency on those benches, and our legislation is consequently nothing but expediency. All they have to do is to look around and say, "Oh, we can secure So-and-so;" and so the matter is arranged. There are always those who do not come in to a division on the first occasion—who are lukewarm on the subject; but if they are persuaded a little they will come in the second time, and so the matter is arranged. It is an unfair way of legislating to say to a man, "If you will vote for this and help us to carry it through, we will see if we cannot help you in another way." I have a strong objection to these divisions being taken twice. The other night the division was taken twice. Several honourable gentlemen were away in the first division, and the matter was settled in a certain way; and if we had stuck to that division the Government would have been defeated. But after that they managed to collect supporters, and another division was taken

the consequence was that the decision arrived at was reversed. These second sions, I say, are a source of great danger to legislation. There is another matter which m particularly sorry to see in connection h this railway. If the Government do not it to buy the railway, why do they come m again with this proposal to recommit the l? That is a matter I cannot possibly unstand. There must be some urgent desire the part of the Government to deal with matter. It may be that it is caused by ssure on the part of honourable members or pressure outside. But, after the disclosures have had this session, I think it is very wise on their part to try to force us into matter. I know very well that if I had money invested in this Waimea Plains ilway I should be very glad to take £27,000; any man knows, when he is making a loss, is better to sacrifice a little than lose the ole: and I am sure the company is in that dition. If we agree to this demand we shall ve companies making railways all over the ony; and then, if they turn out bad specuions, we shall be asked to make their loss d to them at the expense of the colony. I sorry to say that there was a great loss in case of the district railway that was made the North, and the people connected with at railway were very glad to get out of it at oss: and it was a genuine railway. But this lway is made through the land of this Agriltural Company, and we know very well that embers of the Government have been inested in that company. The Premier himf has admitted that one or two Ministers re interested in it, and I think the position ey are in is very peculiar when they come d ask the House to give this additional oney for the railway. I think the House d all it could be expected to do when it reed to give £27,000 for the railway. We ow we are not flush of cash. I admit that e Government have been lavish in their exnditure, and have not attempted to draw in eir horns in any way; but I say this is not a me when we can afford to throw away several ousands of pounds. I certainly hope the ouse will affirm its original resolution, and ill not be led away by a second division. his Parliament has originated a sort of hisrical way of doing things by Order Papers, d second and third editions of Bills; and now e are going to introduce another Liberal rinciple, of taking second divisions on every bject. The Government, this session, wherer defeated on one point, have, by means of bbying, managed to get the decision of the ouse set aside. This is not the only case. hey have done it several times. They have ied to see whether they could not get the uestion put again, and if they found that it ould not work they did not try it, but when hey felt sure of success they brought the atter up again. They have counted noses in his case, and, now that they feel strong enough, t the fag-end of the session, when many onourable members have gone away, and others are anxious to get home, they come down and want to alter the whole principle of this Bill and give the company all the money they ask for, simply because they think they have a majority to carry their way on a new division by reversing a decision which was taken honestly and at a time when members could devote their whole attention to the matter, and were not anxious to get home. I say if they succeed in their attempt it will not reflect credit on them or on those who vote with them.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I should like to call the attention of the House to one or two matters. The honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill states that the Government was authorized to buy the railway, and he seemed to assume that, having given the Government power to purchase the railway, the House was wrong in not agreeing to the terms that the Government had offered.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—No.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—Well, I am glad to hear the honourable gentleman say "No;" but that was the impression I had, and it was the impression of various honourable members who heard the honourable gentleman on that occasion. The power to buy from the company was accompanied by this proviso: that, whatever the terms of the engagement might be, they must be ratified by this House before being binding in any sense, either morally or in law. Therefore we are just as free to discuss the matter as if the Government had made no preliminary arrangements whatever. I am sure the honourable gentleman will agree with that. But, then, the honourable gentleman says we altered the cash consideration from £35,000 to £27,000, and that there is a certain amount of hardship in that. He says that the Government had offered the company £33,000. But had the honourable gentleman brought the Bill down at first with the figures £33,000 in it I could understand that he might wish to stand upon those figures. But what did he do? When he brought the Bill down in the course of the debate upon it he stated distinctly that, although the amount in the Bill was £35,000 cash, he wished for the direction of the House as to the amount that was to be paid to the company. Well, the House gave a direction. The House gave a direction that £27,000 was a sum sufficient for the requirements of the case; and the honourable gentleman now comes down and tells us that not the £27,000 which the House considered sufficient, but the £33,000 which was offered was the right thing. I think that part of the honourable gentleman's difficulties has arisen from the fact that he, or else his colleagues, did not know their own minds. How did we arrive at £27,000? It was by a very simple process. We had before us the report of the Committee, which gave us the various estimates by officers in the honourable gentleman's own department—that is, by those best qualified to judge of the value of the railway. Now, I would remind the House once more of what those values were; because this

is essentially a question of figures—there is nothing of sentiment about it; it is simply a question of what the thing is worth, and what we should pay for it. First, of all we have to consider whether, if we were starting *de novo*, it would be necessary to make the railway. About that point there must necessarily be some difference of opinion, and there is a very considerable difference of opinion. But, however, let us take it for granted for a moment that, if it were left to the unbiassed opinion of the House, we should determine to make it. Then, surely the first question to be considered would be, What should it cost, what is the constructive value of this work? Now, the very highest figure set down for that is £95,000. The figures are given at from £90,000 to £95,000. This is not the estimate of an ignorant person, but of a Government expert, one thoroughly acquainted with railways. Are we, then, to be told that the House was illiberal or that there was anything wrong in offering £102,000 where £90,000 was the value? I would take the average value, the difference between the two, neither the highest nor the lowest, and say that £92,000 would be the construction value of the railway. Are we illiberal when we tell the Government they may go to the extent of £102,000—that is, £10,000 over the construction value? And from this construction value, remember, there should be deducted the very large item of £18,000 to which I will refer afterwards, which would really make the commercial value to us, taking the £18,000 from the £92,000, £74,000, as the just and natural value to offer to the company for the property. That is to say, instead of the £102,000 we are prepared to offer, we ought really to offer only £74,000. Then we come to the commercial value. Now, I say the commercial value is set down upon a wrong basis. When the Engineer says the construction value is £92,000, I take his word for that; but I cannot take his word for the commercial value of the undertaking: as to this, any commercial man in the House is quite as good a judge as, probably a better judge than, the experts in the Public Works Office. How would any commercial man arrive at the commercial value of the undertaking? Would he not consider what it would produce by way of permanent income upon the amount expended for the cost? There is no other mode of arriving at the commercial value. You may say a thing is worth £100,000; but, if it only brings in £2,000 a year when the commercial value of money is 4 per cent., then I say that £100,000 cannot be the commercial value, but only the half of £100,000. Now, in taking the commercial value you have to consider not only the present income, but the probable future income, looking also to the past income. What has been the income of this railway? Well, the figures are given, and they are very instructive. The nominal amount of profit for the year ending on the 31st March, 1883, was £964 14s. 5d.; but there must, evidently, have been a great falling-off in the trade of the district, which may account, to a certain extent, for the falling-off in the profits of the railway, or the first year's income and expenditure were wrongly balanced. There was some mistake about it, because in the next year the income had fallen from £964 to £12 4s. 6d. Now, we are told the income for the past year has been £2,000. Supposing it were, which I doubt, I have to call the attention of the House to this: that it was during this year, when they had the nominal income of £2,000, that they were negotiating with the Government for the sale of the line. That is a very important point to take into account when you are considering the commercial value. Depend upon it everything was taken out of maintenance and out of the cost of working that could possibly be taken out, and everything was put into the income that could possibly be put into it; because the gentlemen in connection with the railway are very astute, and they would be certain to put the best possible face upon the undertaking at a time when they were negotiating for the sale of the property, the value being based upon the net annual returns. Therefore from the £2,000 there ought to be a very large deduction in order to arrive at the true profits. But, for the moment, I will take it to be that the net amount of profit was really £2,000. What, then, would be the basis for the commercial valuation, so far as the present income is concerned? It would not be £2,000, or £12, or £964, but all those amounts added together and divided by 3. That would give an income of £1,000 a year in round figures, which, upon the purchase-money of £102,000, would be under 1 per cent. Therefore, with an annual interest of 4 per cent. to pay by the colony, and with an income of only 1 per cent., the commercial value, if it were taken on its present basis, would only be one quarter of £102,000. That would be the commercial value if there were no prospective value. What is that to be? We have no data whatever to show, because the jump of the net revenue from £900 to £12 and from £12 to a nominal £2,000 is so singular in its character that it prevents us from being able to ascertain for the future what the probable income would be. So that, in every sense of the word, in offering £102,000 we were giving most liberally—infinitely more than the railway was worth. It has been spoken of as a thing which we should eagerly accept—the opportunity of buying the railway at the present time. Why should there be this anxiety? If the railway accounts be truthfully stated in such a way as to show a large profit it will be a better plan for all parties to wait. If there is going to be a large profit it will be better for the railway company to wait, for they will then be able to sell on a better basis; and it will be better for us to wait because we shall have more data to go upon in ascertaining exactly what we have to pay for the work. Now I come to this figure of £102,000. How do we arrive at it? Upon what the experts say would be the value to the Government. Here comes in the consideration which has been very much pressed by the advocates of the purchase and by the honorable member for Hokonui. He has reiterated

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that by taking this railway over the general railway system of the colony will be benefited to the extent of £1,000 a year. How does that stand? Supposing it were so, how much of this £1,000 ought to go to the company, and how much ought to go to the colony? According to the honourable gentleman and, apparently, according to the Minister in charge the whole advantage of that money ought to go to the company and not to the colony, because, according to the honourable gentleman's calculations, it requires that £1,000 to pay the interest he talks about the railway producing. If this £1,000 be a merely incidental advantage, as the honourable gentleman himself acknowledges, then, under all circumstances of fairness, one-half of the amount ought to go to the colony and one-half only to the company. It is nonsense to say that this £1,000 should be taken as one of the advantages to be derived from the purchasing of the railway, and that the company should get the whole advantage of that. At the very outside, from their own showing, only one-half should go to the company. Then, I apprehend that, in estimating the value to the Government, the experts have stated that £102,000 would include the £1,000 which the honourable member has referred to. Let us see, taking the basis I have indicated as a fair one, what the undertaking would pay us on a basis of £102,000 purchase-money. I am still leaving aside the question of discount on the bonds. We will say the railway costs £102,000, that we have an average income of under £1,000 from the railway itself, and £500 from a share of the advantage in the general working of the railways. That is under 1½ per cent. per annum. The honourable gentleman, when speaking on this point last week, said the railway was going to produce from 2½ to 2¾ per cent.; but, emboldened by his successful working on the feelings of the Minister in the meantime, he assumes this evening that the profit will be 4 per cent. without a particle of change in the figures before the House. At the very outside it can only be 1½ per cent. I come to see how far even that is proved. I have again to trouble the House with certain figures in relation to the bonds I have just alluded to. Those bonds vary in date from ten to twenty-three years, and the rate of interest upon them varies from 6 to 6¼ per cent. With money at 4 per cent., in order to redeem those bonds we should require to pay £18,000 down. That is the amount we should have to take out of our pockets and hand over to the holder of those bonds in order to redeem them. It has been said that the holders of the bonds would be willing to compromise the matter, and would probably take £13,000. Even that would be a very large amount. But I say that, the bonds being held by a public trust, the trustees cannot, without putting themselves in a very false position indeed, take one penny-piece less than the full value of the bonds. If they do they will be recreant to their trust—they will be cheating the policy-holders of the department in whose interests they are appointed. They are not appointed for their own interests, or to feather the nests of their friends: they are appointed for the purpose of seeing that the policy-holders of the Government Insurance Department have the very utmost interest they can get safely for their money. And I ask the House this: What possible security could they have so good within the colony as colonial bonds? We are responsible for the bonds in every sense of the word; and are we to suppose that the various officers of the Government who form this public trust are so dead to all feeling of honour and honesty as to give away the property of the policy-holders for less than it is worth? We must dismiss that matter from our minds absolutely. It has been suggested that by taking £13,000 and allowing the bonds to be redeemed the public trust could reinvest the amount, probably in some stock at 5 per cent. I grant that. I have no doubt whatever that those gentlemen could invest that money at 10 or 30 per cent.; but just in proportion to the height of the interest would be the badness of the security. It is therefore better for them, in the interests of their clients, to keep the bonds as they are than to have them redeemed in order to put the proceeds into other stock at a higher price. There is therefore to be added to the £102,000 this sum of £18,000; so that interest will have to be paid on £120,000, which will give a return of not over 1¼ per cent. That is the amount the colony would gain by taking over this railway at the present time. Now, how is it that we agreed to take off £8,000, and say £102,000 instead of £110,000, the amount originally intended? It arises in this way: The railway company has found itself unable, or has been unwilling, to collect all the arrears of rates, and it has allowed those arrears to come up to nearly £16,000. What do we do? Acting under the impulse given to feeling in this House by the honourable member for Hokonui, we say, It is a very great pity indeed that those people should have to pay their arrears; let us knock off half their arrears, and let the colony pay it. The question naturally arises, Why should the colony pay those arrears of £8,000? Why stick it down as cash paid to this company? And, more than that, we not only give it to the company without any special consideration from the company, but we positively take no power whatever to collect from the debtors of the company the rates, in order to reimburse ourselves. We buy a debt, and then we take no power whatever to recover payment from the original debtors. Was ever a more profligate proposition made to a legislature? Eight thousand pounds of the people's money, at the very time that in every quarter of the colony we are told the people are unemployed—at the very time we are told we cannot make both ends meet with regard to our revenue! Here is a sum of £8,000, which might be put to a most profitable use in relieving the people from taxation, to be thrown away for nothing whatever, except to please two or three honourable members

from the district in which the railway runs. Well, I say this is a profligate proposal. And here I will just say a word with regard to what is called "lobbying." Honourable gentlemen may say they know nothing about it. The honourable member for Rangitikei says he knows nothing about it. Well, I dare say that is perfectly true so far as he is concerned. There is no man in this House whose honour is greater than that honourable gentleman's: he is above suspicion in every way. But, if he will allow me to say so, he very frequently allows his feelings to overcome his judgment. He would see lobbying if he had eyes to see it. But he has not, and I am glad he has not; I hope he never will have. But that honourable gentleman could see it every day in the lobbies if he liked to look for it—in the streets too—everywhere. And here I enter a protest against the sayings of some of my friends—that these "lobbyers," and these people in the streets who cannot get into the lobby, have a right to make the best bargain they can to advance the interests of the railway company. I say they have a right to do that within the rules of honour and honesty, but that they have no right beyond these rules—none whatever. And I again say that a man who attempts to squeeze an undue advantage out of another, either by flattery or false representations, is doing as dishonest a thing as if he were to put his hands into that other man's pockets and to rob him of the money in those pockets. I have no excuse whatever for those gentlemen, and I think the time has come to enter a protest—and I do so—against the whole system of button-holing and lobbying members to induce them to vote for things which in themselves are nefarious. That is the position I take in regard to that. I entirely disagree with my friends who have a single word of apology for these persons. Now I come back to this £8,000. Whom do we benefit by giving the £8,000 to the company? My honourable friend the member for Hokonui says if we only knew the people whom these rates bear hardly upon we should sympathize with them. But rates always bear hardly upon people. We have very little money left to us in New Zealand to pay rates with, and rates must always be a source of trouble in a district. But, with regard to these ratepayers, they must be divided into classes. There are those who have bought Government land not knowing—though they ought to have known—that there was a liability to rates on the land. Now, I have been told—I do not know with what truth, because I have no official information to show me exactly how the matter stands—that the amount of Crown and school lands alienated or leased, and upon which these rates fall, is something like forty thousand acres. To that extent, and to the extent of the ignorance of the people on these lands, we have a class of ratepayers whose case we may pity and have some sympathy with. These I put on one side and pass. Then there is another large class of ratepayers who owe very small amounts. There are about two hundred who range from £1 to about 3s. 4d. each. Of course it is nonsense to say that they are greatly oppressed by the rate; so we may set that class on one side. The third class are those who voted for the rate. It cannot be supposed that the rate could have been imposed without some people voting for it. Those people who did so did it with their eyes open, and I apprehend that a great many of them were animated by this feeling—that some day or other they would wriggle out of payment of the rates. The fourth class consists of certain large proprietors, including the proprietor. There are several of them. I venture to say that every one either voted for the rate or took up land after the rate had been commenced, and knowing everything about it. These people form the fourth class. I say the two last classes deserve no sympathy from us. The second class—those who owe from £1 to 3s. 4d. each—require none of our sympathy or assistance. So the only people who need any consideration are the first class—those who took up Crown or school land in ignorance of the fact that there was any liability on it. They are the only people we have to consider; and I venture to say, if we consider them only, we should have very little to do. If we are going to pay rates, let us give power to this company to levy the whole of the rates due to it—that is, as much as it can extract from the people; and upon our own lands, in our own way, let us be our own ratepayers: and that would take a very small sum. No one in the House would join more cordially than I in assisting them to a fair and limited extent. As to the big proprietors, I ask the House to note this: Those who have bought land from the Agricultural Company since the 1st May, 1884, have no grievance as to rates. On the 5th March, 1884, there was a great indignation meeting at Gore in regard to the rate which had just been levied by the railway company; and a consequence of this meeting was that the Agricultural Company could no longer sell their lands. The company then inserted in the local papers—among others the *Mataura Ensign* of the 6th May, 1884—this advertisement:—

"The New Zealand Agricultural Company are prepared to indemnify all purchasers of land bought from them on and after 1st May, 1884, against claims for the Waimea Plains Railway rates.—G. P. Austing, Manager, Wantwood, Gore."

Therefore all the purchasers of land from the company since the 1st May, 1884, require no sympathy from us, because they are not the victims of any fraud, and they are liable for the rates. The first rate was struck on the 31st March, 1884, and under that levy one ratepayer owed £335 13s. 4d. Does any one suppose that the owner of what must be an enormous estate knew nothing of his liability to that rate? Is he not one of those who promoted the railway as a system of speculation in the district for the purpose of gaining largely? And I do not grudge him his gains if they were got honestly; but, if it was a mere land speculation, then we should not give relief to a person of that kind. Another person owed £132 3s. 4d. as his rate for the

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year. He too must have owned a large speculative estate, and, in all probability, either voted for the railway, or, if he bought his land after, he must have known of the liability to rate. Now I come to the great delinquent of all in this matter—for I call it a delinquent company which comes to this House for relief from just engagements of its own. That company's rate for the first year was £3,003. Out of a total of £4,700, £3,000 had to be paid by the big company. This is the proportion: For every £17 of rates that all the other ratepayers together have to pay, the company have to pay £30. What is, then, the interest of the Agricultural Company in this Bill? It is this: We relieve the company at once of a burden of £1,500 a year for eleven years. Now, are we going to capitalize that, and ask the company to pay us the capitalized amount? No: we propose to pay this railway company £8,000 on behalf of arrears of rates now due, and, in addition, we give the Agricultural Company £1,500 a year for eleven years, and for both amounts we get absolutely nothing whatever—no service whatever has been rendered to the colony. The company has not promoted settlement, it has not promoted in any way the welfare of the colony, it has neither brought people nor capital to it, nor has it increased, as I shall show, the good name of the colony. Not at all. I am not going in any way to bring in names of men—I am not going to blame men at all—they may have their opinions; but I blame the system. I say the company has done nothing of good for the colony. We propose to continue a low rate upon the land; but, as I pointed out once before, that is entirely illusory. You cannot do it. If the railway company cannot collect its rates the Government certainly cannot collect them. The political pressure brought to bear on the members from the district is heavy enough now—it would be ten times heavier then; and the poor ratepayer, who is now pitied, but who is really the rich ratepayer, will then be brought forward more and more as the victim of our taxation and our rates; and I venture to say that in two years' time the whole thing will be swept away. And the consequence of that will be that you will give this Agricultural Company £3,000 a year for eleven years, for which the colony gets and has got nothing at all. Why should we give this to the company? I will appeal to honourable gentlemen present as to the position of this company in this colony. They know what it has been—they know how useless it has been to promote settlement. And now I will ask a little attention to the company outside the colony. I have more than once alluded to the *Times* in connection with the English record of this company. I have not followed the history of the company down to the present time, but I have followed its history during what I may term its inception; and I would like to ask honourable gentlemen to consult the *Times* in the library—to look over every single number from the 27th January, 1879, up to the 7th of February following. Now, during these twelve days there are frequent references in the *Times* to the Agricultural Company that was then being formed. I will give a very slight synopsis of what is to be found there; and I trust that honourable gentlemen will look up the record for themselves, so that they may come to a conclusion as to whether the company can be said to have been of any service to this colony. In the *Times* of the 29th January there appears the first abridged prospectus of the company. There are various statements made with regard to it—as to the number of freehold acres, number of leasehold acres, number of sheep, horses, cattle, and so forth. The price set down as the average for freehold was £6 7s. 6d. per acre, and this was represented afterwards as being very cheap indeed. Looked at in the light of subsequent events it certainly was not very cheap. The purchase-money was to be £1,070,000. I need not go into how this money was to be paid. It was partly in cash and partly in shares to the vendors. There was £720,000 to be paid in cash at various dates ranging from application to the 9th December, 1883, and there were vendors' fully paid shares to the value of £350,000. Now, I want to call the attention of the House to what greatly struck monetary men in England, and was, to say the least of it, extraordinary: I will not use the word "discreditable," but I will say it was most extraordinary, and will leave honourable gentlemen to apply any other term they may choose. In the money article of the *Times* of the 28th January it is said,—

"The promoters of the company are the agents of the vendors, and, as such, entitled to a commission of 7½ per cent. on the purchase-money, out of which, however, they undertake the payment of certain promotion expenses for the company."

That is to say, on an enterprise having a capital of £1,070,000, the commission amounted to no less than £80,250. That £80,000 was put into the pockets of somebody. We do not know to whom this money was paid. The promoters got it; but who they were we do not know, nor do we know how they divided it; but no doubt the £40,000 that the honourable member for Auckland East referred to as being equally divided among the directors came out of that sum. Somebody got the £80,000; and that was set down by the *Times* as a most extraordinary statement, and one that ought to be answered. But was there any answer? Not a bit of it. In the *Times* next day the secretary replied, but he did not refute one single thing that was an accusation against the company, or against its promoters, or against its mode of management. He shirked the questions at issue, and by his silence acknowledged that the charges were true. Then another question came up; or, rather, there were two—first, the value of the land being bought as compared with the value of the land being sold in the district; and, secondly, the rabbit nuisance. With regard to the price of the land there was considerable correspondence. The secretary referred to a gentleman in this House who had telegraphed from Scotland that the land cost the

present owners £4 an acre without stock; that seven years ago £3 was given for 33,000 acres by one vendor; and that £2 10s. to £3 10s. and in some cases nearly £4 10s. was given for many thousands of acres. The secretary completes the misrepresentation by taking some incidental sales as transactions applying to large ones, and stating that "good pasture-land fetches at auction £3 per acre, and good agricultural from £5 to £12 per acre." That, according to the secretary, was a fair sample of the price that land was selling at at auction in the district in which these lands that were being sold to the company were situated, and for which the proprietors were asking the moderate price of only £6 7s. 6d. I appeal to honourable members whether it was true with regard to large blocks of land even at that time; and that was a time when, as we know to our cost, there was enormous speculation. But in that very year, as we also all know, the finances of the Government were entirely upset owing to the fact that they could not sell land at any price. This was in January, 1879; and yet it was pretended that this was a true statement of the value of land in the neighbourhood of these estates—that is, that the auction-price of good pasture-land was £3 an acre, and of good agricultural land from £5 to £12. Then came the question of the rabbits. It was said—and I am not prepared to say how far it was true—that there were rabbits in that district, and that they were rapidly increasing. That was contradicted. It was said—although, in evidence, by the gentleman who made the statement given by him on the subject in 1878, it was alleged that the rabbit nuisance was very bad in that district—it was said in 1879 that, owing to the Acts of 1876 and 1877, the rabbit-pest had been greatly abated. And here I come to a matter that the honourable member for Auckland East referred to the other day; and this is an extract from the letter to which I have alluded as coming from Scotland to the *Times* on the 7th February, 1879, and written by one who is a member of this House now. The gentleman who writes the letter says,—

"In conclusion, permit me to state that the Colonial Treasurer of New Zealand has telegraphed to the Agent-General as follows: 'Turned first sod of Waimea Plains Railway 27th January. Line through magnificent country, waiting settlement by proposed company. Success must contribute prosperity colony and remunerate proprietors.'"

I apprehend that that was the telegram to which the honourable member for Auckland East referred the other day, and in regard to which we had some confused statements. Then, there is a further statement that this land was within four miles from a railway. I presume that was from the proposed railway. To sum up, I would say this: that the colony has not, either directly or indirectly, derived any benefit from the operations of those persons—I speak of them in the bulk—who would be relieved by this Bill; but that, on the contrary, they have done the colony no good in the colony, while they have treated it very badly externally. I am not going to refer to the various changes which the company has undergone since its origin, nor shall I refer to the commission of inquiry sent over from Australia to this colony two years ago, at which most extraordinary revelations were made. I need not refer with any particularity to the interviews between gentlemen belonging to this colony and to a neighbouring colony, owing to which a considerable number of shares were exchanged or given over. All these things may have been or may not have been exaggerated; but I say that we are under no obligation to these people to relieve them from any legal liability that they may be under. And, with regard to the railway company, we are under no obligation to give them more than the fair value for the line. Compassion can have nothing to do with it; it is purely a mercantile transaction; and, if we go into questions about "poor people who have lost" this or that, we go into questions that we have nothing to do with. I was told yesterday that the shareholders had lost £2 per share. That may or may not be. It seems quite certain that they would not sell to us until arrangements were completed between the managers of the two companies. We were simply the pawns they were moving on the board, instead of being masters of the situation. Then I say that the real price to us under the resolution which I proposed to the Committee the other night is £102,000 *plus* £18,000—that is, £120,000. I say that the transaction, as a business transaction, is bad. With regard to the mode of bringing this motion on, I think we have a right to complain of the action of the Ministry. We have fought over these resolutions and amendments, and I suggested a difficulty in clause 4 with regard to the debenture bonds. Ministers have acknowledged that I was right, and have brought down clauses to meet that difficulty. I thank them for it. But was there ever one word about reinstating the £35,000? There was not one word about that from beginning to end. No fewer than four Order Papers have been issued with the amendments which were to be brought on in Committee on the various clauses; but there was not one word about a change in the money-consideration. The money-clauses are the clauses that are of interest to us, and not the mere verbal amendments; and yet the one thing above all others that most concerns us they were absolutely silent upon. I have given my opinions upon this matter by way of protest against the action we are now discussing. I say, if this kind of thing is to go on, the sooner we shut up the better—the sooner we stop all public works the better. Our credit will be injured. And here I may say that our credit will never be injured abroad by hard talk. It will be injured by bad actions. It will only be injured by our doing what is unfair and unjust to our fellow-citizens. It is by our conduct in this House that we shall be judged. If we act honourably and fairly, and with a single eye to the interests of the colony, I have no fear for our credit abroad. It is not discussions going on in the Old Country that have

Colonel Trimble

brought our funds down to 98—the lowest of all the funds of the Australian Colonies. It is because we are going into all kinds of speculations—speculations for the benefit of private speculators, and not for the public good. These are the things that are bringing New Zealand into discredit. It is, first, the loss of our credit, and then the loss to our purse.

Mr. DARGAVILLE.—It appears to me that the only question upon which the honourable member who has just sat down dwelt so fully and eloquently resolves itself into this: whether a sum of £27,000 in cash shall be paid to this company or a sum of £35,000. It appears to me that the Minister is insisting on the larger sum, or, if I understand him more correctly, he will accede to £33,000 in cash—at least, so he stated. With a view to some practical result being arrived at, and with a view to this debate ending, I would ask him if this compromise would meet the case: that a sum of £31,000 be inserted in lieu of the £27,000 in the Bill. If the House insists on £27,000 only being paid the Bill will be dropped; there is no doubt about that, because it will be useless. If, however, the Minister insists on the larger amount the House, probably, will refuse to go into Committee on the Bill. I therefore ask the Minister, with the view to some practical result being arrived at, if, in Committee, he will agree to the sum of £31,000 being inserted, and if, in that case, he will be contented to go on and pass the Bill under the arrangement, or drop the Bill altogether. I think it will get rid of this matter, one way or the other, if we get some information as to the attitude he will take in that way. I ask the Minister that question.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Before I can answer that question I think the honourable member ought to say whether he couples with it any proposal as to rates. If he proposes to give the company power to collect the full rates one of the principal reasons for buying this line would cease to exist, and the ratepayers would get no advantage.

Mr. LAKE.—I do not propose to delay the House long, after the exhaustive manner in which the honourable member for Taranaki has exposed the whole system, if I may so call it, of effrontery with which this measure has been brought into the House. Strongly as he puts the case, I think it will be admitted that he has not half told the case. The whole of this proposed cost has been based on an imaginary estimate. I asked the Minister the other day what proportion the existing rates now charged on that line bore to those charged on the Government lines, and he told me that it amounted to 25 per cent. increase on the existing rates. That at once reduces the returns, as has been shown by the honourable member for Taranaki, practically to half the estimated amount.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Why?

Mr. LAKE.—Because the rates are at present placed too high. The amount named as returns from this railway by the honourable member for Hokonui was £2,000. The actual results, on the average of three years, would be considerably under £1,000; and that is worked out at a rate of 25 per cent. above the present tariff. We have also evidence before us that a large number of the sleepers will require renewing shortly; and the Minister in his agreement completely abandoned all claim to fencing the line, which was a part of the original proposal, and which would most certainly increase the cost very largely. I could not help noticing one word which was said by the honourable member for Auckland West. I presume he thought, speaking as he did, that he must have been raising an issue favourable to the Government when he said that the only thing at stake in this question was whether we should pay £27,000 or £35,000. I think there is something very much higher at stake. It is not only a question of money; it is a question affecting the honour of the Government and of this House, and more particularly that of one or two gentlemen in this House; and to a very large extent the Minister for Public Works must share in any blame which may attach to the character of any person in connection with this transaction. We had last night a repetition of that shameful conduct which we saw last session, when one night—almost in the small hours of the morning—exactly a similar thing was done to what is now attempted. One would have thought, from the exposure we have had this session as a sequel to that matter, that honourable members would be almost ashamed to have their names figuring all over a document such as we have here. Here we see one honourable gentleman, in his eager advocacy of the interests of his constituents, assuming the position of middleman between a company and the Minister for Public Works. I say these things do not reflect credit on this House. As has been stated, Order Paper after Order Paper has been issued containing, practically, the suggestions of the honourable member for Taranaki; and even this morning we had a fresh Order Paper; but there has not been a single notice or a word as to the intention to recommit this Bill for this purpose. The Minister for Public Works says that half the House knew of it. No doubt his friends and supporters knew of it; but we on this side of the House knew nothing of it, and we were bound to take the Order Papers of the Government as some proof of what they were going to bring before this House. I hope that no compromise will be made in this matter. I hope we shall go to a vote, and if we are beaten I hope this whole transaction will go before the country in its true light. The Waimate Railway and the Waimea Railway will be linked together in a page of shame in the history of the colony, and it will take the honourable gentlemen on those benches years to get over their connection with it.

Mr. COWAN.—I wish to make a personal explanation. I presume the honourable gentleman referred to me as the member who had acted as a middleman between the company and the Government in this matter, and as being linked in shame with the Waimate Rail-

decision arrived at, there is no argument in favour of recommitting at all.

An Hon. MEMBER.—There was a thin House.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—The honourable member says there was a thin House. If that were an argument, then we might recommit every Bill before the House. Only the other night we had an instance of where a decision of the House was reversed in five minutes. Talk about a "snatch-vote"! there never was a Bill brought forward yet but the same might be said of it — that it was carried by a snatch-vote; and an honourable member might appeal to the House for a recommittal in order that another decision might be arrived at. There is no distinction whatever between the decision arrived at in this matter and the decision arrived at in any other matter that ever came before Parliament. What did we find last night? In a much thinner House the honourable gentleman tried to snatch another decision on this very question—one in the opposite direction from that arrived at before. Let us dismiss that from our consideration altogether. I say it has always been open to the House to review its decisions until a Bill has passed its final stage, and the House is always willing to be satisfied by argument that the recommittal of a Bill is desirable. If there was a thin House when this vote was taken, why did the Government go on with the Bill? Why did they not wait till there was a fuller House? They took the decision of the House as it was, and that decision ought to be final. I am sure the House will not be at all convinced by such an argument, and I am sure the Minister is not convinced himself. The Minister smiles with that placid and, I might say, that beautiful smile that so becomes him; but I can see by that that he is not sincere. Then, he uses another point, in which he is very strong, and in which I believe he is sincere. He says that it is absolutely necessary that the Government should acquire this line. That is a misuse of terms. "Absolutely necessary." What do these words mean? They mean that the government of the colony could not be carried on unless the Government do acquire this line. They mean that the railway system of the colony must come to a standstill unless the Government acquire this private railway. The term the honourable gentleman should have used was that it was rather desirable; and that is the greatest extent to which he ought to have gone. Any one who has read the evidence that was taken before this Select Committee on this railway must admit that it is desirable that the Government should acquire the line, if they can acquire it on favourable terms. But the whole of the evidence of the engineers who were examined amounts to no more than an opinion that it would be convenient to the working of the railway system if the Government had this line. As for this absolute necessity, such a thing is never hinted at in this evidence. Mr. Maxwell, in his evidence, and all the engineers and officials of the department who were examined, only say that if they had this line they could work the Government railways somewhat more cheaply than they could otherwise do it.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—We shall buy it next year on our own terms.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I am coming to that. The Minister tells us that it is absolutely necessary that the Government should buy this line. I say it is not absolutely necessary; and, if the Government do not buy it this year or next year, or for many years afterwards, we shall still be able to work our railway system with fair success, and the difference will not be noticeable in any appreciable respect. If the Minister asks us whether we think it is desirable that we should have the line, then I say, "Yes; it is highly desirable to have it if you can get it on reasonable terms." The House has authorized the Government to buy the line on the terms indicated by their own engineers before the Committee; and I say we are bound to take that evidence as an authoritative indication of what the value of the line is. The honourable member for Wakatipu urges that we should not stick for a few thousand pounds. Now, there, I think, he is quite wrong. In a question of this kind we ought, undoubtedly, to get the line for the lowest sum it is to be got for. I have not the slightest doubt, in my own mind, that if we leave the Bill as it stands,—amended, by the whole Committee of this House, in accordance with the evidence of the engineers and officials of the department before the Select Committee,—we shall get the railway at that price. I have not the least doubt of it. I believe every member of this House, including the honourable member for Hokonui and the honourable member for Wakatipu, is of opinion that if we pass the Bill as it stands the Government will get the railway at the price fixed in the Bill as it stands at the present moment. The honourable gentleman shakes his head; but he knows as well as I do that the company are not going to stand out. If any one has to concede a thousand or two, let it be the company and not the Government. The Minister gives me to understand that the company will not sell the railway for the price fixed in the Bill. Is that so? Yes, that is so. Now, the ratepayers cannot and will not pay their rates. What position will the company be in then? They are bound to sell to the Government on the terms fixed in this Bill. They cannot help themselves. The honourable gentleman tells us that the ratepayers will pay the rates. For my part, I must say that I am not in perfect sympathy with those persons who purchased the land knowing what they did. Did the people know what rates they were going to pay?

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—The Agricultural Company sold them the land without telling them the liabilities that they were going to incur by the purchase? Is that the case?

Mr. FERGUS.—The Government sold them the land.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Without letting the purchasers know what liabilities they were incurring?

Mr. FERGUS.—Yes.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Then that ought to be brought out, because, if that is so, it is a fraud on the part of the Government; and, if any company did the same thing, that would be a fraud on the part of the company. Does the honourable gentleman accuse the Government or a private company of fraud?

Mr. FERGUS.—Yes; decidedly.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—We are getting a new light on this matter every moment. We are getting along splendidly. We are told that the company and the Government——

Mr. FERGUS.—No; I did not say the company.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—The company, then, come out in a bright and shining light; but the unfortunate Government—"Nunkey pays for all"—they have been selling the land in this district without letting the people know what liabilities they were incurring. It is a very grave accusation to bring against the Government of New Zealand, that they have sold land liable to railway rates without letting the purchasers know that the rates were payable. Well, I, for one, decline to believe it; and I say that the land-laws of the colony and the railway-laws of the colony are public to all and are known to all.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I say they are, by the Acts of Parliament and all other publications. But the Agricultural Company sold the land in London on their strength of their prospectus, and, if they did not tell the agents of these liabilities they deceived the purchasers, and obtained prices that they would not otherwise have obtained. It is a most clumsy argument to say that the Government sold the land in the district liable to rates without the knowledge of the buyers. The whole truth of it is this: that the Agricultural Company have sold land in that district—I do not say they sold it without letting the ratepayers know: that is not my affair—and the ratepayers objected to pay the rates; and that is the real cause of this Bill and of the whole agitation concerning the railway. There is the whole secret. Now, I say this is not fair to this Parliament, and we are not at all bound in honour or in any respect whatever to relieve the company from the difficulty they are in, or to relieve the ratepayers of the difficulties they are in, simply because the land has not been of the value it was expected to turn out. To finish that point, I may say that the argument that the ratepayers cannot and will not pay the rate is the strongest argument why we should not recommit this Bill; for, if we decide to pass the Bill as it stands, the company is bound to sell the railway on the terms mentioned in this Bill. If the honourable gentleman asks me whether I consider it desirable that the district railways should be bought, I say, Most certainly I think they ought. I voted for the District Railways Bill last year because I believed the railways could be got on reasonable terms. I shall vote for this Bill on that ground, as it now stands, because I can see that, so long as we have these private railways in the colony, not co-operating with but working in antagonism to the Government railways, we shall always have trouble, and we shall always have the political influence brought to bear in this House that is being brought to bear to-night from ratepayers—that is to say, shareholders in these district railway companies. By all means let us get rid of this public nuisance of district railways, but let us get rid of it on the lowest possible terms we can, let us buy them out as cheaply as we can: and I say this House has got into a position in which it can buy the railway on very fair terms, not unreasonably low, but at its real value. Let the House stick to that, and by no means be pushed into a corner either by the cry of the ratepayers or by the cry of the companies, but let us do our duty like men and authorize the Government to pay for this railway what is a fair and reasonable price, and no more. I quite agree with the honourable member for Wakatipu that this is a necessary railway, and that it should have been made by the Government in the first instance. There is no doubt about that. It is one of the connecting-links of the great railway system of the Middle Island, and it ought to have been made by the Government; but the fact is that the company jumped their claim: so eager were they to get a great bargain that they hastened to make this railway. If any one will look back for ten years he will see how the great estate-holders hurried together and threw their estates into one pot, thinking to make their fortunes; but wool went down, grain went down, produce of all kinds went down, and the whole situation changed: and now they want the Government to relieve them of their responsibilities. There is the whole story. Let us not disguise the facts, or pretend that the people there were in any way philanthropic, or that in relieving them we are doing a public good. They have taken the responsibilities, let them bear them; and, if a concession as to price has to be made, let the company make it and not the Government, and let the Government take the line at its real value; let them take the valuation of their own officials and engineers, and stick to that. I do not want to throw stones at anybody. The honourable member for Hokonui, I am convinced, in all that he has done has been simply actuated by a desire to do what was for the good of his constituents; but there is the mischief of the whole system, that an honourable member comes to this House and has to plead a bad case honestly and faithfully for the sake of his constituents, and for the reason that his constituents have been placed in this position by bad laws made by this House, and by the unfortunate way in which those laws have been taken advantage of by a number of private speculators. I say it is a speculation, they have gone into it as one, and the honourable gentleman represents people largely consisting of speculators.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—There is no offence in that. The honourable member cannot help see-

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Mr. WAKEFIELD.—The company, then, come out in a bright and shining light; but the unfortunate Government—"Nunkey pays for all"—they have been selling the land in this district without letting the people know what liabilities they were incurring. It is a very grave accusation to bring against the Government of New Zealand, that they have sold land liable to railway rates without letting the purchasers know that the rates were payable. Well, I, for one, decline to believe it; and I say that the land-laws of the colony and the railway-laws of the colony are public to all and are known to all.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I say they are, by the Acts of Parliament and all other publications. But the Agricultural Company sold the land in London on their strength of their prospectus, and, if they did not tell the agents of these liabilities they deceived the purchasers, and obtained prices that they would not otherwise have obtained. It is a most clumsy argument to say that the Government sold the land in the district liable to rates without the knowledge of the buyers. The whole truth of it is this: that the Agricultural Company have sold land in that district—I do not say they sold it without letting the ratepayers know: that is not my affair—and the ratepayers objected to pay the rates; and that is the real cause of this Bill and of the whole agitation concerning the railway. There is the whole secret. Now, I say this is not fair to this Parliament, and we are not at all bound in honour or in any respect whatever to relieve the company from the difficulty they are in, or to relieve the ratepayers of the difficulties they are in, simply because the land has not been of the value it was expected to turn out. To finish that point, I may say that the argument that the ratepayers cannot and will not pay the rate is the strongest argument why we should not recommit this Bill; for, if we decide to pass the Bill as it stands, the company is bound to sell the railway on the terms mentioned in this Bill. If the honourable gentleman asks me whether I consider it desirable that the district railways should be bought, I say, Most certainly I think they ought. I voted for the District Railways Bill last year because I believed the railways could be got on reasonable terms. I shall vote for this Bill on that ground, as it now stands, because I can see that, so long as we have these private railways in the colony, not co-operating with but working in antagonism to the Government railways, we shall always have trouble, and we shall always have the political influence brought to bear in this House that is being brought to bear to-night from ratepayers—that is to say, shareholders in these district railway companies. By all means let us get rid of this public nuisance of district railways, but let us get rid of it on the lowest possible terms we can, let us buy them out as cheaply as we can: and I say this House has got into a position in which it can buy the railway on very fair terms, not unreasonably low, but at its real value. Let the House stick to that, and by no means be pushed into a corner either by the cry of the ratepayers or by the cry of the companies, but let us do our duty like men and authorize the Government to pay for this railway what is a fair and reasonable price, and no more. I quite agree with the honourable member for Wakatipu that this is a necessary railway, and that it should have been made by the Government in the first instance. There is no doubt about that. It is one of the connecting-links of the great railway system of the Middle Island, and it ought to have been made by the Government; but the fact is that the company jumped their claim: so eager were they to get a great bargain that they hastened to make this railway. If any one will look back for ten years he will see how the great estate-holders hurried together and threw their estates into one pot, thinking to make their fortunes; but wool went down, grain went down, produce of all kinds went down, and the whole situation changed: and now they want the Government to relieve them of their responsibilities. There is the whole story. Let us not disguise the facts, or pretend that the people there were in any way philanthropic, or that in relieving them we are doing a public good. They have taken the responsibilities, let them bear them; and, if a concession as to price has to be made, let the company make it and not the Government, and let the Government take the line at its real value; let them take the valuation of their own officials and engineers, and stick to that. I do not want to throw stones at anybody. The honourable member for Hokonui, I am convinced, in all that he has done has been simply actuated by a desire to do what was for the good of his constituents; but there is the mischief of the whole system, that an honourable member comes to this House and has to plead a bad case honestly and faithfully for the sake of his constituents, and for the reason that his constituents have been placed in this position by bad laws made by this House, and by the unfortunate way in which those laws have been taken advantage of by a number of private speculators. I say it is a speculation, they have gone into it as one, and the honourable gentleman represents people largely consisting of speculators.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—There is no offence in that. The honourable member cannot help see-

ing that they went into the thing as a speculation.

An Hon. Member.—It was mainly Dunedin people who went into it.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Of course it was; and do you think their influence is not visible here? Of course a large number of Dunedin people went into it: we can see that in all directions. I am glad the honourable gentleman has advised me of it. There were plenty of Dunedin people in it, and their influence is abundantly obvious in this House to-night. I say it is a most unfortunate thing that the honourable member for Hokonui should be placed in such a position. It shows that we ought to put our foot down firmly and refuse to give way to the influence of these private companies when we see that an honourable member like the member for Hokonui, who is absolutely above acting from private interests or anything of that sort, has so many of his constituents interested in this that he is obliged to come to this House and advocate a case which, if he were otherwise situated, he would never think of advocating. To think that that honourable gentleman is in any way influenced by personal motives is altogether out of the question; but when he says that he is asserting the interests of his constituents, who, as ratepayers and otherwise, are concerned in this railway, he is practically brought into this position: that he has either to advocate this case or lose his seat in the Legislature—for that is what it means. I say that ought to be a strong argument in favour of putting a stop to the whole of this system and doing away with this kind of thing. I believe the company will get a very fair price for the railway if we pass the Bill as it stands—quite as much as it is worth—and we do not want to give more than it is worth. Every penny that we give above that price is so much put into the pockets of private individuals out of the public chest. We can get the railway, I have no doubt, for the sum fixed in the Bill; and if we pass the Bill as it stands we shall get the railway, and save the colony a large sum of money. I have listened with great attention to the remarks of honourable members who, like my honourable friend the member for Wakatipu, understand this subject; but I say it appears, to my mind, that they look at it from rather a local than a colonial point of view, and my desire is to urge upon the House to regard it from a colonial point of view rather than from a local one.

Mr. FERGUS.—I should like to correct a statement of the honourable gentleman, by way of personal explanation. The honourable member stated that I said it was absolutely necessary to purchase the line. I did not say that, but that it would be necessary to purchase, on this ground: that it would be impossible to work a small section of line belonging to the Government running from this district railway, from Riversdale to Switzer's, profitably without this line. To work it without this line will entail a cost to the colony. That was what I meant to convey. The House has voted £40,000 for a line that will be of a fragmentary character, and which cannot be profitably worked unless this line is acquired. I may say that I have never voted for the purchase of any district railway heretofore.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I should like to explain that I took down the words that the honourable gentleman used, and they were "absolutely necessary." If I have misrepresented the honourable gentleman I am quite willing to withdraw any expressions I used.

Mr. BROWN.—The honourable gentleman who has last spoken has made one of his usual convincing speeches—speeches convincing to himself, but to no one else. Had the honourable gentleman the knowledge which he professes to have, and which he ought to have before attempting to address the House upon this question, he would not have told us that this was "a snatch-division" the other evening. I have before me the record of *Hansard*, which proves it was not "a snatch-division."

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Will the honourable gentleman allow me to correct him? I did not say it was "a snatch-division," but quite the contrary. It was the honourable member for Wakatipu who said it was "a snatch-division."

Mr. BROWN.—I may have misunderstood the honourable gentleman, and I accept his explanation. I have before me the proof copy of *Hansard*, which shows that one of the majority had not only paired but voted against the Bill. Had he not done so the majority would have been on the other side instead of as it was.

Mr. FULTON.—I think the honourable gentleman refers to me. I am told that my name will appear among the pairs. I certainly did vote; but a few minutes before I came into the House I met the Government whip, and asked him whether I had paired. He said I had not; and I voted. After the division, he came over and told me I had paired. I said it was rather too late to tell me then, and he replied that he would arrange the matter in another way.

Mr. BROWN.—I only know, from what appears in the *Hansard* report of the proceedings of the House, that if that division had been properly recorded this discussion would not have taken place this evening. What, to my mind, has been lost sight of is this: that what we are discussing is, whether the price to be given for this railway is extortionate or otherwise. I have before me the report of the Public Accounts Committee, who have carefully taken evidence on this matter; and I am sure that they are more able to speak upon it than most honourable members, who have not given this matter any consideration. That report says, "That, in the opinion of the Committee, the proposed terms of the purchase of the Waimea Plains Railway, as set forth in the agreement embodied in Parliamentary Paper B.-6A, are such that the Committee can recommend." And I understand that that is the proposal in the Bill which we are now discussing. I take the opinion of the Public Accounts Committee, which took all the evidence it could take, in preference to the opinions of a

No. 27.

NEW ZEALAND.

ARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

12th August to 16th August.

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nber of members who, perhaps, understand more about it than the man in the street. also have it in evidence that this railway hirty-seven miles long; and the price now red is less than £3,000 a mile. It is well wn that the railway is as properly equipped any Government railway in the colony; and have it also that the extension of a Governnt line to Waikaia, Switzer's, will cost the ony £70,000 more. That £70,000 is to conict fourteen miles of railway—£5,000 per e. We cannot have better evidence than t of the desirability of buying this railway the price which has been submitted to Parnent. We know, also, that the whole of New land is interested in this line, inasmuch as saves fifty-two miles of railway travelling n Dunedin to the Lakes. A large number of sons, tourists and others, use the line, and re is not the slightest doubt that, as it saves distance I have mentioned, and saves time l expense as well, it will add considerably he inducements to travelling. The House authorized an expenditure of £37,000 on ther line of railway from this to extend the interior, and that line will add very terially to the value of this line. In my nion, if the railway is not bought now we ll have, at some future time, to purchase it a higher price than we can get it for at the sent time. The honourable member for itotara said that he was surprised at the mier advocating the purchase of this rail-, seeing he was so largely interested in it. nd, from the list of shareholders, that the mier has no more interest in that company n I have, which is *nil*. I also find that re is not a member of this House who is a reholder in the company owning this rail-. It is said that one or two members of Government are remotely interested in the npany; and I know it has been said in the bies that several members of this House are erested in the railway company, and I know t has been made a lever with many honourse members to induce them to oppose this l. But I find that no member of this House a share in this railway company.

Mr. KERR.—I really think it is time this cussion came to an end. I cannot be blamed having had anything to do with this line. oted against the purchase of every one of se district railways last year, and I can sly say that I do not know where this parlar line is. The real truth appears to me to that the Opposition are stonewalling this l because they are afraid to let the Repretation Bill come on. I can assure them t all this talk will not change one vote. y do they stop the business, instead of ning to a vote one way or the other? As for honourable member for Selwyn, with his ring language, talking about the honourable mber for Hokonui being afraid that if he did get this Bill passed his constituents would re-elect him, I think that the honourable mber for Selwyn is a great deal more in ger than is the honourable member for konui.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I am not afraid.

Mr. KERR.—I do not say the honourable member is afraid, because I believe he is making his way for another seat. I do hope honourable members will not blame our side of the House for delaying business to-day. If the Opposition do really want to stonewall the Bill I wish they would say so, for we on this side would then go away for a week, and let them do so. I think the House had better go to a vote on the question.

Mr. HAMLIN.—There appear to be two points which have not been properly cleared up in this debate. The honourable member for Wakatipu has just told us that this is only a paltry sum of £8,000 that we are talking about —that it is a mere bagatelle—in fact, we have so much money that we may vote away £8,000 without hesitation. I have seen letters lately in which it was stated that the Treasurer was so impecunious that even a sum of £2,000 could not be found for objects where an immense benefit would be done. Again, if it be true that the people along this line of railway are, unfortunately, so poor that they cannot pay the small rates of 1s. 6d., 3s. 4d., or £1 per annum in order to maintain this great boon they have, then, in the name of all that is good and great, how is it going to be a boon to the country when we purchase it? The sooner it is sold, and the rails and engines and sleepers, the better it will be for the country, because, if the people cannot pay these small rates, how is it possible that they will be able to send anything into the towns or bring anything along the railway from the towns? How will they pay the railway charges? It appears to me that honourable members, in arguing that the people are so poor that they cannot pay these small rates, are showing that a railway has been constructed which can never pay, and which, if taken over by the colony, must place undue burdens on other colonists who have not reaped one atom of benefit from these millions of money we have expended, although indisputable evidence has been given that if a like boon were granted to them it would be immensely beneficial to the general weal of the colony. Under these circumstances, I feel myself in a dilemma, and, if the question goes to a division, I shall have to vote against my honourable friend the member for Hokonui. That honourable gentleman has, I think, fairly shown that it would be better if the railway were closed at once, and no rates collected, the rails sold, and the whole thing kept at a standstill until the people become sufficiently flush of money to pay a small rate, thereby affording a guarantee that they will be able to purchase goods from the town and send their produce along the line.

Mr. WILSON.—I think it would be much better to take the vote at once, and settle the question in Committee.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—I think I shall be consulting the interests of the House by refraining from commenting on the speeches made in this very long debate. I wish only to make one or two remarks in reference to what fell from

the honourable member for Taranaki. Before doing so, I wish to express my regret that the honourable member for Waitotara and the honourable member for Waipa should have so far forgotten themselves as—purely in spirit of party—to use the language they have used in reference to the transaction now before the House. As I have said before, it would be far better, in dealing with a question of this kind, if honourable members really would omit personal abuse, and confine themselves to the practical part of it. The honourable member for Taranaki, no doubt unwittingly, misled the House when dealing with the commercial value of this concern. He omitted altogether, as far as I followed him, any reference to the question of the rates by which the company make up the 7 per cent. they are entitled to on their venture. That ought not to be omitted, because it is obvious that, in dealing with the value of a commercial concern, you ought to take in all sources of revenue. The only other point I wish to allude to is this: In dealing with the income from the railway the honourable member put it down as £1,000 a year, because it averaged that up to the present time. I demur altogether to any estimate of that sort, because we know as an absolute fact that the land surrounding that railway is rapidly coming under cultivation. There were three thousand acres of land under crop last year more than there were ever under crop before, so that, in all human probability, the revenue from the railway must largely increase. The rate for last year is probably very much nearer the average income than the sum which the honourable member has quoted.

Motion agreed to.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 4.—Price to be paid for railway.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON moved, That the words "twenty-seven thousand pounds" be struck out of subsection (1): "To pay the sum of twenty-seven thousand pounds agreed to be paid to the company in cash."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 25.

Barron	Grey	Sutter
Bruce	Harper	Thompson, T.
Bryce	Lake	Wakefield
Buchanan	Macarthur	Whyte
Buckland, J. C.	Montgomery	Wilson.
Buckland, W.F.	Newman	
Conolly	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Dodson	Pearson	Rolleston
Fulton	Reese	Trimble.

NOES, 27.

Ballance	Hobbs	Richardson, G.
Bevan	Joyce	Steward, W. J.
B.-Bradshaw	Kerr	Taylor
Brown	Lance	Thomson, J. W.
Dargaville	McKenzie, J.	Tole
Fergus	Moat	Walker.
Fraser	O'Callaghan	*Tellers.*
Grace	Pyke	Cowan
Guinness	Richardson, E.	Stewart, W. D.
Hatch		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Beetham	Turnbull
Duncan	Gore
Fisher	Hirst, H.
Johnston	Parata
Levestam	Holmes
Ormond.	Pere.

Majority against, 2.

Motion negatived.

Words "twenty-seven thousand pounds" struck out, and "thirty-one thousand pounds" inserted.

Bill reported.

On the motion, That the Bill be read a third time,

Mr. WAKEFIELD said,—I wish to say one or two words. I think it is a startling fact, which may be given forth to the people of this colony with advantage, that in Committee of this House, by a majority of two, and at the instigation of the Government, £4,000 of public money has been given to two great companies, which might have been saved without any disadvantage whatever. The Minister for Public Works has told us that he would have dropped the Bill if the price fixed by the House when the Bill was previously considered in Committee had been retained. That is to say, in his opinion the company would not have sold the railway to the Government at the price. I believe that the company would have jumped at the opportunity of selling the railway at that price, and that the increase in the price by this £4,000, which has been called a compromise, is simply a gift of £4,000 of public money to these companies, carried in this House by a majority of two, at the instigation of the Government. Of course the decision of this House is final, and it is useless to protest; but it is fitting that the public should be aware of these facts, and that they should be placed on record in the official records of this House. This money has been given after infinite "whipping," and after every parliamentary effort, both inside and outside this House; and it is right that the public should know it. It is one of those facts on which the people may well ponder, which may be well considered at meetings of the unemployed, and it affords a peculiar commentary upon the success of our parliamentary institutions. When we have poor men coming here asking for their rights I cannot say that they get injustice, but, if they get justice, it is of the barest kind; while rich people—who are powerful, and have active representatives and clever agents, who leave no stone unturned—get a sum of £4,000 absolutely given to them by a majority of two at the instigation of the Minister for Public Works, who should be the guardian of the public purse. I wished to say this in order that it might go on record, and that the public might have an explanation of what has been done in Committee during the past few minutes.

Mr. PEARSON.—I merely wish to say that I coincide with what has been said by the honourable member for Selwyn, and that, in

my opinion, this company has been actually given £4,000 by the vote that has been given to-night. But I hold myself clear of any responsibility in the matter.

Sir G. GREY.—I still hope that the Premier will not insist on pushing this Bill through.

Sir R. STOUT.—I am not in charge of it.

Sir G. GREY.—The honourable gentleman's might and influence in this House are everything. How can he say that he has nothing to do with this Bill, when he, as leader of the House, having such power at his disposal, will not use his influence to prevent the Bill introduced by his Government from passing through the House? Why should he use his influence in passing this Bill, when he is solicitor to both of the companies interested in the Bill? I see another honourable member on the Government benches, having great power, and who is not only the holder of shares in this railway company, but also is one of the original vendors to the Agricultural Company, and must ultimately benefit largely by the passing of the Bill; because, from the condition of things, a great deal of the land must pass back into the hands of the vendors. I think that the House will feel that we ought to give a great example in the future, and that a Ministry so situated ought not to force this Bill through. I appeal to the Premier, for his own sake, to think upon what he is doing. It was only by a majority of two that the Bill was forced through Committee. I do trust that an example will be set for future time such as ought to be set, and that persons occupying those benches, and possessing such influence and power, will not force through this House a measure in which they are so largely interested pecuniarily. I make this last appeal to the Premier because some man ought to say these words, and from nothing but a sense of duty do I say what I would gladly shrink from saying.

Sir R. STOUT.—The honourable gentleman knows perfectly well, with regard to this Bill, that I have not taken any interest in the matter, nor exerted any influence in its favour. I have not voted on it nor spoken on it, nor have I had anything to do with the negotiations. Now, I charge the honourable gentleman himself with having been the cause of this Bill. What did he do during the recess? He went away to Gore and tried to keep up an agitation to force the Government to buy this line — he pledged himself to the Gore ratepayers that he would insist upon the Government giving assistance; and now he comes here and opposes the Bill, and throws the blame upon the Government. I am surprised at the honourable gentleman. Does he think that we have no memories? Does he think that we do not know what he has been doing? I have not interfered with this matter, though I really have no interest in it; but, if I had, I could have told the House that, through our faulty legislation, many poor people who have invested their money in shares in this railway have never received a penny of interest, and have even had to mortgage their furniture to pay calls, and, even at the price agreed to be given by the House, will not only not get interest on their money, but will lose a considerable portion of their capital. The honourable gentleman knows very well that neither I nor my colleague to whom he has referred have taken any interest in this matter — we have not mentioned it nor voted for it.

Sir G. GREY.—I wish to make a personal explanation. I understand that the settlers at Gore were led to purchase their land without knowing that they were liable to these charges. I appeal to the honourable member for Hokonui whether that is not the case. Well, then, I have simply to say this: that I think it would have been the duty of the House to have relieved those people from those charges entirely by special Act; but that is totally different from taking the course of forcing a Bill through this House by means of a Government possessing such power as this Ministry has, and only relieving the settlers from half the rates.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—The Premier says that the bringing of this Bill forward and the passing of it was owing to what took place at Gore on the occasion of a visit by the honourable member for Auckland East.

Sir R. STOUT.—The agitation got up amongst the ratepayers.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—Was it the agitation of three or four months ago that brought in the Bill of last year?

Sir R. STOUT.—There was no Bill dealing with this railway last year.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—Did not the honourable gentleman bring forward the Waimea Plains Railway last year?

Sir R. STOUT.—Not last year.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—Well, the year before. It is a mere quibble to say that it was 1884 and not 1885. Could what occurred three months ago be the cause of what occurred two years ago? The honourable member for Auckland East took a tour through the colony for purposes with which I have nothing to do—a tour other honourable members may make if they so wish—and he told the people at Gore, as the honourable member for Hokonui has said, that he would endeavour to relieve them from taxation. Did he tell them at the time that he was going to relieve the Agricultural Company to the extent of £3,000 a year? Not he. The poor people were the persons that the honourable gentleman spoke of relieving from taxation, and not these great nabobs who are endeavouring to make fortunes out of speculation. I have just one word to say with regard to what the Minister for Public Works said in answer to what I previously stated. The statement which he made to the House before we went into Committee bore out all that I said, only that it made it much stronger. All the difference in the rates of freight upon goods the Government will have to give up. The Government will have to reduce those rates.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—The honourable gentlemen say "No," with the whole system of purchasing these railways before them. These

honourable gentlemen know they will have to do so. The very men who are making such a noise now in favour of buying this line will be the first to insist on these railway rates being brought into conformity with the railway rates of the colony. Therefore the honourable gentleman will make the income worse, not better, by what he says. Now, with regard to this company which the honourable gentleman refers to, I have before me an extract from an English paper dated the 3rd June, 1885, called *Money*, and which says,—

"Widows, beware! A widow lady in Cambridge, who happens to hold some debenture bonds of the New Zealand Agricultural Company, has placed in our hands the following communication addressed to her by one Lambert, of Newington Green:—

"'46, Newington Green,
"'London, N., May 6, 1885.

"'DEAR MADAM,—Being a coinvestor with yourself in the New Zealand Agricultural Company, Limited, I wish to bring under your notice that there are thirty-five of the £20 shares in the company, with £7 10s. paid up, now offered privately for disposal on very advantageous terms, as the owner of them, on whose behalf I am writing, is in urgent need of their value, owing to a protracted illness and consequent losses.

"'You may not be aware that there has been paid upon these shares, during the past six years, a uniform dividend of 7 per cent., which gives them a character for permanence and reliability equal to that of the company's debentures, but a higher return at less cost; and as, from the exigencies of the case, I can place any portion of these thirty-five at your disposal for £6 5s. each, the above-named dividend will be thereby virtually raised to one of 8½ per cent.—I am, &c.,

"'H. LAMBERT.'

"The shares which this fellow Lambert seeks to foist upon our reader at £6 5s. are, we should explain, practically unsaleable at 1¼, ½ (nominal), and carry the heavy liability of £12 10s. per share. Here, indeed, is a man who, in order to get rid of a practically unsaleable article for about five times its market value, does not scruple to rob even the helpless widow of her mite! We know if some poor hungry devil were to attempt to sell painted sparrows for *bonâ fide* canaries he would be summarily 'run in,' and quite as summarily tried and sentenced. Why, then, we would ask, should a character of the type of this man Lambert be permitted to remain at large? If the public prosecutor, or whoever is supposed to do duty for that defunct dignitary, were to hunt up Lambert instead of harrying the editors of newspapers, we venture to say that he would be rendering the community infinitely more valuable services — services which all would appreciate."

From the beginning to the end the company has been one, as I stated before, and as I think this will illustrate, that has not brought credit to the country; and why we should sacrifice this enormous amount of money for the benefit of that association astonishes me. I protest against the third reading of the Bill. I do not suppose there is much use in doing so, but at the last moment I desire to record my protest against it.

Mr. WHYTE.—I should like to ask your ruling, Sir, on a point of order. We all look on the Premier as the head of this Government, and he disclaims having anything to do with this Bill. Therefore, Sir, this must be a private Bill introduced by the honourable member for Kaiapoi. It appears to me that we have been traversing the Standing Orders with reference to private Bills.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member has disclosed no point of order for me to give a ruling upon.

Mr. REESE.—I have voted consistently, from the first, against the purchasing of district railways. I have done so this evening, and I intend to vote against the purchasing of this district railway. I rose, however, for the express purpose of challenging the statements which the Premier made with reference to the honourable member for Auckland East. He stated deliberately that these negotiations were brought about by the agitation aroused by the honourable member for Auckland East a few months ago. I would draw the attention of the Minister for Public Works to this fact: that in November last the first telegram which started the negotiations was sent by the honourable member for Hokonui to the Minister for Public Works, and the correspondence finishes up with the terms laid down by the Minister in a letter dated the 8th April. I want to point out that it was not till May of this year that the honourable member for Auckland East addressed the people at Gore. That was one month after the Minister for Public Works had sent his letter; so that I think the Premier has done an injustice to the honourable member for Auckland East in saying that it was his address at Gore which caused this agitation.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—The honourable member for Taranaki has, I think, endeavoured rather to mislead this House—that is, he has endeavoured to influence certain members by misstating facts; and the honourable member for Ashley, I am sure, knows that what he says is not correct. The honourable member for Taranaki says that if this line falls into the hands of the Government the rates will immediately be reduced. On the other district-railway lines which have been purchased the rates have not been reduced, and it is not proposed to seriously reduce them except with the consent of the ratepayers. The honourable member for Selwyn and the honourable member for Ashley practically charged me with not taking care of the colony's funds, and with presenting these wealthy companies with thousands of pounds. Did it strike those honourable gentlemen that until the negotiations were practically concluded this company refused £33,000?

Sir R. STOUT.—I wish to make a personal explanation. The honourable member for Starmore stated that negotiations were concluded

in April, and that the people were not met by the honourable member for Auckland East till May. The people at Gore were met by the honourable member for Auckland East in March.

Mr. REESE.—I stated distinctly that the first telegram from the honourable member for Hokonui to the Minister for Public Works was dated the 11th November, and that the final letter of the Minister for Public Works to the secretary of the company was dated the 8th April, and I stated, or meant to state, that between these two dates the honourable member for Auckland East addressed the people at Gore.

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be read a third time."

AYES, 29.

Ballance	Hobbs	Ross
B.-Bradshaw	Joyce	Steward, W. J.
Brown	Kerr	Stewart, W. D.
Cowan	Lance	Sutter
Dargaville	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Fitzherbert	Moat	Thomson, J. W.
Grace	O'Conor	Tole.
Guinness	Pyke	*Tellers.*
Hatch	Richardson, E.	Fergus
Hislop	Richardson, G.	Walker.

NOES, 18.

Bryce	Macarthur	Wakefield
Buchanan	Montgomery	Whyte
Buckland, J. C.	Pearson	Wilson.
Conolly	Reese	*Tellers.*
Dodson	Rolleston	Peacock
Grey	Thompson, T.	Trimble.
Lake		

Majority for, 11.

Bill read a third time.

On the question, That the Bill do pass,

Sir G. GREY said,—I should like the House to fairly consider what it is doing. There is really a large number of persons interested in the question. I think one thing that is very little known is, that among the shareholders of the New Zealand Agricultural Company in England there is a great deal of distress. Lately I have received a telegram telling me of the case of an aged man, between eighty-six and eighty-seven years of age, a retired medical officer, who, some years ago, when this company was started, invested the savings of his life, which he looked to to support him in his old age, and who is now in the greatest distress. But what is a fact that appears to be overlooked is this: that the persons we are relieving are not only the ratepayers, but that probably we are giving a large sum of money to the original vendors of the land to the Agricultural Company, who have no claim on our consideration. I think that there can be no doubt whatever that on an investigation of their accounts this would be found to be something like the case: that the New Zealand Agricultural Company raised some £300,000, or some such sum as that, from the sale of shares, and they were obliged, in point of fact, to raise money shortly afterwards in debentures in order to carry on the company. What I am told of their position shows almost certainly that ultimately lands of considerable value out of those which were sold by the original vendors must go back to them because they took security on those lands, and that the persons we therefore are giving money to, by relieving them from the payment of these rates, are in part the original vendors of the land to the Agricultural Company, who are strongly supported in this House. Then, I feel sure that the gentleman whom I have referred to as having suffered so greatly was induced to enter into this speculation on account of the great public officers who were engaged in the formation of the company, and whose names appeared in the report of the New Zealand Agricultural Company published in England. For instance, amongst them was the name of our late Agent-General, the present Colonial Treasurer. That is what I feel so much; and I cannot help feeling that this House has nominally been induced to attempt to relieve a number of persons who are ratepayers, while really the unfortunate persons on whom the losses will fall we have done nothing for. I cannot help feeling that they have a claim in some way upon us in consequence of the use of the names of great public officers in getting this company up. I hope the House will even now pause, and—feeling that we have a Premier who is solicitor to both companies which will benefit so largely, and a Treasurer who is connected with the great losses that must fall on the shareholders of the company, and another Minister who was one of the original vendors—that it will not pass this Bill, but allow another Government to bring it in. The Premier was good enough to say that I was the cause of forcing this Bill on—in fact, he gave me great blame for this; but I would remind this House that almost the first thing this Government did after they got into office was to get this measure pushed on; and honourable gentlemen who were in the House at the time will recollect that I protested most strongly against their action. Did I in any way force them to do that? Was not all my effort to prevent them, and to recall them to a sense of the great duty that falls upon them in consequence of the high offices we have conferred upon them? Then, the Premier spoke of what took place at Gore. I was there in March; and he will find that the negotiations commenced by the Government had then proceeded very far—that, in point of fact, the Government were committed to go on with them if they could possibly make an arrangement. I showed that they brought this measure forward against my will when first they took office; and what shocked me so much was that gentlemen so largely interested in the matter should, on going into office, so soon endeavour to carry a measure which would so largely benefit the New Zealand Agricultural Company. Then, I contend that no action of mine at Gore in any way necessitated their taking this step. I was going through the

country, not in connection with this matter, but upon a Bill of a totally different character, and to try and get the people to take up a Bill which I am certain would be of very great advantage to them. It was an accidental circumstance, as it were, that I went to Gore, and I had no conception of what I was to encounter when I went there. I was asked to go there, and I felt very much for the position into which the people were plunged, and was determined to help them by legislation; but I deny that I am the cause in any way, directly or indirectly, of having this Bill pushed forward, which I think an injustice to the Gore settlers. I appeal again to the Government; and I feel that I ought to do so—that Ministers circumstanced as they are should not attempt to carry this Bill through. Their influence in this House is great. A Minister may rise from his seat, and go out through that door of the House; but the shadow of his influence remains behind him here, and it is felt throughout the country also, for he can make men's fortunes or ruin them at a moment's notice. Those powers may be justly exercised; but, nevertheless, in the minds of men there will always be a suspicion that Ministers give great advantage to their supporters. The Premier must know his power, and that his colleagues have been interested in various ways in this matter. I ask him, then, to rise now, and set an example which will last to all time, and say, at this the last moment, "I feel I ought not to do this," and thereby set a great example to New Zealand for ever, and hand his name down to posterity, by saying, "I withdraw this Bill, and leave it to some other Ministry or some other person to do that with which I feel that I ought not to meddle."

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—The Minister for Public Works has said that I was wrong in stating that, in passing this Bill, we are giving £4,000 of the public money to a private company; and the only reason he had to give in denial of my statement was this: that the company had refused £33,000. Now, did he mean to say that they were in earnest in such refusal, or did he not? He stated that he would have dropped the Bill at once if we had stuck to the £27,000; and yet he tells the House that my statement that he had given £4,000 to the company was incorrect, for the reason that the company had refused £33,000. Does the Minister mean to tell the House that the company was sincere in that refusal? He is silent. He openeth not his mouth.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—As far as we know, they were sincere.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—And yet the Minister has accepted the vote of £31,000. The honourable gentleman tells us he would have dropped the Bill if we had stuck to the £27,000. Why does he not drop the Bill now that we have voted £31,000? Because he knows perfectly well that the company will jump at it, as they would have jumped at the £27,000. We are not quite children in these matters. We have seen other transactions between private companies and the Government, and we know it is the regular routine for the companies to refuse what all the while they are only too eager to get, and what all the while they would be only too glad to get one-half of. It is the regular Dutch-auction system. Have we not seen in this session the case of a private individual who had sold a piece of land, of the value of £3,000, who had it thrown back on his hands by the purchaser, and yet he got £17,000 for this from the Government? The purchase I refer to is a piece of property in Auckland—the notorious Stark's Point property; £17,000 the Government paid for it, and the owner could not get £3,000 from a private purchaser.

Mr. DARGAVILLE.—Absolutely incorrect.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I am not going to take the honourable member's word as to it. I know what I am speaking about. And this is not the first instance of a thing of the kind that has occurred. Talk about refusal! This man may have refused to sell for £6,000, £7,000, £8,000, and up to £17,000; but he got the £17,000, and, as he went to America with the money in his pocket, he was, like Clive, astonished at his own moderation. He was sorry he had not asked £27,000 for it. The honourable gentleman's argument will delude nobody, because everybody knows that a private company in dealing in a matter like this refuses, and refuses, and refuses until he comes to the point at which it can afford to sell. So I say now that the company are making £4,000 out of this which they have no right to make, and we are making them a present of £4,000 more than the railway is honestly worth. The sooner that fact is known to the public the better. Not one public reason has been urged why this sum should be given, in the teeth of the evidence of the officers of the Government who were examined before the Committee. And I would not allow it to be left on record that my statement was incorrect, when we have before us this session in the deliberations upon this Bill abundant evidence of the truth of what I say—that the Government have, by a majority of two, obtained a decision of this House which practically gives £4,000 of the public money to a private company, which ought properly to have remained in the public chest, and which has been taken from the taxpayers.

Mr. REESE.—When I challenged the Premier's statement a few moments ago I did so hurriedly, from the fact that I had not had time to refer to the papers. But now, after looking at the papers, I see that the action of the honourable member for Auckland East had nothing whatever to do with the negotiations that were going on with the honourable member for Hokonui. On the 11th November, 1885, the honourable member for Hokonui telegraphed to the Treasurer; and he received a reply the same day. He then, on the 23rd December, sent the following telegram to the Minister for Public Works:—

"Have got offer of Waimea line for one month for £108,000 and some stiff conditions. Price will return money invested without interest or profit. Offer by first mail."

That is the distinct offer to the Government.

I will pass over some of the other correspondence, and I will go to the last paragraph of the letter of the Minister for Public Works of the 31st December, which is as follows:—

"In view of the present holidays, however, and of the probable absence of myself and Sir Julius Vogel in Auckland for some little time, it may probably be some weeks before a full Cabinet can be got together to decide upon the question, and I have therefore thought it better in the meantime to acknowledge your letter, with an indication as to my own views on the subject, pending the decision of the Government being given upon it."

Then, again, we will take the 10th February, when the honourable member for Hokonui wired to the Minister for Public Works,—

"Offer of Waimea may lapse on the 15th instant. Does Government wish further extension? Will be glad to try and arrange matter."

The Minister for Public Works replies, two days later,—

"The report I advised you I was getting as to the real value of the Waimea line to the Government of course cannot be considered by Cabinet till we meet at the end of this or early next month. Probably the company, if they really wish to sell, will not withdraw."

Then follows further correspondence with the secretary; and on the 8th April the Minister for Public Works makes a distinct offer to the secretary. So that the terms and conditions were submitted by the honourable member for Hokonui, and the Government, at first, had not time to consider them, but when they did consider them they accepted the proposals of the company which were made in November and December last.

Sir R. STOUT.—It would perhaps have been better if the honourable member had not got up to defend the honourable member for Auckland East till he had made himself master of the facts of the case. What he said was that we had finished the negotiations before the honourable member for Auckland East went to Gore. That was wrong. The negotiations were not finished till the 2nd June, and the honourable member went to Gore in March. That is what I said. I think it is very improper and inadvisable for a member of this House, when he must have known that the Government were negotiating for this line, to interfere by stirring up matters in connection with the railway, to try and force the hand of the Government.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I should like to ask the Minister whether any representations whatever came to the Government from the Gore District in reference to the purchase of this line owing to the meeting held by the honourable member for Auckland East. The whole thing was substantially settled on the 11th April——

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Colonel TRIMBLE.— —and to say that the meeting held in March had anything to do with it, is mere moonshine. As a matter of fact, I believe that the negotiations were concluded by that time, and no communication came to the Government from Gore before the final offer was made; and this is an entire after-thought—absolutely a thought that came into the honourable gentleman's brain for the first time to-night.

Mr. KERR.—The honourable member for Auckland East says that the Minister ought to get up at the last moment and save the country. The honourable gentleman says that he was going through the country soliciting the whole of the people to pass a Bill which he said would save the country. It is quite evident that the people did not believe in him or his Bill; but he did not say what the Bill was. He said, when the Premier did such a thing as this it was in his power to discharge any officer of the Government. I do not think the Premier would do such a thing, or any other person who held that position in the colony. But I am not aware that that has anything to do with it. It is quite evident to me that, if the Premier goes through the country and persuades the people to do this they must have a good deal more faith in the Premier than they have in the honourable member for Auckland East. I might as well be stonewalling this as any one else. This side of the House has been trying to get on with the work of the country, so that we could get away at a decent time. We have been in session now for about three months, but it appears to me that we are going to be here for another three weeks, and a month after that. If we do not come to a decision on this Bill soon, this side of the House will have something to say on the matter too. I hope, therefore, we shall be allowed to get on with the work.

Mr. DARGAVILLE.—I have only a few words to say on this subject, chiefly in reply to what has fallen from the honourable member for Selwyn. That honourable gentleman asserted positively that the company would accept an offer of £27,000 if it were made. I suppose he made that statement on some information that he had; but he did not condescend to give us that information, or to say from what source he got it. Perhaps it was inspired; perhaps the honourable gentleman will tell us whether the company would take £25,000. He does not make any sign. He does not know.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I am not an agent for the company.

Mr. DARGAVILLE.—No. The honourable gentleman knows as a positive fact that they would take £27,000; but he does not know whether they would take £25,000. Now, the honourable gentleman knows just as much about the one as about the other, and that is absolutely nothing. Is there anything in the evidence as to the negotiations to show that the company would take £27,000? Nothing whatever: on the contrary, the whole of the evidence goes the other way. But what is the position the honourable gentleman takes up? He says, "The company are in a hopeless position; they are at our mercy; they are not able to recover their rates: therefore let us take

advantage of their position to screw them down to the very lowest farthing."

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I never said so.

Mr. DARGAVILLE.—That was the whole tenor of his remarks. If that was not the direction in which his arguments went, I fail to understand what they are at all. I say it is not creditable to the commercial morality of anybody to advocate the doctrine that, because these unfortunate people, through our defective legislation, are not able to recover even interest on the capital they have invested in the enterprise, therefore we are to take advantage of their position to screw them down to the lowest possible point. Sir, I feel that the remarks of the honourable gentleman had very little weight, and that the last stage of this Bill will be passed.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Allow me to say, as a matter of personal explanation, that I never made any such statement as that attributed to me by the honourable member for Auckland West. What I said was this: that the honourable member for Wakatipu had stated that the ratepayers would not and could not pay their rates, and therefore we might be quite sure that the company would be glad to accept the price which had been fixed as the real value of the line by Government engineers, and which this House has agreed upon as the price to pay. I never said they were in a helpless position and at our mercy, and that we could screw what we liked out of them; and I object altogether to being totally misrepresented by the honourable gentleman.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Sir, the honourable member for Selwyn, in speaking on the passing of this Bill, introduced the question of the Stark property, and made a charge against me of having wasted a large sum of money. Sir, I say the honourable member must know, if he has looked at the correspondence, that the statement he has deliberately made in this House is absolutely incorrect; and, if he has not looked into the evidence, he ought not to have made the statement.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I have read it.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON.—Then I have only to say that the honourable member has attempted deliberately to mislead the House.

Bill passed.

MINES BILL.

A message was received from the Legislative Council, stating that the Council did not adhere to its amendments in this Bill, with the exception of the amendment in clause 184.

Mr. LARNACH moved, That this House do not insist upon its reasons for disagreeing with the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Mines Bill, and that the concession made by the Council in the Bill be now agreed to. The clause in regard to which the Legislative Council insisted upon their amendment referred to prospecting on private lands. At present the law allowed the resumption of private lands known to be auriferous, but there was no power to go on private lands in order to ascertain whether such lands were auriferous: hence the clause now under consideration had been inserted in the Bill to enable this to be done; but the Legislative Council had resisted that, and, considering the great relief miners would receive from this Bill becoming law by the reduction of miners' rights from 20s. to 5s., he was content to leave and accept the Bill as it stood.

Mr. ROLLESTON wished to know if there was to be no power of prospecting upon the lands set aside for the Midland Railway.

Mr. LARNACH.—Not greater power, for the present, than now exists.

Mr. ROLLESTON thought the clause had been inserted for the purpose of giving miners the right to prospect over that land.

Mr. LARNACH.—Not particularly over the Midland Railway Company's land, but over all private lands.

Mr. ROLLESTON desired to know if there was any fresh power of resuming lands in the Bill.

Mr. LARNACH.—No; not now—in consequence of the clause referred to having been disagreed with by the Council.

Motion to accept the concession of the Council agreed to.

LOCAL BODIES' LOANS BILL.

A message was received from the Legislative Council, requesting a fresh Conference with the House of Representatives on their amendments of clause 38 of the Local Bodies' Loans Bill.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That four new Managers be appointed—namely, Major Atkinson, Mr. Montgomery, Mr. Macandrew, and the mover.

Motion agreed to.

SITTING OF PARLIAMENT AT NELSON.

On the motion, That the House go into Committee of Supply,

Mr. KERR moved, That special provision be made this session for holding the meeting of Parliament in Nelson next session.

Motion negatived.

SUPPLY.

PUBLIC WORKS FUND.

CLASS VIII.—PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

General departmental offices, £7,000, agreed to.

Judicial, £21,100, agreed to.

Post and Telegraph, £3,500, agreed to.

Customs, £500, agreed to.

Lunatic asylums, £16,400, agreed to.

Hospitals and charitable institutions, £8,100, agreed to.

Quarantine stations, £400, agreed to.

School-buildings, £55,000.

Dr. NEWMAN drew attention to the fact that the school-buildings grant was never paid until almost the close of the financial year. Last year that was the case, although the Government had plenty of money in hand. In consequence of this delay the whole of the Education Boards had to get overdrafts, for which they paid heavily; and it made a great

al of confusion, because the Boards would e to put important works in hand in the mmer, which they could not do owing to this lay.

Captain RUSSELL said this grant for school-ildings was absolutely inadequate to provide r essential requirements—at any rate, in his strict. There, the buildings, for want of pair, were being damaged; they were unable get a proper water-supply for the children; ere were no proper conveniences; the masters re not properly accommodated; and the ildren had to be taught under verandahs d trees. Whether there was an unnecessary nount granted to other districts he could not y, but in Hawke's Bay the amount was ab-lutely insufficient. He hoped this money ould not be distributed on a capitation basis rely, but rather that it would be distributed nong those districts where it was proved that ere was not sufficient school-accommodation. a member of the Board of Hawke's Bay had urged on the members to resign and row on the Government the duty of carrying the administration in regard to education, the present condition of affairs was simply farce, the principal duty of the Board being refuse applications for school-buildings, and lmit that they were not able to perform their nctions for want of means.

Mr. TURNBULL said the honourable mem-r for Hawke's Bay should remember the still eater hardship suffered by a very large class people—a very influential class of people—the colony who were actually paying for ery school-building they erected, besides pay-g for teachers out of their own pockets; while, the same time, those poor people were taxed rough the Consolidated Fund to provide for e education of the children of the rest of the mmunity.

Sir R. STOUT recognized that this was not ough money for the purpose; but they must al with school-buildings as with other things according to their means. No doubt if a rtain clause had not been struck out of the unties Bill—enabling local bodies to con-ibute towards this work—there would not be y complaints from Hawke's Bay. The people Hawke's Bay were exceedingly generous, and e Road Board there had contributed pound for ound towards the erection of a school. He new that Hawke's Bay was peculiarly situ-ted, owing to the rapid increase of population, nd the want of proper accommodation in the ovincial days. With regard to the distribu-ion of the vote late in the year, the honourable ember for Thorndon would see from the turns that some Boards, instead of having verdrafts, were considerably in credit.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the Wellington Dis-rict had been rapidly increasing in population, nd consequently large demands were made on e very small buildings at the disposal of the oard. Teachers were not housed, and in any ways education was very badly looked fter. At the present time the building fund as overdrawn. As long as the money was paid n a population basis, and no allowance made for the opening-up of new districts, so long would education be badly looked after. He hoped the Premier would pay special attention to this matter.

Mr. SUTTER, referring to the complaint that Wellington had not sufficient for buildings, would reply, Look at the Terrace School! How much had been squandered there! A good school had been pulled down, and enough spent on a new one to provide four or five fine large schools in country districts. The Boards should economize very largely in the matter of school-buildings before they complained that they had not enough. No more schools would be built in that style if local bodies were compelled to give half the cost of buildings, instead of the funds wholly coming from loans raised by the Government. He would support a special Act for that purpose. He knew of one case—Waimate—where a school for 260 children had cost £2,600, and another for 250 children had cost £2,600. It was a disgrace to use public money in that way. The cost of school-buildings would be lessened by half if the local bodies had to bear a large part of the cost: there would not then be a bit of extravagance.

Mr. BEETHAM said the old Terrace School was absolutely insufficient, and was not in fair condition to be used as a school, and it had to be replaced by a normal school.

Mr. ROLLESTON said no doubt there had been a great deal of extravagance in the large towns in buildings. He did not think this vote adequate; but, then, they could not increase it. It was very much to be regretted that hundreds of thousands of pounds were spent on railways along navigable rivers and the sea-shores, and in other jobs of that kind, when they could not increase this vote. He would like again to call the attention of the Minister of Education to this practical point, by which he had endeavoured to effect reform: He thought the department, when giving these large sums for school-buildings, should take some guarantee that the utmost value was obtained for the money. There should be standard drawings possessed by the department, and then it would be known how much the accommodation cost per head. They would then be able to know what they were doing. At the present time gorgeous buildings were erected in the large centres of population, while in many parts of the country districts the barest accommodation could not be obtained.

Mr. FULTON said that in Otago they had standard drawings, to be used according to the number of children to be provided for.

Mr. DODSON asked if the Premier would extend his offer of a subsidy of pound for pound to any one else beside local bodies.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Mr. DODSON.—If not, why not? If it was fair for one, surely it was fair for another. If a school was provided for giving the education the State required, and met the State requirements, then that school should be recognized by assistance from the State. Was the Premier

going to distribute the funds on a population basis?

Sir R. STOUT said he had copies of the drawings used in Victoria and in New South Wales, and he found that the school-buildings there were far more expensive than those in New Zealand, and he did not think they were so suitable. The Victorian Government had very kindly supplied copies of the drawings for nothing. He did not think it would be possible to get all the Boards to adopt standard drawings, and the Government could not interfere with the Boards in the matter of the style of buildings. He believed that only the Otago Board had standard drawings. During the last two years the fund had been distributed on a population basis, except £4,000 given specially to the most needy districts.

Mr. TURNBULL would call for a division against the vote, as a protest against making some people provide school-buildings at their own sole cost, and yet compelling them to pay a large share of the cost of schools for other people.

Mr. BRUCE said no doubt in some country districts there was wholly insufficient accommodation. In face of children being unable to get even rudimentary education in some places for want of funds, should they spend many thousands on higher education in the towns, in addition to the other extra educational advantages the towns possessed? He protested against this injustice. His protest might be without effect, but that would not prevent him making it.

Mr. GUINNESS said there were items of £200 for the New Plymouth High School, and £250 for the Waitaki Girls' School. He moved, That the total vote be reduced by £450, the total of the New Plymouth and Waitaki items. How could the colony afford to borrow money for high schools, when it had not enough money to make roads to those schools? Some parts of the colony, though most anxious to get high schools, could not get a farthing for them. On behalf of his constituents, he entered his protest against this injustice. The colony had no right to borrow for school-buildings. Though the money had been expended unjustly in the past, it ought not to be so in the future, and the expenditure for primary and secondary education should be so conducted that the taxpayers of the country might know exactly what was being done, and be able to keep a check over the expenditure. That was the proper way, and he could not support the present vote for high schools out of loan.

Mr. TAYLOR could not understand this hue-and-cry against education, for he believed that even borrowed money could be much better spent on education than on many purposes to which it was devoted. In England the increase of expenditure on education had been accompanied by a decrease of expenditure on pauperism, and as the people were educated expenditure on pauperism would continue to decrease. His experience was that Education Boards were economical in their expenditure on school-buildings. Certainly the North Canterbury Board was economical. He objected to the proposal to give a pound-for-pound subsidy, as exceedingly unfair to poor districts.

Mr. LEVESTAM said he had fought and won his first election as an advocate for maintaining a high standard of education in the primary schools; but he objected to money being spent on secondary schools, which were mainly attended by the children of those who did not wish their children to rub shoulders with the children of the masses, and were rich enough to pay for separate education if they would have it. There were small children being educated at State expense at secondary schools who should be in the primary schools.

Mr. MOSS represented that there were great inequalities in the equipment of schools in different parts of the colony. The Province of Auckland was behind in the matter of buildings and equipments, simply for the reason that it had never been able to overtake the arrears which had been caused by the difficulties of the early days, when Auckland had no Land Fund to devote to the erection of school-buildings. He hoped that the Premier would himself see that this vote was properly distributed, so as to remove inequalities, not merely as regarded provincial districts, but also as regarded school districts. He was not sure that the Education Boards were the proper bodies to expend this money.

Mr. DODSON also hoped that the Premier would look into the matter carefully and see that the money was distributed so that the most needy places should receive consideration. The effort of the Government should be in the direction of the equalization of buildings and equipments, and then the casting of responsibility for these matters in the future on the various localities themselves. That would be a better and cheaper method of providing school-buildings.

Mr. TURNBULL said he yielded to no one in valuing education, but he wished the colony to take pattern by the noble example set by a section of the people who educated their children and provided their own schools, teachers, and everything else necessary. He was anxious that the system should not be so built up and maintained as to pauperise the people. They had a brilliant example before them, but they preferred a system which was disgraceful, and was calculated to destroy the spirit of the people. It seemed to be a growing idea that it was the duty of the State to educate people, support them while they lived, and bury them when they died—to teach people that they had no duties to perform themselves. That seemed to be one of the results that were arising from the present education system.

Mr. SUTTER said the leading countries in Europe took a pride in having good schools. In Scotland the smallest town had a grammar school, in order to give secondary education to all classes. In Germany there was the same thing; and they had been adding to their high schools in Victoria. At Timaru nine or ten

scholarships were given during the year, ole for two years; and twelve scholarships d be given by-and-by. Those scholarships not for the rich people, for they would end their children to school there.

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. GUINNESS asked leave to withdraw amendment. In moving it he simply ed to place on record how his district had treated by the Minister of Educ ation.

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ass IX.—Lighthouses, Harbour-works, and Harbour Defences.

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Major ATKINSON said it seemed to him at the line which the honourable member for vercargill had taken was extraordinary. He mitted that the coast should be properly hted, but said that the ships should pay. He (Major Atkinson) held entirely different views om those expressed by the honourable gentlean. The endeavour of the colony should be leave its shipping as free as possible. He ould like to see not only the lights free, but e harbours also. If the shipowners were ade to pay most of the money it would come on the people in the increased cost of goods. he colony wanted to be known to shipowners roughout the world as a colony that wished foster the shipping trade. He would support reduction in the light-dues.

Mr. BRUCE said the views of the honourable member for Egmont were the views of all advanced seafaring men. If the shipping were to be charged for these lights, of course they would put it on to the freights and passage-money.

Mr. WAKEFIELD would simply comment on the speech of the honourable member for Egmont by saying, "Three cheers for free-trade."

Mr. SUTTER said it was the honourable member for Egmont who had lowered these dues. The lights on the coast of Great Britain were not kept up by the Government, but by Trinity House, and were maintained out of the dues.

Mr. HATCH said the returns showed that the expense of erecting the lighthouses had been £150,890, that the receipts last year were £7,423, and that the cost of maintaining the lights was £11,087, irrespective of the interest on the cost of construction.

Major ATKINSON said he had looked into the matter on account of representations made to him by small shipowners, and he found that the dues very materially hampered their business. It was for that reason he had made a reduction. If the high dues were restored it would greatly cripple the small coasters.

Mr. BRUCE pointed out that there was no analogy between the coast of New Zealand and that of Great Britain. New Zealand had a great coast-line, and very few vessels; and unless the Government took the matter in hand it would cripple maritime enterprise. Nothing scared ships away from countries more than high light-dues.

Mr. CONOLLY would like honourable members to remember that these lights were not put up only for the benefit of shipowners, but to render travelling in ships round the coast quicker and safer. Therefore it would be most unfair to put the whole of the cost of maintaining the lights on the shipping.

Mr. KERR could remember the time when there were a great many more sailing coasters along these coasts than there were now, and no lighthouses were wanted then. The people who were advocating the taking-off of the light-dues were the Union Company, and the fact was that these lighthouses were built for that company specially. He hoped the Minister of Marine would increase the dues. As for the honourable member for Picton saying that these lights were for the safety of passengers, the honourable gentleman should look after his own port, which was the worst lighted in the colony.

Mr. WAKEFIELD said that when the "Tararua" went ashore on Waipapapa Point there was at once a cry throughout the whole colony that the Government should put up a light there; and so it would be whenever a ship was lost. There never was a time when there were more coasters than now, and, in his opinion, it would be wise to make all lights and harbours free.

Mr. SEDDON said that if any honourable member would move that this vote be reduced by £1 it would be taken as an indication that

going to distribute the funds on a population basis?

Sir R. STOUT said he had copies of the drawings used in Victoria and in New South Wales, and he found that the school-buildings there were far more expensive than those in New Zealand, and he did not think they were so suitable. The Victorian Government had very kindly supplied copies of the drawings for nothing. He did not think it would be possible to get all the Boards to adopt standard drawings, and the Government could not interfere with the Boards in the matter of the style of buildings. He believed that only the Otago Board had standard drawings. During the last two years the fund had been distributed on a population basis, except £4,000 given specially to the most needy districts.

Mr. TURNBULL would call for a division against the vote, as a protest against making some people provide school-buildings at their own sole cost, and yet compelling them to pay a large share of the cost of schools for other people.

Mr. BRUCE said no doubt in some country districts there was wholly insufficient accommodation. In face of children being unable to get even rudimentary education in some places for want of funds, should they spend many thousands on higher education in the towns, in addition to the other extra educational advantages the towns possessed? He protested against this injustice. His protest might be without effect, but that would not prevent him making it.

Mr. GUINNESS said there were items of £200 for the New Plymouth High School, and £250 for the Waitaki Girls' School. He moved, That the total vote be reduced by £450, the total of the New Plymouth and Waitaki items. How could the colony afford to borrow money for high schools, when it had not enough money to make roads to those schools? Some parts of the colony, though most anxious to get high schools, could not get a farthing for them. On behalf of his constituents, he entered his protest against this injustice. The colony had no right to borrow for school-buildings. Though the money had been expended unjustly in the past, it ought not to be so in the future, and the expenditure for primary and secondary education should be so conducted that the taxpayers of the country might know exactly what was being done, and be able to keep a check over the expenditure. That was the proper way, and he could not support the present vote for high schools out of loan.

Mr. TAYLOR could not understand this hue-and-cry against education, for he believed that even borrowed money could be much better spent on education than on many purposes to which it was devoted. In England the increase of expenditure on education had been accompanied by a decrease of expenditure on pauperism, and as the people were educated expenditure on pauperism would continue to decrease. His experience was that Education Boards were economical in their expenditure on school-buildings. Certainly the North Canterbury Board was economical. He objected to the proposal to give a pound-for-pound subsidy, as exceedingly unfair to poor districts.

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Mr. SEDDON said that if any honourable member would move that this vote be reduced by £1 it would be taken as an indication that

the dues should be increased; and he would vote for that. He did not believe that if this charge were put on the shipping it would increase the rates of freight or passage-money. It was sufficient for the colony to erect the lighthouses, and the shipping should pay for their maintenance. The Union Company had sufficient power in the House at one time to get itself exempted from the property-tax, and no doubt it was the influence of that company which was now being used to get rid of these dues.

Mr. LARNACH said there was a good deal to be said on both sides. He was now getting information from the other colonies, and also in connection with the trade in New Zealand, and would take the whole matter into consideration during the recess.

Mr. MONTGOMERY did not consider that, whether they voted the money or not, it would have the effect of bringing one more steamer to New Zealand.

Mr. SUTTER said sailing-ships were charged for lighthouses, but those that lay in the roadsteads had nothing to pay.

Mr. WAKEFIELD said he got his information on the subject from a paper by Sir Frederick Weld, the Governor of the Straits Settlements, which was read before the Colonial Institute.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE was astonished at the remark of the honourable member for Waimea that there used to be four times the number of vessels that now come here. It appeared to him that this was a dead-set on the Union Company. He had heard that company praised by travellers from one end of the colony to the other, and their steamers were said to be the best-fitted in the world. The shareholders had recently deprived themselves of a larger dividend in order to treat the colony fairly, and now it was proposed to reduce their income in this manner. The Anchor Line, in Nelson, was a struggling company, and there were many other companies in the same position.

Mr. KERR said he said, or meant to say, that there were four times the number of sailing-vessels that used to come to New Zealand.

Amendment withdrawn.

Harbour-works, £100.

Mr. DARGAVILLE asked if there was any provision here for deepening the Whangarei River, as promised by the Premier when he was in the district. It was promised that £10,000 should be expended on that work.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said there was no promise of the sort. There was a proposal to extend the railway, and the local bodies thought it would be better to wait for the present.

Vote agreed to.

Harbour defences, £120,000.

Mr. ROSS drew attention to the fact that last year the amount expended did not reach the amount voted by £87,000.

Mr. BALLANCE replied that the liabilities extended over two years, and the amount required this year was £120,000. The total amount last year was £250,000, but he had stated that £200,000 would be sufficient. The liabilities were liabilities upon works extending over three years, and, in all, a sum of about £300,000 would be required for harbour defences.

Vote, £120,000, agreed to.

CLASS X.—CONTINGENT DEFENCE.

Armed Constabulary Field Force, £12,500, agreed to.

CLASS XI.—RATES ON NATIVE LAND.

Vote, £34,500, agreed to.

NORTH ISLAND TRUNK LOAN.

CLASS II.—PUBLIC WORKS, DEPARTMENTAL.

Vote, £3,000, agreed to.

CLASS III.—RAILWAYS.

New works, construction and land.—Main trunk line, Marton–Te Awamutu, £130,000.

Mr. BRUCE noticed that only £58,000 had been expended out of £130,000 voted last year. That being so, he desired to know how it was that statements had been made that they were unable to carry on new works for want of funds.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said there were liabilities incurred to the extent of £84,000, as explained in the Public Works Statement, before the vote was passed last year.

Mr. BRUCE asked if the liabilities did not go into this year's accounts.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that they did.

Vote, £130,000, agreed to.

CLASS VI.—PURCHASE OF NATIVE LANDS, NORTH ISLAND.

Minister for Native Affairs, £80,000, agreed to.

PUBLIC WORKS FUND (NEW LOAN).

CLASS II.—PUBLIC WORKS, DEPARTMENTAL.

Minister for Public Works, £11,000, agreed to.

CLASS III.—RAILWAYS.

Extension north of Auckland, £4,000, agreed to.

Auckland—Doubling line, £5,000.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE wished to have some explanation of the necessity for this work. The traffic through the Auckland Domain Tunnel could not be one-tenth of what went through the Lyttelton Tunnel, and a single line was found to be sufficient for the traffic between Lyttelton and Christchurch.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON replied that he had explained this on several previous occasions, and had given detailed figures of the cost of the three alternative proposals. There was an incline between the Auckland Railway-station and Newmarket, and the traffic on the line was increasing so rapidly — and, no doubt, would continue to increase—that it was absolutely necessary for the safety of the public and the carriage of the traffic that a second line should be constructed. The question had been under consideration for two or three years, an amount had been expended in surveys to ascertain the best means of carrying on the

lic, and it was with the view of being able commence a work that was recognized as essary that the vote was taken.

Mr. PEACOCK said that from to-day's paper ppeared that the railway facilities for taking sengers out to the football match were insuf-ent. On holidays and race-days the Railway partment entirely failed to afford sufficient ommodation to the travelling public.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked if an estimate l been made for the cost of a double line tead of a loop-line.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that the two p-lines surveyed would cost within £7,000 £8,000 of each other. Each would cost ler £70,000, and doubling the present line s estimated to cost £65,000.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN said it was very clear at the present single line, if doubled, would much cheaper, and would do the work quite ll.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said everything now inted to the doubling of the line; but they uld do nothing without the fullest considera-n.

Mr. DARGAVILLE pointed out that the p-line proposed northwards out of the city uld serve a population of twenty thousand the suburbs, and it must be constructed oner or later.

Mr. PEACOCK said that, in addition to the estion of population, there was the question grade. The grade on either of the loop-lines uld be much easier than by doubling the esent line.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said the grade was t of much consequence, because beyond ther of the loop-lines the grade would be lite as steep as beyond the tunnel.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE did not think very good asons had been given. He was glad to hear at the trade was increasing; but it was range that the line only paid 2½ per cent. they worked the traffic by night as well as by y he was sure there would be no difficulty.

Mr. LAKE would be very glad if the honour-le member for Motueka were Minister for ublic Works, so that the Waikato people ould be able to get night-trains. It was not e Waikato traffic which blocked the tunnel, t the whole of the Onehunga traffic, and a rge amount of suburban traffic.

Mr. T. THOMPSON pointed out that the hole of the Kaipara timber-trade had to pass er this line.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE moved, That the item, Auckland—Doubling line, £5,000," be struck ut.

Mr. MOSS said that if the line through the nnel were doubled it would do admirably for long time to come. Something must be one to meet the difficulty, as it was not safe t present.

Mr. LEVESTAM said there was evidently o good reason for this work, as every Auck-nd member gave a different reason for carry-g it out. He hoped the Auckland members ext year would help the Nelson members to et proper facilities for their traffic. To show how badly off they were, the passengers had to get out and push the train up an incline.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote, 'Auckland—Doubling line, £5,000,' be retained."

AYES, 42.

Atkinson	Kerr	Reese
Ballance	Lake	Richardson, E.
Beetham	Larnach	Richardson, G.
Bevan	Macarthur	Rolleston
B.-Bradshaw	McKenzie, J.	Ross
Brown	Menteath	Seddon
Bruce	Moat	Sutter
Conolly	Montgomery	Taylor
Cowan	Moss	Tole
Dargaville	Newman	Trimble
Dodson	O'Conor	Walker.
Gore	O'Rorke	*Tellers.*
Grace	Parata	Fraser
Guinness	Peacock	Thompson, T.
Hatch		

NOES, 9.

Barron	Levestam	*Tellers.*
Fulton	O'Callaghan	Hursthouse
Hislop	Samuel.	Turnbull.
Joyce		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Duncan	Buchanan
Lance	Bryce
Steward, W. J.	Wilson.

Majority for, 33.

Vote retained.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE moved, That the vote, "Hamilton-Grahamstown, £20,000," be omitted. That line ought never to have been begun, and ought never to be, and never would be, finished. Information he had received since the Loan Bill was passed showed him that the line could never pay ½ per cent., and, but for the late hour, he could convince honourable members of that by giving the information. It would entail a liability of between £200,000 and £300,000 to connect it with the Auckland Railway at Te Aroha; and he ventured to predict that not a single person would travel by that line from the Thames to Auckland unless he had a free pass, because the distance by rail was three times the distance from Auckland to the Thames by sea, where comfortable steamers ran twice a day. The Grey Government started this line by misappropriating money, the then Premier being a member for the Thames; but that was no reason why the House should continue the wrong. If the Minister for Public Works could speak his heartfelt convictions, he would say that the line could not possibly pay for the next quarter of a century.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote, 'Hamilton-Grahamstown, £20,000,' be retained."

AYES, 28.

Ballance	Fraser	Lake
Bevan	Gore	Larnach
B.-Bradshaw	Guinness	McKenzie, J.
Dargaville	Hatch	Menteath

Moat	Reese	Tole
Moss	Richardson, E.	Walker.
Newman	Ross	
O'Rorke	Sutter	*Tellers.*
Parata	Taylor	Cowan
Peacock	Thompson, T.	Grace.

NOES, 16.

Atkinson	Kerr	Trimble
Barron	Levestam	Turnbull.
Bruce	Macarthur	
Fulton	Montgomery	*Tellers.*
Hislop	O'Callaghan	Conolly
Joyce	Rolleston	Hursthouse.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Cadman	Pyke
Duncan	Buchanan
Lance	Bryce
Steward, W. J.	Wilson.

Majority for, 12.

Vote retained.

Auckland–Rotorua, £15,000, agreed to.

Napier–Palmerston, £40,000.

Mr. MACARTHUR complained of the slow rate of progress of this line. When the Government came into office in 1884 they made a point in the Governor's Speech of completing this line and connecting the east and west coasts of the North Island. That was a very proper decision to come to, seeing that, with the exception of one small mineral-line, this was the only line that paid interest upon the cost of construction. This year it yielded a profit of £4 18s. 6d. per cent., and the year before it paid £4 5s. per cent., so that there was every justification for the line being completed. The House was led to believe that it would be completed speedily; but in the next session the Government put on a very small vote, the amount being only £65,000. That amount was reduced by the motion of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay; but, irrespective of that circumstance, the vote was so small as to be quite insufficient to allow of the Gorge contract being let. This session the Government declared as their policy that it was not desirable to complete this railway, because it would benefit the Wellington–Manawatu Company. That was a peculiar position to be taken up by a Government whose policy for three sessions had been largely in the direction of benefiting private railway companies. He admitted, however, that it would be a justifiable reason if it were true that the Government, by completing the line, would increase the value of the Wellington–Manawatu Railway Company's line to the prejudice of the colony in the event of the Government wishing to purchase that line. But such reasoning would not apply, because the Government had the right by Act to take over that line at an arbitrated price, not exceeding 7 per cent. over the cost of construction, if the line were taken over within three years from the time of its completion. The reason given by the Government for not pushing on the line, therefore, was not a good one, and he could only presume that the Government had promised to complete the line because they wanted support, and that their anxiety died away when they found that they were safe in their seats.

Vote, £40,000, agreed to.

Wellington–Woodville line, £40,000.

Greymouth–Hokitika, £30,000, agreed to.

Picton southwards, £15,000, agreed to.

Upper Ashburton Branch, £8,000, agreed to.

Livingstone Branch, £15,000, agreed to.

Catlin's River Branch, £13,000, agreed to.

Edendale–Toitois, £5,000, agreed to.

Otago Central, £87,000, agreed to.

Lumsden–Mararoa, £5,000, agreed to.

Seaward Bush, £6,000, agreed to.

Riversdale–Switzer's (including assessors' fees, £13 12s.), £5,000, agreed to.

Additions to open lines, £93,000, agreed to.

Permanent-way, sleepers, and rolling-stock, £150,000, agreed to.

Surveys of new lines, £3,000, agreed to.

CLASS XII.

Charges and expenses of raising loans, £30,000, agreed to.

PUBLIC WORKS FUND (UNEXPENDED BALANCE).

CLASS I.—MINISTER OF IMMIGRATION.

Immigration, £19,200.

Dr. NEWMAN asked if, in view of the cry from the unemployed, the Minister would strike off anything from this vote.

Mr. BALLANCE said this did not apply to the class from which the unemployed was drawn. A considerable portion was to introduce farmers with capital. Fourteen families had just been introduced, representing seventy-eight souls, who had shown that they possessed capital to the amount of several thousand pounds. They had proved that satisfactorily to the Agent-General before part of their passage-money was paid. With regard to the nominated immigrants, the Government had introduced a class of agricultural labourers, single women, and divided families. They had been careful not to introduce any of the artisan classes. Even those introduced under the nominated-immigrant system possessed capital.

Mr. HATCH asked if, in view of the small amount of immigration, reductions could not be made in the immigration officers.

Mr. BALLANCE said the Government were reducing them gradually, but it was a difficult thing to discharge people who had been a long time in the service. He would look into this matter.

Dr. NEWMAN asked how many agricultural labourers it was proposed to introduce. If it was proposed to introduce any more agricultural labourers he would divide the House on it.

Mr. TURNBULL suggested that, as no more immigration was going on, the vote for the Immigration Officer at Christchurch might be reduced. Would the Minister explain where the Dunedin Immigration Officer was?

Mr. BALLANCE said the Dunedin Immi-

gration Officer was in Scotland at present, to bring out crofters. He (Mr. Ballance) would inquire into the Christchurch matter, and if a reduction could be made it would be. He might explain to the honourable member for Thorndon that nominated immigrants consisted of three classes—agricultural labourers, divided families, and single women. The unemployed did not consist of agricultural labourers, but of tradespeople and denizens of the towns. Agricultural labourers were badly wanted in all parts of the country. There was another class of immigrants coming out—namely, farmers with capital. They had to prove to the Agent-General that they were possessed of capital; and when they arrived out the Immigration Officer at the port at which they landed gave them information as to what land was available, and the quality of it, and assisted them to the utmost. His own opinion was that, instead of the small amount which was now asked for this purpose, there ought to be £100,000 on the estimates if public works were to be carried on vigorously and the colony to progress.

Mr. MOSS said the Minister did not know the condition of the unemployed. They were men of all classes, and it would be cruel to introduce people from England when there was so much suffering here now.

Mr. ROSS wanted to know how the passage-money of the crofters was to be paid, as the £10,000 put on the estimates last year for that purpose was rejected.

Mr. BALLANCE said the £10,000 was to pay the whole cost of the passages of the crofters, and, that having been rejected, they stood in the same position as other immigrants—that was to say, half their passage-money would be paid by the Government. The Immigration Officer who had gone Home found that they could not afford to pay even half the passage-money; but negotiations were going on with the Imperial Government to induce it to pay half the passage-money, and, as that Government was anxious to assist in the matter of emigration, it was thought likely that it would enter into the arrangement.

Mr. MOSS asked the Minister to state, if immigration were stopped at the present moment, how much he would have to provide to meet existing liabilities. Last year the vote was reduced on the distinct understanding that there was to be no more immigration.

Mr. BALLANCE.—No.

Mr. MOSS asked that there might be a clear understanding now.

Mr. BALLANCE said it would require £16,000 to meet existing obligations.

Dr. NEWMAN then altered his motion to the effect that the amount be reduced by £1,000.

Mr. REESE said the immigration question was a very serious one in Canterbury. There were hundreds of unemployed in Christchurch working for 3s. 6d. and 4s. a day, simply to keep themselves from starving.

Mr. BALLANCE said there were no agricultural labourers on that list.

Mr. MOAT said any persons who were willing to work could make a living at the gumfields in the Northern Wairoa. They could earn £1 10s. to £2 10s. a week.

Mr. MOSS said he had good authority for saying that any number of agricultural labourers could be got for 15s. a week and their provisions.

Mr. MOAT said he had been told by several gum-diggers that they could earn their living and save money on the gumfields which he had referred to.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote be reduced by £1,000."

AYES, 13.

Barron	Montgomery	Turnbull.
Dargaville	Peacock	
Gore	Reese	*Tellers.*
Hislop	Ross	Moss
Menteath	Thompson, T.	Newman.

NOES, 20.

Atkinson	Macarthur	Samuel
Ballance	McKenzie, J.	Tole
Bruce	O'Callaghan	Trimble
Conolly	Parata	Walker.
Hatch	Richardson, E.	*Tellers.*
Joyce	Richardson, G.	Fraser
Lake	Rolleston	Moat.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Bryce	Lance
Buchanan	Duncan
Wilson.	Steward, W. J.

Majority against, 7.

Vote, £19,200, agreed to.

Resolutions reported.

The House adjourned at five minutes past three o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 13th August, 1886.

First Readings—Second Readings—Third Readings—Otago Harbour Board—Property Assessment Bill—Settled Land Bill—Municipal Corporations Bill—Counties Bill—Harbours Bill—Local Bodies' Loans Bill—Harbours Bill—Property-tax Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Railways Construction and Land Bill, District Railways Purchasing Bill, Rabbit Nuisance Bill, Property-tax Bill, Public Revenues Bill.

SECOND READINGS.

District Railways Purchasing Bill, Public Revenues Bill, Railways Construction and Land Bill, Property-tax Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

District Railways Purchasing Bill, Property Assessment Bill, Property-tax Bill, Public Revenues Bill.

[illegible]

[illegible] I have the greatest possible objection to clause 5. It is unreasonable. At present as the law stands a company's property is taxed precisely the same as individuals'. If a man has invested his money in shares in a company, that property ought not to be taxed more than if he held it individually. Companies ought to be taxed precisely the same as private individuals in regard to their property. I know no reason whatever why any difference should be made. If a man invested his money in companies which hold land, there should be no reason for making any difference in the taxing of it from the case of a man who held it separately; yet the company is to be taxed in either one of two ways—either on the market value of the property or on the amount stated in the balance-sheet. It is unreasonable that it should be taxed for the amount stated in the balance-sheet, because a company wanting to sell land may sell either on terms or for cash. If an individual wishes to sell the land he is taxed on the land for the

[illegible]

[illegible] Mr. Sperrey, and then we can discuss the clause with more information at our disposal than we have at the present time. I move, therefore, That the debate be adjourned.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I may say that I am very glad that you, Sir, have given the decision which you have on this Bill, and I shall be willing that the debate be adjourned. I always like to take the Council into my confidence—I have no secrets to conceal from them: and I may say that I have had many conversations with Mr. Sperrey about this Bill, because it seemed to require a great deal of information, as, indeed, all Bills of this kind require; and, after receiving a good deal of explanation about it from Mr. Sperrey, he informed me that the

n of the word "company" which is in ' does not meet the point which he o get hold of; and therefore it was sug- that, as this was not a Bill that could ıded by the Council, a message should from the Governor to amend that m. I will have the amendments ready evening, and in the meantime I hope ourable friend will place me in posses- any amendments he intends to move, I may have an opportunity of conferring e department on the matter.

te adjourned.

SETTLED LAND BILL.

Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER moved, That uncil agree with the amendments made House of Representatives in the Settled Bill. Some of them were merely verbal ıments, and he would just mention those were of any importance. As he had when he introduced the Bill, the two ımportant clauses were 3 and 7. Clause ided that the tenant for life might sell and or part thereof, and the House of sentatives had added the words "with nsent of the Court." He did not think was any advantage to the Bill; but, at ame time, he did not propose to dissent it.

ı Hon. Mr. ROBINSON said the father of Bill had informed them, when he intro- l the Bill, that they must have the Bill in condition or nothing else; and yet it had gone many important amendments.

e Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I never so.

e Hon. Mr. ROBINSON said the honour- gentleman did not say that in so many s, but it was to that effect. The power ıortgage had been struck out of the Bill. ıad expected the honourable gentleman to ıin the difference between this Bill and the which had been introduced. It might be ry good Bill as it stood now, and it had ı deprived of a great many clauses which hought were very objectionable; but he was it would give a great deal of employment he lawyers in the future. It was provided t, after selling the land, the money should nvested in a certain way; but this had been red, and it was now provided that, if the ator "willed" that the money should not be ested in land, this could not be done. It ı not, however, his intention to make many ections to the Bill. He thought it would be ter to discuss the amendments in Commit- of the Whole; but, if the honourable gentle- n in charge of the Bill preferred to give the uncil an explanation of the clauses one by e, he was ready to fall in with that course.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER said he was quite re the honourable gentleman would be only ı glad to give the desired explanations: in ct, he was proceeding to do so. His honour- le friend Mr. Robinson knew perfectly well ıat the alterations were: they were quite vious to any one who had taken the trouble read the Order Paper. The gist of them was that the operation was to be performed with the consent of the Court. That was an amendment which, he thought, would commend itself to the approval of the Council.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER moved, That the amendments made in clause 3 be agreed to.

The Hon. Mr. SWANSON wanted to know whether there would be any finality about applying for the consent of the Court. If an application was refused, how often might the applicant go to the Court? Could he go again and again?

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—No.

The Hon. Mr. SWANSON.—At whose expense is it to be?

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—At his own.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON said there was no doubt that this was an excellent lawyers' Bill. He wanted to know whether it was really certain that these applications to the Court would be at the expense of the applicants, or whether the costs would be charged against the estate.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said that costs were always awarded at the discretion of the Court.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—Then it is not clear that it is to come from the tenant for life?

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—Then who is to pay for it?

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said an application might be dismissed, and the applicant would have to pay. The Court would exercise its discretion as to who should pay and what the amount should be.

Amendment agreed to.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER moved, That the amendment in clause 7 be agreed to.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON was very sorry that the honourable gentleman had decided to accept the amendment with regard to investment in securities on land or in real securities. It seemed that "real securities" actually meant freehold land; but another term was used—"on land," which showed that "land" meant something else. It might mean Maori land, or leasehold land, or land in some other part of the world. If "real security" meant freehold land, what was the necessity for this in the Bill? He hoped the honourable gentleman would consent to have this struck out. It would make the clause clearer.

Amendment agreed to.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said the next amendment that had been made was the insertion of a new clause. He wished to remind the Hon. Mr. Robinson that all the amendments which had been made by the House of Representatives were in the direction of the honourable gentleman's own desires, and he (Sir F. Whitaker) was rather at a loss to understand why the honourable member was opposing them. However, he could please himself about that. The new clause provided that it should not be lawful for any trustee or tenant for life to invest the capital-money in the purchase of land where, by the terms of the settlement, such was prohibited. He looked upon

that as a piece of supererogation entirely. But he would ask the Council to accept the Bill in the form in which it was returned to them rather than run the risk of having a Conference.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON hoped the new clause would not be agreed to. It was wholly unnecessary. It raised a doubt that had never been raised before.

Amendment agreed to.

The whole of the amendments agreed to.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS BILL.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN brought up the following report of the Managers of the Free Conference appointed on behalf of the Council to confer with the House of Representatives on the subject of amendments in the Municipal Corporations Bill :—

"The Managers of the Free Conference on the Bill intituled 'The Municipal Corporations Act, 1886,' have the honour to report that they have come to the following agreement—namely :—

"1. That the amendments made by the Legislative Council in sections 135 and 137 shall not be insisted on by the Legislative Council.

"2. That the proviso added by the Legislative Council to section 219 shall be amended by striking out the words 'separate rates or' as suggested by the House of Representatives.

"3. That the amendment made by the Legislative Council in section 182 shall be agreed to by the House of Representatives.

"4. That the amendment made by the Legislative Council in the First Schedule shall not be insisted on by the Legislative Council."

Report agreed to.

COUNTIES BILL.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN brought up the report of the Free Conference on the subject of amendments in the Counties Bill :—

"The Managers of the Free Conference on the Bill intituled 'The Counties Act, 1886,' have the honour to report that they have come to the following agreement—namely :—

"1. That the Legislative Council does not insist upon its amendment in section 157.

"2. That the following clause be substituted for clause 195 as amended by the Legislative Council :—

"'If the number of votes given for the proposal within the several ridings taken together is not less than three-fifths of the total number of votes given at the poll to be taken as aforesaid, and if one-third in number of the ratepayers vote in favour of the proposal, and the number so voting are entitled to more than one-third in number of the votes which can be exercised by the whole number of ratepayers, then, and not otherwise, the resolution in favour of the proposal shall be deemed to be carried, and the Council may proceed with the proposal accordingly; but, if not, then the resolution shall be deemed to be rejected, and the Council shall not so proceed.'"

Agreed to.

Hon. Sir F. Whitaker

HARBOURS BILL.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. WILSON, the Hon. Mr. Peacock was appointed a Manager for the Council at the Free Conference on this Bill, in place of the Hon. Mr. Bonar.

LOCAL BODIES' LOANS BILL.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN brought up the report of the Free Conference on the Local Bodies Loans Bill. It set forth that the Managers had been unable to come to any agreement.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I should like to say, in reference to this, without making any motion, that, as instructed by the Council, the Managers on their behalf insisted on retaining the majority-clause in the Bill—that is, the clause requiring that upon every poll of the ratepayers for the raising of a loan there shall be recorded a majority of the number of ratepayers on the roll.

HARBOURS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON brought up the report of the Free Conference on the Harbours Bill, to the effect that the Managers had been unable to come to any agreement. He said the point at issue was a very small one, and it was the intention of the other branch of the Legislature to ask for a second Conference.

PROPERTY-TAX BILL.

On the motion to go into Committee on the Property-tax Bill,

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said,—Sir, I feel very strongly with regard to the provision in this Bill inflicting a 10-per-cent. penalty on those who neglect to pay the tax; and, if we cannot alter this Bill, I should like the Council to express its strong sense of the injustice of this, by recording its protest. If in order, I shall move, when the Bill goes through, that we send, with the Bill, a message to the other branch of the Legislature pointing out the injustice of the provision.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—A great many people have, apparently, paid this 10 per cent. I think, therefore, we should go further, and ask that it be returned.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL.—The proper way to deal with this matter would be, on the third reading of the Bill, to enter a protest against this provision; and it will be quite competent for those members who are present when the question is put to join in the protest.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I think it would be a most injudicious thing to send out such a protest. It might be considered a breach of the privileges of the House. The proper place to enter the protest is in the Journals of the Council. I may say I remember an honourable gentleman entering his protest in this Council on a former occasion, when the Wellington-Manawatu Railway Company Bill was before the Council. The Bill passed through, and the very next day that honourable gentleman went and took ten thousand pounds' worth of shares in the company. That was the way he seconded his protest. I repeat that it would be injudicious to adopt the course that is sug-

ed, and I would ask the honourable gentle-
ı not to press the matter.
he Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I think it would
, very good suggestion that the 10 per cent.
ıld be distributed as a bonus among those
ıons who have paid.
[otion agreed to.
he Council adjourned at twenty minutes
t nine o'clock p.m.

)USE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 13th August, 1886.

ɔnd Reading—Third Reading—Owhaoko and Kaimanawa-Oruamatua Reinvestigation of Title Bill—Harbours Bill—Clutha Floating Flour-mills—Clutha Gold—Mangatu Block—New Guinea—Census Sub-enumerators—Police Uniforms—Gaol Warders and Gaolers—Gaols—Dunedin Gaol Warder—Manukau Heads Lights—Waikawa and Rankleburn Lands—Wax Vestas—Rabbit Nuisance—Railway Management—Seal-fishery—Burnett and Yule—Stark's Property—Village Settlements—Rabbit Bill—Public Revenues Bill—Property-tax Bill—Representation Bill—Property Assessment Bill—Harbours Bill—Local Bodies' Loans Bill—Counties Bill—Municipal Corporations Bill—Legislative Expenditure—Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two
lock.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READING.
Railways Authorization Bill.

THIRD READING.
Railways Construction and Land Bill.

WHAOKO AND KAIMANAWA-ORUAMATUA REINVESTIGATION OF TITLE BILL.

Mr. CONOLLY brought up the following
port of the Select Committee appointed to
quire into the Owhaoko and Kaimanawa-
ruamatua Reinvestigation of Title Bill:—

"The Committee have the honour to report
at they have perused and examined the Bill,
ıd the memorandum of the Hon. Sir Robert
ɔut annexed thereto, and the petition of Mr.
anton, and have taken evidence, and have
ard Mr. Bell, of counsel for Messrs. Fenton
ıd Rogan.

"1. With regard to the lands called Owhaoko
o. 1, Owhaoko No. 2, and Owhaoko, it appears
ıat a rehearing was ordered, as alleged in the
ɔst paragraph of the preamble to the Bill, and
ıat no such rehearing ever took place. It also
ɔpears from the evidence that some, at least,
the parties who had applied for a rehearing
d not intend that their application should be
ithdrawn.

"2. The Committee are therefore of opin-
n that there should be a rehearing with re-
ɔect to Owhaoko No. 1, Owhaoko No. 2, and
whaoko.

"3. With regard to the Kaimanawa-Orua-
ıatua land, it appears that on the hearing a
itness, Noa Huke, stated that 'Natives not present had a claim; that the people then living on the land had a claim.' But, after endeavouring, without success, to obtain from Noa Huke and Renata the names of Natives other than were put in the memorial of ownership, the Court, notwithstanding Noa Huke's evidence, made an order in favour of five Natives only. Two of the absent Natives have been examined, and another has been represented by his son, before the Committee. They object to Renata being made a part-owner with them, and also complain that the hearing was held in their absence. It is stated by them that they had only three days' notice, which appears to the Committee to have been unreasonably short. It is, however, material that an application for a rehearing was received and considered but refused by Sir Donald McLean, apparently on the ground that the Natives had had sufficient time to appear.

"4. The Committee are of opinion that a *primâ facie* case for a rehearing has been made out in the case of the Kaimanawa-Oruamatua Block.

"5. In the opinion of the Committee, provision should be made, in granting a rehearing in respect of any of the said blocks, that the rights of the lessees respectively should not be prejudiced.

"6. The memorandum of the Hon. Sir Robert Stout would appear to have conveyed to Mr. Fenton the impression that, in coming to the decisions that he did, he was actuated by improper motives; and that he had been influenced by friendship, and had unduly favoured certain parties. The Committee have to report that, in their opinion, there is nothing in the evidence to show any such partiality or favouritism on the part of either Mr. Fenton or Mr. Rogan; and that the Hon. Sir Robert Stout, in his second memorandum (page 81), states that he at least did not intend to charge corrupt conduct.

"7. Several serious charges have been made against Dr. Buller in the course of the inquiry, as to which, that gentleman being absent and unrepresented, the Committee offer no opinion.

"8. There has, no doubt, been much irregularity in the proceedings of the Native Land Court; but the Committee are of opinion that it would not be right to judge that Court by such a strict standard as might fairly be applied to other Courts.

"9. That, from the evidence, it appears that Mr. Fenton, in addition to the work which devolved on him as Chief Judge of the Native Land Court, performed various executive duties; and he states that his letters and telegrams referred to in the memorandum of the Hon. Sir Robert Stout were written in his executive capacity."

Mr. PERE wished to make some remarks in regard to this land. He hoped that the titles to this land would not be broken up or invalidated, but he would like to see that those few people mentioned by Noa Huke who had been left out of the title should have their names inserted. If the whole title to this land was ripped up, then all sorts of people would come

forward and manufacture claims to the land. He made this suggestion for the consideration of the Government and the House.

HARBOURS BILL.

Mr. LARNACH.—May I ask, Sir, if you have made up your mind as to the position that the Managers have been placed in, as mentioned previously, in regard to the Conference on the Harbours Bill?

Mr. SPEAKER.—It appears to me, from what was stated in the House yesterday, that that Conference broke up on a misunderstanding that all the Managers had agreed to a report. That misunderstanding having arisen, I think the Conference ought to reassemble as soon as possible, and come, if possible, to a decision unanimously, which they could report to the House. Probably the Minister of Mines will try to get the Conference reassembled during the adjournment, and then the Conference might report whether it had agreed to a report, or could not come to an agreement: if it could not agree, it would then be open for this House to ask for a fresh Conference.

Mr. LARNACH.—What, Sir, would be the position, supposing any of the Managers for either House have gone away?

Mr. SPEAKER.—If, from any cause, the Managers appointed cannot be got together, that can be reported, and it would then be open to us to ask for a fresh Conference.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I may as well say at once, as one of the Managers, that I cannot agree and I will not agree to abrogating the privileges of this House, and therefore it would be better to appoint some one else at once in my place.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I do not think we can appoint other Managers until the existing Conference has reported either that it has agreed or disagreed, or that it cannot be got together.

CLUTHA FLOATING FLOUR-MILLS.

Mr. PYKE asked the Government, Whether they will afford facilities for the erection of floating flour-mills on the Clutha River, and what encouragement they will give to such enterprise? Some persons proposed to undertake this enterprise, which would be of great value. Those floating flour-mills would go up the river from its source to a hundred miles inland, grinding wheat at the various farms, and so saving a large amount of cost to the settlers. As the enterprise would involve a very considerable outlay, those proposing to undertake it were naturally anxious to be secured for a certain period, so as to render the investment of capital a safe one. He hoped the Government would deal with the matter carefully, so as to promote the welfare of the district.

Mr. LARNACH saw no objection to giving these people who might wish to embark in floating flour-mills the same privileges as to such class of flour-mills as had been granted to other persons for floating gold-dredging machinery, but limiting the area of water.

Mr. PYKE did not think the honourable gentleman understood the question at all. The dredges only went about a mile on the river, while these mills would require to go about a hundred miles.

CLUTHA GOLD.

Mr. PYKE asked the Government, What concessions they are prepared to grant for the encouragement of companies desiring to work the bed of the Clutha River for gold upon an extensive scale, by the aid of costly machinery? A great deal of gold was known to exist in the bed of the river, and a company had been formed in London with a capital of £12,000 to work the original bed. He said "original," because in the process of time, since gold had been discovered in the vicinity, a large amount of *débris*, partly consisting of tailings and partly of material washed down by floods, had covered portions of the original bed of the river to a great depth. The object of the company was, by the use of improved machinery, to work the original bed, and thereby recover the many tons of gold lying buried underneath. The manager of the company was a Dunstan miner, and was now in Dunedin, and effective machinery was on the way, and he thought there was nothing to prevent them getting gold along the river-bed. The river was two hundred miles in length from the lakes. Twelve ordinary dredges had been successfully in operation for some time recovering gold, and they had brought a great amount of gold to the light of day. If this proposed company was successful in working on a large scale it would be a great benefit to the country. Others would, no doubt, follow: and he hoped the Government would do their utmost to promote such a desirable object.

Mr. LARNACH said the honourable gentleman was well aware that himself and many others, about fifteen in number, of honourable members interested in the development of the goldfields, had requested the Government, by petition or letter, to put a sum of money on the estimates for this purpose, and after consideration the Government had decided to put such a sum on the estimates as would be sufficient to meet the case, and leave the matter to the decision of the House.

Mr. PYKE said he did not want a penny put on the estimates. What he wanted to know was, what concessions and advantages the Government were prepared to give to the company.

MANGATU BLOCK.

Mr. LOCKE asked the Government, Whether they will carry out the recommendation of the Native Affairs Committee in regard to the petition of Peti Taihuka and others, in reference to the Mangatu No. 1 Block, Cook County, and have full inquiries made into the matter? This was a matter of more importance than might appear on its face, and he trusted that the Government would say that they would, during the recess, make a careful inquiry through the officers they had in that part of the country, so that their report might be before the House

session. It would open up a very large tion, he believed; but, without now going ner into the matter, he would ask the Go- ment to get a careful and impartial in- y made.

r. BALLANCE said, Yes; an inquiry would nade in accordance with the report of the mittee.

NEW GUINEA.

r. NEWMAN asked the Government, ether they will take steps during the re- to stop the yearly contribution of £2,669 ards the government of a part of New nea? He considered it a waste of money, n which the colony got no benefit whatever. saw no reason why New Zealand colonists uld be taxed for this waste of money, as re was no connection between New Zealand New Guinea.

ir R. STOUT did not see what was to be l about this matter. The arrangement had n that the colony should contribute for ee years, and two years' portions had already n voted. The agreement was limited to ee years, and in the meantime he did not that they could say anything.

Mr. FITZHERBERT did not think the wer wholly satisfactory, and did not know y New Zealand should spend money for an ect in which it had no interest. He would ve the adjournment of the House to enable re to be said on the matter.

Mr. SPEAKER said the adjournment of the use could, of course, be moved, but the nourable member would not thus enable nself to speak to the matter of the contri- tion to the government of New Guinea, as mbers on discussing the question of adjourn- the House were debarred from referring to e order of the day for the Committee of pply, which covered the vote towards the vernment of New Guinea.

CENSUS SUB-ENUMERATORS.

Mr. MACANDREW asked the Government, they are aware that the census sub-enume- tors have not been paid; and, if so, when will e payments be made?

Mr. TOLE said these men could not be paid ntil their work was checked; but, as a matter fact, all had now been paid except one, and this case the superior officer, believing there as an overcharge, had not certified, and he be- ved the dispute had not yet been settled.

POLICE UNIFORMS.

Mr. HATCH asked the Minister of Defence, he will, next year, make such provision that olice-officers are put on the same footing prison-officers so far as the allowance for niform is concerned, or advocate the saving of e £650 now voted for the latter, which same oncession is not made to the former? His bject was to ascertain if the Minister would, uring the recess, endeavour to bring about an qualization in this matter in the two depart- ents. At present there was no equalization: a fact, there was very great inequality. This system of giving uniforms to the officers of one department was a new thing that had arisen since the abolition of the provinces.

Mr. BALLANCE said he was not aware that any complaints had been made by the police on the subject of the pay they received, which was supposed to include uniforms. He was not aware that any portion of the men had complained at all. The men knew on joining that it was so; and to give the police uniforms would mean an addition to their present pay, and he did not think the colony was called on to give that at the present time.

GAOL WARDERS AND GAOLERS.

Mr. HATCH asked the Minister of Justice,—(1.) Does the allowance now paid in some instances to warders residing within the precincts of the gaols, of £20 per annum, carry out the recommendation of Gaols Report, 1878 (I.–4), where it recommends that this allowance should only be paid where it is impossible to provide quarters: thus giving some the extra advantage of prison servants, bedding, cutlery, table-linen, &c., causing the expenditure in all of £1,640, as per estimates? (2.) How is it that the recommendation of the Gaols Committee, 1878, to be found in Appendices of that year (I.–4), is not adhered to, and is being exceeded, so far as concerns the advances to first-class gaolers for each year of service for twenty years being in some instances now £10, instead of £5 as recommended in that report? He put this question with a view of bringing before the Government the necessity of economy in the public service, especially as the country was at the present time calling out for it; and he wished to fix especially on the mind of the Minister the fact that the recommendations of the Gaols Committee in 1878 should be still carried out, and that the treatment of officers in different parts of the colony should be uniform.

Mr. TOLE replied that the honourable gentleman seemed to think that the recommendations of the Gaols Committee were adopted by the House; but it did not appear that they had been, or that the Government had been instructed to carry them out. As a matter of fact, however, the recommendations had, in the main, been carried out. As to the proposal that men should reach the maximum of salary in twenty years, it was deemed advisable, on further information being obtained, that they should reach it in ten years. An increase of £10 per annum was therefore given in the first-class prisons, where the long-sentenced prisoners were detained, and where there was greater responsibility, and £5 in gaols of the second class.

Mr. KERR moved the adjournment of the House in order to enable him to ask why there was a difference in the rates of pay between different parts of the colony. He maintained that there should be a uniform rate of payment throughout the colony; but he was given to understand by correspondence that he had received that this was not the case.

Mr. TOLE said the rates of pay varied of course according to the class of gaol; but he

intended to consider the question during the recess.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

GAOLS.

Mr. HATCH asked the Minister of Justice, If, during the recess, he will examine into the cost of the Gaol Department, with the view of explaining why in New Zealand the cost per head per annum of each prisoner is £53 9s. 9d., whilst in Victoria it is £38 19s. 7d.? There seemed to him to be another source of economy open here. He should not complain of the conduct of the department, for he thought that was an improvement upon what it formerly was; but he did not see why there should be this disparity between the cost here and that in Victoria. It was true that it was the gross cost that was spoken of, and that, if they took into consideration the net cost, as shown by the returns which had been laid on the table of the House, there would be a considerable decrease in the cost of the New Zealand prisons. Still, he must recommend a continuance of the policy of economy, and he believed that, by the careful utilization of the labour of prisoners, the cost might be very much reduced. He was anxious that honourable members should not leave this session without showing the Government where economy could be exercised in various branches of the public service.

Mr. TOLE said the respective costs of the prisons in Victoria and New Zealand last year were—for Victoria £39 13s. 5d. per head, and for New Zealand £53 9s. 9d. In Victoria there were eleven prisons, which contained, taking the daily average, 1,434 prisoners, whilst in New Zealand there were thirteen prisons, and only 616 prisoners, taking the daily average. It was manifest that small prisons cost proportionately far more than large ones. The secret of the high cost in New Zealand as compared with Victoria was that, while they had far fewer prisoners here, there were more prisons kept for their detention than in Victoria. He might mention that the cost per head in the Invercargill Gaol was £99 18s. 10d., as against £41 7s. 9d. in Auckland. As the honourable gentleman was so rampant for economy——

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must not introduce debatable matter.

Mr. TOLE was merely going to say that the honourable gentleman's suggestion plainly pointed to the advisableness of closing the Invercargill Gaol. He did not know whether the honourable gentleman was prepared to support that. He would further say that the comparison between certain gaols in Victoria and in New Zealand stood thus: In the Castlemaine Gaol, where there were eighty-five prisoners, taking the daily average in all cases, the cost was £53 17s. 5d.; while at the Wellington Terrace, where there were seventy-nine prisoners, the cost was £48 8s. 9d. In Portland, where there were twenty-two prisoners, the cost was £85 2s. 4d.; while in Napier, where the number of prisoners was twenty-seven, the cost was £50 17s. 9d. These details showed that in the smaller prisons the cost was less in New Zealand than it was in Victoria.

Mr. HATCH asked if he had rightly understood the Minister to say that Invercargill was the most expensive gaol in New Zealand.

Mr. TOLE replied that he had not said so; but it ranked second in that respect. He believed that Hokitika was the most expensive.

DUNEDIN GAOL WARDER.

Mr. HATCH asked the Minister of Justice, Why a Chief Warder named Ferguson, who was discharged for habitual drunkenness from Dunedin Gaol some few months since, should, soon after the prorogation of Parliament, be allowed and paid the amount of £60 or thereabouts? It seemed to him that the action of the Minister of Justice in this matter was calculated to hold out inducements for drunkenness in the gaols. The facts of the case were these: that the warder mentioned in this question had been a long time in the service, but had been discharged for habitual drunkenness. He was not dismissed because he had been drunk once or twice; but a person had told him (Mr. Hatch) that the man had been drunk three hundred times. He did not say this man had actually been drunk so often as that; but he had offended many times. He was dismissed on this account, and yet he had received compensation for loss of office to the amount of about £60.

Mr. TOLE said he had had to deal with this question from the point of view of justice. The man had until very recently been a good and valuable officer, and had been twenty years in the service. He had offended in the direction indicated in the question, and was told that if he committed himself again he would be liable to dismissal. He did offend again, and he (Mr. Tole) decided to take a lenient view of his case. He did not dismiss the man, but dispensed with his services; and, considering his long services, and that he was advanced in years and had a family, and that, if it had not been for his misconduct, he would have been entitled to £133 as compensation for his services having been dispensed with, and that he would also have been entitled to three months' leave of absence on full pay—in all, £190—he (Mr. Tole) thought it would be right to give him £60. The man had thus lost his employment and forfeited above £120, and that seemed a sufficient punishment. It was distinctly understood that this was not to be a precedent. He therefore recommended the Cabinet to grant the man £60; and that had been agreed to.

Mr. HATCH hoped that subsequent offenders would meet with the same consideration.

Mr. TOLE pointed out that it had been distinctly stated that this was not to form a precedent.

MANUKAU HEADS LIGHTS.

Mr. HAMLIN asked the Minister of Marine, If he can inform the House when the guiding lights will be placed in the beacons that are

now being or are erected at the Manukau Heads? It seemed to him that there was unnecessary delay in placing the lights on these beacons. He had been given to understand that the necessary housing had been erected on the beacon on the North Head; that on the South Head had been erected for some time; and he asked this question in the hope of learning that there would be no unnecessary delay.

Mr. LARNACH said that good progress had been made with the beacons, but they were not yet ready to receive the leading-lights, but he hoped that they would be before the end of the present month.

WAIKAWA AND RANKLEBURN LANDS.

Mr. BROWN asked the Minister of Lands, What steps are being taken to give effect to the wishes of the people, and the recommendation of the Waste Lands Board of Otago, that blocks of land at Waikawa and Rankleburn be set aside on the homestead system? The Minister of Lands was well aware that application had been made to the Waste Lands Board of Otago that the land referred to in this question should be set aside, and he was also aware that only a limited quantity—three thousand acres—could be set aside in any one year, and therefore it was very desirable that immediate steps should be taken to have this area set aside during this year, because there would be other demands in a similar direction to be satisfied in future years. He had in his possession a letter from settlers at Waikawa, who were very anxious that the land should be set aside.

Mr. BALLANCE said that the block at Rankleburn was now under orders for survey into sections of, on an average, one hundred acres each. The block at Waikawa, recommended by the Land Board, had previously been withheld for the Highland crofters. Another block, however, in lieu of it, and a few miles north along the coast, at Taukupu Bay, had been suggested to the Land Board as a suitable location for a 3,000-acre homestead block; but no reply had yet been received.

WAX VESTAS.

Mr. BROWN asked the Commissioner of Customs, If there is any difference of duty imposed on wax vestas, as between Bell and Black's and Bell and Co.'s manufacture—say, 50-plaids and 250s; and, if so, upon what grounds such different duties are charged? He had asked a similar question the other day, and the answer which he got was not sufficiently explicit. What he desired to know was, whether there was any difference of duty on these goods, which were of the same quality.

Sir J. VOGEL had to say that there was no difference of duty. Both were subject to 25 per cent. *ad valorem* duty.

Mr. BROWN wished to know upon what value the duty was fixed.

Sir J. VOGEL had explained previously that the Government were not bound to take the invoiced price, and would not do so unless they were satisfied that it was the right and fair market-value.

RABBIT NUISANCE.

Mr. BEETHAM asked the Government, If they will place a sum of money on the supplementary estimates for the purpose of subsidizing voluntary contributions raised by associations for the purpose of importing the natural enemies of the rabbit; such expenditure to be subject to the control of the Government? He regretted having to trouble the House and the Minister again with this matter, but he thought that when he spoke before the Minister did not appreciate the fact that the intention of the settlers at Masterton was to avoid, if possible, the inconveniences and hardships of taxation, and that they had collected voluntarily a considerable sum of money for this distinct purpose. He desired to know if the Ministry would give them a fair amount of assistance by way of subsidy on amounts raised by the settlers.

Sir J. VOGEL thought he had explained, when he agreed to putting in the Rabbit Bill the pound-for-pound subsidy, that it was done on the assurance of the people being willing to rate themselves for this purpose. Now, the proposal had led to the very thing he had feared it would. There was no particular objection to meeting the wishes of a district that had shown its willingness to rate itself; but it was a different thing if two or three people took it into their heads to enter into this expenditure and asked the Government to pay part of it for them: that the Government had never intended to do, and he did not think it desirable it should be done. That the Government should contribute a proportionate amount to a district that put itself under rates was a widely different thing from half a dozen people entering into an expenditure to improve their properties and asking the Government to contribute a proportion of the cost. That he did not understand to have been agreed to in the Rabbit Bill, nor did he think they ought to agree to it.

RAILWAY MANAGEMENT.

Mr. SUTTER asked the Minister for Public Works, If the cost in connection with Vaile's Committee will be affixed to the report of that Committee? He would like to know how much the cost in connection with the report of that Committee was, as several members were dubious about it. He, for one, did not think the report was worth anything.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON did not know why the honourable member should ask him this question, as it was one that should more properly have been addressed to Mr. Speaker. He had no means of knowing what the cost of the Committee was, but he might say that one return required by the Committee from the Public Works Department had cost about £110.

SEAL-FISHERY.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Minister of Marine, If he will, during the recess, issue instructions to

the master of the Government schooner "Kekeno" to visit the Auckland and Campbell Islands, with the view of reporting upon the result of the series of close seasons that have been observed in regard to the seal-fishery? As honourable members were aware, the leasing of the seal-fisheries had been contemplated of late by the Government, and, in connection therewith, the action of the United States in leasing the seal-fisheries of Alaska had been cited. But the Alaska fisheries had not been leased until due and proper inquiries had been made by experts into the number of seals, and the number that might be killed annually without killing them off. As they had no information as to the number of seals on the Auckland and Campbell Islands, he took it to be very desirable, before further action was taken, that that should be ascertained as nearly as might be. One of the experts who gave evidence in the United States spoke, with regard to the seal-fisheries at the Auckland and Campbell Islands, as follows: "Nothing down there now is valuable enough to rouse the interest of any Government: still, a beginning might be made which in forty or fifty years would bear fruit." Under the circumstances, he thought that, before action was taken by the Government in the direction of leasing, some report should be obtained showing the result of the close season for three or four years.

Mr. LARNACH might state that the "Kekeno" was at present down at the Auckland and Campbell Islands, and on returning the captain would be asked to report.

BURNETT AND YULE.

Mr. BEETHAM asked the Government, If they will give effect to the report of the Public Petitions Committee on the petition of Messrs. Burnett and Yule?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON replied in the affirmative.

STARK'S PROPERTY.

Mr. MOSS desired to ask a question without notice. He had received from Auckland the following telegram: "Great indignation *re* Stark's matter. Has Committee's finding been ratified by the House?" This telegram was from Mr. David Goldie, who signed himself as chairman of a committee. To this he had been obliged to reply, "There is no chance of being considered unless brought forward by the Government." He had mentioned the matter to the Premier, who had agreed that he should ask whether the Government intended to give the House an opportunity of expressing an opinion upon the report during the present session.

Sir R. STOUT replied that it was impossible to answer the question. A great number of questions of a similar kind were put, but what the Government could do depended entirely upon how they got on with the business. On the previous day several hours had been spent over the committal of a Bill, and, if the mode of dealing with business was gone on with, he did not know when the session would end. He did not see what the object of the "great indignation" was, except to charge the valuers upon whom the Government relied.

VILLAGE SETTLEMENTS.

On the motion of Sir G. GREY, it was ordered That a return be prepared showing what persons are employed by the Government in endeavouring to induce people to locate themselves in village settlements, as also what salaries and travelling expenses are allowed to such persons.

RABBIT BILL.

On the motion for the committal of the Rabbit Bill,

Mr. DODSON said that a constituent of his in whom he had confidence, had communicated with him to the following effect: Some two years ago he purchased four stoats and turned them out on his run in Marlborough. He had lately seen some dead rabbits there, and, from appearances, he was under the impression that the stoats had killed them. As a proof of this, he noticed that the tongues of the rabbits had been eaten out, and it was known in England that it was the habit of stoats to devour the tongues. The gentleman from whom he had received the letter had had great experience not only in sheep, but also in rabbits and their natural enemies. He (Mr. Dodson) believed the statement to be reliable.

Bill recommitted, and reported with amendments.

On the question, That the Bill be read a third time,

Mr. BUCHANAN said that when the Bill was in Committee a night or two ago he had protested against the hurried manner in which it was being put through, and he had called the attention of the Minister in charge to the fact—which the honourable gentleman evidently did not know—that town districts would be liable to the rating clauses. The Third Part of the Bill was especially hurried through without due consideration. He would have moved the recommittal of the Bill in order to make certain amendments, were it not that he was given to understand by the honourable gentleman that he was willing to have those amendments introduced in another place. The amendments he proposed went in this direction: First, they were all aware that the Rabbit Act had been administered altogether under Government control up to the present time, and it was now proposed and agreed to by the Committee which had taken evidence on the subject that certain exceptions should be made to this in the case of districts not now infested with rabbits, the ratepayers in which in the past had shown their willingness to rate themselves and find large sums of money to protect their districts from the incursion of rabbits. He recognized that a great deal of consideration was due to the settlers in those districts, and therefore he had consented, rather unwillingly, that in such districts they should be allowed to elect trustees, in order to aid the settlers, and thereby be able to pay

up rabbit-proof fences, and protect themselves from the incursion of rabbits. A further extension of this principle was asked for in the case of districts now infested with rabbits. He objected very strongly to this, and urged that the Third Part of this Bill should not be passed. He was satisfied that a great deal of confusion would arise under it; and what he had to ask the Government to do in the way of amendment was this: that it should not be a hard-and-fast rule that the boundaries should follow the county boundaries. He would ask that the Third Part should be placed on the same footing in this respect as the Second Part; also, that it should provide that the area of each district should not be less than 200,000 acres, otherwise there would be danger that districts would be formed of too small an area. He asked that if the settlers desired it a district should comprise two counties or parts of two counties—in fact, that it should have such boundaries as the settlers selected. He had no further objection to the Bill, and if the Government would consent to make these amendments in another place he was satisfied that they would be desirable and altogether in the interests of the country generally.

Mr. TOLE had informed the honourable gentleman that he would have these amendments considered in another place.

Bill read a third time.

PUBLIC REVENUES BILL.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I beg to move the second reading of the Public Revenues Bill. Its first object is to carry out the intention expressed in the Financial Statement, to convert the deficit held over in deficiency bills into debentures having a short currency only. There is another purpose which I propose to provide for by this Bill—that is, to extend the power of issuing deficiency bills in the colony. The reasons are these: The remittance deficiency bills which there is already sufficiency of power to issue are not found desirable or suitable for the purposes for which they were originally intended; and I propose to reduce the amount by £200,000, and to take power to increase the issue of other Treasury bills by the same amount. The reason why we have to ask for an increased issue of Treasury bills is chiefly because of the very large accumulation on which interest has to be paid on two particular days in the year owing to the conversion of the large amount of debentures that has been going on for the last two or three years. The interest on the stock is payable half-yearly on two particular days in the year; and the accumulation —especially on the 31st October, before the time that the property-tax comes in—is so considerable that it is necessary that a larger power of issuing Treasury bills should be given than otherwise would be the case. I am, further, free to admit that I would not ask for such an increase as £200,000 did I not feel that the falling-off in revenue makes it safer to take a larger power. Otherwise I should, possibly, not have asked for more than £100,000 or £150,000.

Major ATKINSON.—I shall certainly support this Bill. It is only reasonable and quite necessary that the Treasurer should have sufficient deficiency bills to anticipate the revenue. I was very sorry to hear the honourable gentleman say that the increase was partly caused by the falling-off in revenue. That is rather a serious matter for us to take note of, and I hope the House will remember that when we come to consider another Bill, by which we are abandoning revenue voluntarily. I could quite understand the Treasurer asking for sufficient bills to meet the extra payments on particular dates. That is a matter that would cause us no anxiety at all. We know that the Imperial Government anticipates a quarter's revenue by deficiency bills; so that we need not feel anxious about anticipating the revenue. But it becomes a very serious thing when the honourable gentleman tells us that the increase is caused partly by the deficiency of revenue. It gives a very serious aspect to the matter. I think the House will do wisely to give the full amount asked for. Of course, the abandonment of the £200,000 is abandoning nothing, because at present we pay interest in that way. I think it would have been better not to have made a pretence of abandoning anything, but to let the present provisions stand as they are, or repeal them altogether, because they are quite useless as long as the present arrangement is carried out.

Bill read a second and a third time.

PROPERTY-TAX BILL.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I beg to move the second reading of the Property-tax Bill. It simply carries out the proposal made in the Financial Statement.

Major ATKINSON.—I wish to know if the Government still adhere to the reduction of the property-tax, when the revenue has so palpably fallen off since the honourable gentleman made his Financial Statement, and will not be sufficient for the proposed expenditure. I wish to take no responsibility, on this side of the House, in reducing taxation, when I feel sure that the revenue that will be raised by it will not be sufficient to meet the expenditure which the honourable gentleman has asked for, even with the utmost economy he can practise.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The returns of the revenue during the last four months are certainly not so large as anticipated in the Financial Statement. In the Statement I expressly said that the "rush" to Kimberley and the question when public works would be resumed would affect the revenue. On the other hand, there are certain circumstances which lead the Government to be particularly desirous not to impose a heavier taxation than is found to be absolutely necessary. The great increase in the price of wool and the larger amount of crops put in, with the prospect of their yielding well at the end of the year, give us hopes that the railway revenue may, at any rate, be largely recouped before the end of the year. Although I cannot hope that the Customs revenue will recover sufficiently to enable it to yield as much as

was anticipated when the Financial Statement was delivered, yet the Government, for reasons which we explained in the Financial Statement, do not desire to interfere with the Customs revenue during the present session. The Government have considered the question whether or not they should carry out the proposed reduction in the property-tax, and have come to the conclusion that it is desirable to propose to the House to carry out the intention expressed in the Financial Statement.

Bill read a second time.

On the question, That the Bill be committed,

Major ATKINSON said,—We now have it from the Treasurer that the revenue is not coming in as he anticipated in the Financial Statement—in other words, that he anticipates a deficit upon the estimates which he placed before the House; and yet the honourable gentleman tells us that, notwithstanding that fact, he proposes to reduce taxation to the amount of £12,500. I ask, are we justified in doing that? Is it not a sham to pretend to make such a reduction as this, in the face of the statement of the Colonial Treasurer? And what does he base his argument upon? He admits that, from the general outlook, there is no hope of the Customs revenue reaching his estimate. The Treasurer bases some hope of improvement upon crops, which he hopes will turn out well—crops which are not yet sown, or are just about being sown, and as to which nobody can tell whether they will turn out well or ill. Surely our finances should not depend upon such contingencies as that. I would submit, in all seriousness, looking at the fact that the revenue is evidently not going to equal what the honourable gentleman anticipated—I will not discuss the question of Kimberley and other matters—that he ought not to propose to further reduce the resources of the colony by remitting taxation—to which, under the circumstances, I, at any rate, cannot be a party to agreeing. I do hope the honourable gentleman will reconsider his position in this matter.

Mr. SUTTER.—I do hope the Treasurer will reconsider this matter. I do think it is a great mistake to make this reduction, which is a miserably small affair. I think we ought not to remit a penny. I am quite prepared to pay my share of the taxation. I hope the honourable gentleman will reconsider the matter, and raise the tax instead of reducing it.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I am not going to ask the Treasurer to raise the tax or do anything of that kind, but I would like some explanation as to why he thinks the railway revenue will pull up. There is a deficit of £23,000 in the profit on the railways for the last three months ending on the 26th June, as compared with the same period of the previous year. Then, in the Financial Statement he anticipated a very large increase in the profit from the railways this year; and, when we consider that the accounts show a deficit at the rate of £90,000 or £100,000 a year, I think we should have some explanation from the Treasurer as to how he has reason to expect that the railway returns will pull up for the remaining portion of the year. I can understand that the revenue returns from Customs might, for the first three months of the year, be much less this year than last year, because last year there was speculation on an expectation of an increase in the tariff; but it is not so with regard to the railway returns, and it is as to these that I think we should have some explanation—why, when there is such a very large falling-off, the Treasurer should propose to reduce the property-tax. Without criticising the matter further, I ask the honourable gentleman if he will be good enough to state why he anticipates increased receipts from the railways.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I would point out to the honourable member for Egmont that, although we are in the habit of speaking of the property-tax as though it were a fixed tax, it is not so; but it is, as he himself has stated it was meant to be, a tax fixable from year to year according to the requirements for the time being. There is no reason to believe that the total value of taxable property will be less than last year. On the contrary we believe the valuation will be much greater. It will, as far as we are able to calculate, not be less, and possibly it will be more, than last year—more on real property: as to personal property, we have not the data at present. That being the case, and also because the House refused to make the modification in the tax that we proposed to make last year by excepting agricultural improvements and manufacturing machinery, we make the proposal now before the House, and we are not inclined to deal with the tax this year further than we have dealt with it in the Financial Statement, as there does not appear to be any object in raising the whole question now. Our proposal is for a tax of thirteen-sixteenths of a penny. In spite of the fact that the revenue from Customs and from railways shows a falling-off, the Government have come to the conclusion not to propose to the House a heavier property-tax than that already indicated. I do not look at it as altogether a reduction of the property-tax, for the reason I have stated; nor do I agree with the honourable member for Egmont that the tax does not fall heavily on those paying it. I do not think it right to say that, because the Customs revenue is falling, we should make up the deficiency out of the property-tax. At any rate, there would have to be much careful consideration and discussion before the Government would be justified, at the end of the session and in a thin House, in proposing a radical change in the taxation policy of the country for the future or the present, as the case might be. As to the railways, the information I have comes to me in various ways; but, generally, I am told there is a large additional area of land under crop this year, and that we may expect a great deal of the deficiency in receipts for the carriage of goods will be made up for before the 31st March next, by which time the earlier crops will have been carried. On the other hand, I am told that the passenger-traffic keeps up

well, and therefore that we may expect some of the loss to be made up. Nor must we suppose that the estimate of loss made by the honourable member for Egmont is altogether correct, because the expenditure and receipts on the railways are so closely allied that where there is a falling-off in the revenue there is also a considerable falling-off in the expenditure. Therefore I am led to believe that the results for the year will not be so very much out of harmony with those already anticipated, so far as the railways are concerned. As to the Customs, I have stated over and over again to the House what the position is. Our Customs revenue now totally fails to carry out the intention and policy of the past—the policy, especially, of the honourable member for Egmont—that is, the protection of local industries. Instead of giving that advantage which it was designed to give in the past, it allows of shovelling into the country the results of cheap labour in other parts of the world, whilst the people here who have expended their capital in establishing local industries are left in a very sad condition. A great many of the industries of the country are languishing sadly on account of the Customs duties not being large enough. But the Government had to consider all the questions before them. There were the question of the alteration of the representation, the very large question of the expenditure necessary upon a fresh election, and a number of other questions; and they came to the conclusion not to interfere with the tariff during the present session, although they plainly enough indicated in the Financial Statement that large alterations were required. The fact that during the first three or four months of the year the revenue has fallen below what we anticipated has not altered our opinion of the situation generally as regards new Customs proposals this session, and we do not consider it desirable to propose a larger amount of property-tax than that the Bill now under consideration contemplates.

Bill committed, reported, and read a third time.

REPRESENTATION BILL.

On the question, That the Representation Bill be committed,

Sir R. STOUT said,—In moving, Sir, That you do leave the chair, in order that the House may go into Committee on this Bill, I wish to make one or two remarks. First, as to subsection (3) of section 3, I propose slightly to amend that, as appears on Supplementary Order Paper No. 62; and at the same time I may state that, unless the population basis is accepted by the House, I shall decline to go on with the Bill, because I believe the only possible mode of dealing with representation is on the population basis. I shall be willing to alter subsection (5) of section 3 to give a hint to the Commissioners to allow a difference of five hundred in the districts where the males preponderate. I think that must remain in the Bill. I may, however, state that I have received, unasked, from the Registrar-General this memorandum:—

"Section 3 of the Representation Bill provides for the division of the colony into new electoral districts within three months after the end of the present session; and subsection (5) provides for the Commission taking into consideration the proportion which the male inhabitants of twenty-one years or upwards bear to the entire population of the district.

"It will be impossible for me to give information as to the ages of the population in localities within three months of the end of this session. If the provision of subsection (5) is to be of practical use, I submit that the division into new electoral districts should not be made earlier than the end of the year: by that time I hope to be in a position to supply the Commission with the required information respecting the number of males of twenty-one years and upwards."

It will be seen from this that, apparently, it will be impossible for the Commission to proceed till next year, even if the Act is passed this year. I may say that, at this period of the session, I shall not go on with the Bill unless there is a substantial majority for it, so as to give me some chance of passing it. I think that is only fair. I may also say, as I did not explain it on the second reading of the Bill, that the non-moving of the second reading of the Bill prior to the time when it was moved was entirely owing to my illness. If I had been in the House I should have moved the second reading at least a week before it was moved; and I regret that at this period of the session the matter should come on to be discussed, and that it should not have been discussed before; but, as I have said, that is entirely owing to my illness.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I have not spoken before on the Bill, and do not intend to speak at length now. When the present Act was passed in 1881 there was a distinct understanding by honourable members that there should be another Bill passed after the census was taken this year, and I think the Premier was quite right in carrying out what was understood to be the consensus of opinion, though it was not put in the Act. I know that members who lost representation in their districts were very much troubled in their minds, and resisted the passing of the Act; but I supported it, believing it was very proper and right. The district I come from will now suffer somewhat by the growth of population being more to the North; but yet I think that should not prevent me doing what I believe to be my duty in assisting to pass this Bill. I think the Premier was right, therefore, in bringing it down, and I hope it will be passed, because, if we do not pass it now but leave it till we meet next session, then perhaps circumstances will have come up which will make members of the House, on meeting, take adverse action against the Ministry—I do not say that is likely to happen—consequently there may be an appeal to the country on the present representation; and that would be contrary to the intention of the Legislature at the time of the passing of the Act under which we are now in this House. Therefore I think

we should pass the Bill this session, and I do not see any difficulty in passing it. It must be passed now, or one will have to be passed next session to do justice to the country, as the present Act expires in December next year; and I think we are in a better position even at this late period of the session to pass this Bill than we shall be next year. I think a matter of such great importance to the country as the fair representation of the people should not be allowed to be shelved this year simply because any of us wish to get home a few days earlier. So far as my vote and my voice will go I shall endeavour to get this Bill passed, if I have to wait whatever length of time may be necessary to do it. I wish now to make a few remarks upon the Bill. Clause 2 deals with the appointment of Commissioners. There are to be two official persons, and three appointed by this House, and I understood the Minister to say that those three should be appointed in the districts where the apportionment of the electorates was to be considered. Well, I would rather see three officials appointed. I should prefer to see the two officials who are mentioned in the Bill, and the Property-tax Commissioner acting with them; and I think they should decide upon the electorates just in the same way as the Commissioners did in England in the redistribution of seats. I think that will be better than having outside men appointed by this House, because I question if the men appointed by this House would deal more effectively with the matter, or that their decision would be more free from suspicion than would be the decision of those men named in the Bill—high officers of the Government, who have no interest politically in the matter. Therefore I hope the Minister will take that into consideration, and I trust that three official persons will be appointed, and that this House will not appoint others. Then, with respect to the number of members, I know it has been in the minds of some honourable members, and it has been stated in the newspapers of the colony, that a decrease in the number of members would decrease the expenses of this House—that there would probably be less talk, and that we should get through the business better. As to the expenses being reduced, if there were ten members less it would only mean a couple of thousand a year or thereabouts, as far as their pay is concerned; and, as for lessening the amount of talk, I would point out that when the European members were eighty-five the House sat, upon the average, a much longer time than it is sitting this year. Therefore I do not think, judging from the past, that lessening the number of members would expedite the business very much. But there is something more than that. If you lessen the number of members you necessarily give the Ministry of the day greater power; and that matter should be considered—and it is a very great matter. Therefore I would say at once—and the Ministry did not express any decided opinion to lead the House in the matter, which I think it should have done—I say that I would vote to retain the number of members as they are at present in the House. Then with respect to the electoral districts. Population is to be the basis; and I approve of that. I approve of equal electoral districts; but I wish honourable members to bear in mind one matter. There are four large towns—Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin, and Christchurch; and these towns contain not only the people who are permanent residents, but they contain a large floating population. When the census was taken on the 28th March, many of the farming population, the day-labourers, had gone to the towns. There were also a number of women and children there whose husbands are not in the colony. There are also a very considerable number of wayfarers, people passing backwards and forwards, and residing for a short time in these towns. I am under the impression that to that extent the four large towns should have a larger quota than the country districts. What that excess should be I am not quite prepared to say; but I have been thinking over the matter, and considering whether it should not be one-seventh or one-tenth. Take the country district of Canterbury: during other times than the harvest the men go into the towns, and then we have a large section of the unemployed, the existence of which we all deplore. In order that there should be fair representation of the population, I think there should be a larger quota for the towns than for the country districts. With regard to the amalgamation of the town electorates, I think that is a very important matter. When we amalgamate electorates I think we shall get, if I might say so, men who have had large experience, and who are more before the public eye than we get by single electorates. On the other hand, there are a great many young men coming forward who have served their time and graduated, I think, very properly, in Road Boards, County Councils, and other local bodies. You would injure the chance of these men getting into Parliament if you had large districts each returning, say, four members: so that there is a good deal to be said for and against. I think the time will come—and I have altered my opinion somewhat in this respect simply because the system of expenditure of public money has forced it upon me—when we shall require larger districts to represent the people of the colony fairly, irrespective of local interests, as the expenditure of money will so affect representation if we are to go on borrowing large sums of money to be spent all over the colony. I shall support the amalgamation of city electoral districts, and, generally speaking, I shall support the Bill. I shall endeavour to get the amendments which I have indicated carried; but, if I do not get them passed, that will not prevent me voting for the third reading of the Bill. I thought it necessary to make this short statement, because I think it would save time if honourable members having opinions would express them before going into Committee, and then simply vote in Committee afterwards.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I wish to submit a

proposal which, I venture to think, will commend itself to the good sense of honourable members on both sides of the House. I have neither voted nor spoken upon this question, and am in no way whatever tinged with any of those warm feelings which have been evoked in connection with it. It is clear to me that, if this Parliament is allowed to die a natural death, which I think it ought to be, there is nothing to be gained by passing this measure now, and we shall be just as near the object next session as we are at present. It is very clear, moreover, that, in the present temper of the House, if this Bill goes into Committee we shall have many weary days and nights of acrimonious discussion, at any rate, discussion which will not be more dispassionate at a time when members are eager and anxious to get to their homes. I think that must be self-evident. I do not object to remain here for a few weeks or a month longer if the House will devote itself to the pressing and absolute requirements of the country. If we were going to solve the difficulty of the unemployed and the pauper question, and some others which might be mentioned, I, for my own part, should not object to remain here for a few weeks longer; but I do object to spending time on a question which can be as well discussed next session as it can be discussed now; and there will be this advantage, if this matter be postponed to next session: that at that time members will be fresh, and will not be worn out by these late sittings that we have had for the last few weeks. I move, as an amendment, That, in the opinion of this House, it is advisable, at this late period of the session, that the Representation Bill be proceeded with no further until next session, and that Parliament be summoned for the despatch of business not later than the first week in May next year.

Major ATKINSON.—That is the same time that Parliament met this year.

Mr. MACANDREW. — We were not summoned till the second week. I hope that this proposal will meet with the approval of the good sense of the House. There is nothing whatever to be gained, that I can see, in spending another week in discussing this question. If we are to remain longer, let us go into something more important and more immediately pressing. We can deal with this question next session just as well as we can now. I therefore move the amendment which I have read.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I consider this is one of the most important matters which the people of this colony have to deal with, and the reason I advocate delay is simply this: From communications which I have received from various parts of the country I find that the people are asking for an explanation of this Representation Bill; and I say, before we pass a Bill of this character, a Bill which is binding till the next census is taken, the people should have an opportunity of discussing the matter; and I take it, when all of us go home, we shall have the pleasure of addressing the electors, and we can make a point of this measure. I shall deal with this matter from a political point of view. What I mean by that is simply this: that the people should know under what system they are to be represented, and whether this measure will suit them or not. I have a strong feeling that population should at least return the greatest number of members. Whether that is right or wrong is for the constituencies to settle. Moreover, what do we find at Home? We find that they have adopted these single electorates, and they are found to work very satisfactorily; and we find that under that system the agricultural labourers of England were enabled to express their views freely and clearly, and they elected members whom it was thought impossible to return to the House. I desire that this matter should be put before the people, and I think that is a fair ground to take. At any rate, that is the ground I intend to take, and I shall vote for the amendment.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I am rather sorry that this amendment has been brought forward, and I must say that I think the Government have begun to vacillate on this question a little.

Mr. MACANDREW.—As far as I know, the Government knew nothing whatever about this amendment. It is entirely my own idea. I consulted with no party.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—What I say is, that the Government is vacillating. Judging from the Premier's speech this afternoon, he was rather faint-hearted in the matter.

Sir R. STOUT. — Because I see so many against the Bill.

Mr. W. D. STEWART. — The honourable gentleman threw a hint out in reference to the Bill that, if he did not get a substantial majority, he would not go on with it. That is simply to say, "I am so indifferent about the Bill that I do not care whether it passes or not." I feel this: that we have a duty to perform in connection with this matter, and that that duty should be discharged now. — (No.) — An honourable member says "No." I think we ought to do this now, because I know perfectly well that next session it is probable the question will not be dealt with. I think the Representation Bill as introduced, on the whole, is a very fair one; and, although there may be some slight modification, I think it should meet with the general acceptance of this House. I am especially anxious about the city electorates. I have a very strong impression that these ought to be amalgamated, and that we ought to have single electorates where there is a community of interest. That is one reason, at all events, why I shall support the Bill very strongly this session. As to reducing the number of members, although I should not object to a reduction in the amount of honorarium, I have a strong feeling, from my experience and from my reading, that a small House is more open—if I may be allowed to use the expression—to corruption than a large one, and that in a small House each individual man's worth is increased; whereas in a large House there is much more freedom, and members are much less under the control of the Government of the day; and for that reason I am not dis-

posed to support a reduction of members. And I think the honourable member for Akaroa referred to the fact that the difference in cost, after all, would not be so great. I have only to say that I shall support this Bill, and I hope the Government will be thoroughly energetic, and make a Government question of it, and stand or fall by it.

Mr. REID.—I should like to ask the Premier if, in his opinion, there is any probability of the number of members being reduced in Committee, and, if not, whether the Bill will be proceeded with. I ask this question because I understand the Premier is himself anxious that a reduction should be made.

Sir R. STOUT.—I have told the honourable gentleman already that, judging from what I have heard, I do not think the number of members will be reduced. If it is kept at the same as it is now I shall proceed with the Bill.

Mr. REID.—I understood the honourable gentleman to say that the Auditor-General could not undertake the work in connection with bringing the Bill into operation before the beginning of next year. Supposing, for the sake of argument that the motion for going into Committee is negatived, and that a Representation Bill is not passed till next session, would the machinery of the Bill be sufficiently far advanced, and the electorates subdivided, in time to admit of the next general election being conducted under the new Act?

Sir R. STOUT.—I can only say that I hope the Assembly will be able to meet in April. The honourable gentleman will see at once from the provisions of the Bill that the time in which I think the Commission can do its work is three months. That would be ample time; and therefore the work could easily be done in time for the next general election, if the Bill were passed in the month of May next.

Mr. REID.—I came here pledged to assist to the best of my ability to have the number of members in this House reduced—I do not say very materially reduced, but reduced to a certain extent. My constituents are impressed with the idea, and I believe I am right in saying that a majority of the electors of the colony are of opinion, that our numbers can be reduced without in any way interfering with the good government of the country. I voted for the second reading of this Bill in the hope that reform in this respect would be carried out by the measure itself. We have it now from the Premier that he is of opinion—in fact, he is positive—from the feeling of the House, that if this Bill goes into Committee no alteration whatever will be made in the number of members. He also tells us that if we pass the Representation Bill next session there will be ample time to have the next general election conducted under its provisions. If that is so—and no doubt the Premier can give an authoritative opinion on the subject—why waste our time now over this measure? Why this undue haste, this unseemly haste? I submit that we have already established the principle of the Bill; and that it is only right, seeing that nothing will be lost by a short delay in the matter, that the question should be submitted to our constituents for an expression of opinion before we pass the Bill at all. Of course we are indebted to a very intelligent Press for the manner in which it ventilates all questions of policy and matters of public interest that come before this House: still, I venture to say that there is a great number of men in this colony who have not the opportunity of keeping themselves posted up in many of the important measures that we deal with. Therefore I say it is not fair to these men, who contribute so many thousands annually to the cost of government, for this House to pass a measure now which will affect them for years to come, without consulting them upon it. In voting for the second reading of the Bill I was led to believe that we should reduce the number of members, partly from the expressed opinions of honourable members themselves, and partly from the knowledge of the fact that during this and last session we have passed many local-governing Bills, by which a large portion of the miscellaneous work which used to engage the attention of this House is to be passed over to the local bodies. That is one reason why we should economize in the way I desire. From the assurance which the Premier has just given to me, I can only come to the conclusion that it would be a waste of time to proceed with this Bill this session. I say it is not at all advisable, and it is unnecessary, that we, already tired out and wearied with the work of the session, should have to consider this matter at a time when we are not fit to give that consideration to it which its importance deserves. I hope those members who voted with me for the second reading will, after the Premier's assurance, see that nothing whatever is to be gained by proceeding further with this measure now; also that it is only fair to our constituents that they should have an opportunity of expressing an opinion on the matter. During the recess honourable gentlemen can go before their constituents with the Representation Bill in one hand and the report of the Legislative Expenditure Committee in the other, and explain their provisions. If my suggestion is accepted, we should meet you here, Sir, next session in a better frame of mind than we are now in, and armed with the most pronounced opinions of our constituents on this important measure. We should also be able to give the Bill better consideration, and could pass it in much less time and in a more friendly spirit than we are likely to do on this occasion.

Mr. MENTEATH.—Sir, this is the most important subject that could possibly be discussed by this Assembly, and the function we are now undertaking to perform is, perhaps, the most weighty function that could devolve upon us. And it is of special importance at this time, and under the conditions in which we are at present placed. We have before us a Bill which affirms an entirely new constitutional principle—a principle which has never been affirmed in this House—a principle which has never been affirmed in any country in the world, as far as I am aware—certainly not in the United States

or the Australian Colonies. Are we to shovel this measure through after a few hours' debate —after a few speeches which seem like gasps? —for those who speak are gagged by those who are so anxious to have the measure forced through. Is this the manner in which this House is going to pass a most important and new constitutional measure, which is to bind the utterances of the people for years to come? I say the principle of this Bill has never been affirmed in any country. That principle is the principle of a population basis, without any elasticity or margin whatever. Population, and population only, is the principle affirmed in this Bill. We have heard that the principle of population has been affirmed before in this House; but has it been affirmed? No. Was the principle of a population-basis affirmed under the Bill which was brought in in 1879? No; that measure did not go as far as this one, and I do not believe it ever got as far as its second reading. It was read a first time, and then dropped. Another difference between that Bill and the present is that in it a difference of 25 per cent. in the population of city electorates was recognized. But it has been said that this principle was affirmed in 1881 in the law for the distribution of seats as they at present exist which was then passed. There is no assertion of this principle of population in that Bill. It is true that the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill mentioned in his speech that he took population as the basis on which he divided the various provincial districts; but he left free play for other principles in the electoral districts within the various provincial boundaries. It was only as between province and province that population was taken as a basis; and, as I have already said, we can only gather that fact from the division laid down in the schedule. There was no affirmation of the principle of a population basis in the Bill itself. The Bill simply provided that the electoral districts of the colony should be divided as in the schedule, and in the schedule it so happens that a population basis was recognized as between province and province. In this Bill we are told that the colony is to be cut up into electoral districts, that mountain-ranges are to be chopped in two, that rivers are to be disregarded, that the physical characters of districts are to be disregarded, that the wealth of districts is to be disregarded, that everything is to be disregarded beyond the bare fact that six thousand people are to be found within the imaginary boundary-line that this Commission is to lay down. The distribution of seats in the United States has a reference to a population basis. There the principle is that there shall be thirty-three thousand electors within the district; but there may be more—there may be fifty thousand, or a hundred thousand; and, then, the other circumstances of the district, its physical condition and other matters, are allowed free play under the law there in force. There is, in fact, a minimum limit, but no maximum. There is no hard-and-fast rule laid down that there shall be six thousand electors, or any particular number of thousands of electors in a district.

The hour of half-past five o'clock having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

Mr. MENTEATH.—In speaking to this Bill before the adjournment I sought to establish the following points: that this question is perhaps the most momentous with which this Legislature could occupy itself; secondly, that in the Bill which we have now before us we have an entirely new departure—that that new departure takes the shape of a political experiment—that nowhere in the civilized world have we got that principle in operation at the present day. Turn where we like,—to America, to the other Australian Colonies,—we find nowhere the principle of population affirmed as the only principle on which the distribution of seats should be made. I have endeavoured to establish, moreover, that those who have said in this debate that we are only indorsing the principle established by the Act of 1881 spoke without any knowledge of the facts. In the Bill of 1881 there is no affirmation of the principle that is now sought to be affirmed. Nowhere throughout the Act is it stated that population shall be the basis of representation at all. I pointed out that no doubt the population is a factor in determining the boundaries of constituencies, and that it is also taken as the main factor in determining the allocation of members to the different provinces, but that within the boundaries of those provinces other considerations are allowed to alter very materially the numerical boundaries of individual constituencies. This principle in the Bill of 1881 is not to be gathered from the Bill itself, but merely from the speech of the honourable gentleman who introduced it, Sir John Hall. No doubt it has been said that this principle was affirmed in the Act of 1879. But that Act was a conspicuous failure. It was introduced to this House, and subsequently abandoned because of the universal consensus of opinion in the House that it was not applicable to the circumstances of this colony. As the Act of 1881 has been quoted as an authority upon this subject, and as the speech of the honourable gentleman who introduced it has been quoted as an authority, I would like to refer very briefly to that speech. The honourable gentleman affirmed that he took a population basis as the basis of distribution of representation between the provincial districts, but within those districts he left a large margin for the play of different factors, those factors being the difference between city and country constituencies, the physical features of the country, and the progressive or stationary character of each district. These were expressly admitted by him as governing factors in the distribution of members among the constituencies within the boundaries of each province, although the numerical basis was the basis for the distribution of members

between the provinces themselves. On general grounds, therefore, as this is a new departure, it is worthy of very careful consideration at the hands of this House. But I would urge that there are special considerations which should influence this House to exercise on this question a greater amount of care than is demanded by even the general considerations that I have stated. They are these: What are the functions that this House has to perform in this colony? I take it that the main subject with which this House has to be occupied session after session is the question how best to settle the Crown lands of this colony, and how best to promote colonization, and, as an essential part of that subject, the great question of loan distribution—the question of borrowing and public works. Again, in considering a measure of representation, we must remember this colony is peculiarly situated. We must take into consideration the physical features of the colony, the provincial boundaries, the fact that those provincial boundaries have indicated for many years political entities, which have grown up with a community of thought and feeling, and that those provincial boundaries, in the minds of the provincialists as in the geography of the country, show no signs of disappearance. I hold, then, that this subject, on general grounds, is one of supreme importance, and, under the special difficulties of this country, is one of even still greater importance. How has this question been introduced to this House? We were told at the commencement of the session—I will not say how—by persons in authority that this Bill would not be passed this session—that it would be circulated, and that the deliberation upon it would take place next session. That was what we were told. It was not until a few weeks ago that it came before us as a question of practical politics. We always considered, and had a right to consider, that we should have the whole recess to consult our constituents and to discuss this new departure that we are asked to take now. When this House is exhausted with deliberations infinitely inferior in character to this one which we are now asked to undertake, we are suddenly told that this measure is to be pushed through all its stages now. Why is it that we see this most important measure proposed to the House under the conditions that I have mentioned? We find, on looking round the House, that there are three motors pushing on this Bill. I do not wish to charge any honourable member—I do not wish to make a disgraceful accusation against any honourable member, and therefore I will not say that any honourable member is directly interested by the motives I am about to notice; but I do say these motives exist largely in the country. We read them in the Press; and I have only to express the hope that it is not these motives which account for this extraordinary pressure brought on the House to pass this measure at this stage of the session. The motives I allude to, and which I hope will not be allowed to militate against the permanent interests of the country are these: First, we have local interests; then, we have the interest of one Island against the other; and then, we have the city interest, hoping to snatch a triumph at the cost of the country; and last of all, we have party interest. If party interest is allowed to achieve a triumph by the corruption of the legislation of the country, it may be truly said that party government in this House has been on its trial and has been found wanting. We have in this Bill a proposal to take between forty and fifty thousand electors from the country and put them to the towns—to create some six or seven new city electorates at the expense of the country. I am assuming that it is not proposed to increase the number of members, but that that is to remain as it is now, and, if I am right in that assumption, this Bill takes six or seven or even more members from the country and adds them to the towns. There we have the motive for the support which some honourable members give to this Bill. We have seen the fact broadly stated in the papers that the effect of the Bill will be to give three representatives to the North Island, and take them from the South. Then we have the fact that, if three representatives are taken from the South and given to the North, in the present state of political parties and political feeling the chances are that a certain political party in this House will gain three adherents and another political party will lose three adherents. Now, I would like to say a word or two as to the feeling between North and South. It is said that those opposing the passing of this Bill are actuated by southern feeling—that they desire to keep for themselves an undue share of the representation of the country. I repudiate altogether such a motive. But what I desire is this: that if it is found the North is entitled to three more representatives the North shall have them, but not at the expense of a great legislative blunder—and if this Bill is passed this session in its proposed form, in the exhausted state of the House, I feel sure it will be a great legislative blunder. Now I will deal with the party question. Administrations are the questions of a day; but bad legislation is much more durable in its effects. We know how much easier it is to fetter the people of a country with vicious and improper legislation than it is to break those fetters once they have been imposed. We know that people accustom themselves to particular laws, and it is very difficult to disturb the existing order of things. Once let this vicious principle be accepted, once let it be riveted on the necks of the electoral districts of the country, and we shall find it difficult indeed to retrace our steps. It puts me with surprise when honourable gentlemen occupying leading positions in this House get up and advocate the shovelling through of such an important measure as this for the sake of effecting a change of administration only. I think the voices of those honourable gentlemen would be better raised in urging that this House should exercise the fullest and freest deliberation on

uestion, and not that any one who gets d speaks on the question should be d of stonewalling the measure, and be ce told to sit down, while the House ests signs of impatience. Now, I wish , what is the practical necessity for this ire at the present time? This Parliament not expire for another year. We shall another session. Why, then, should we the measure through now? It surely t be the only motive of those honourable amen who are seeking to thrust this mea- through, that they may possibly effect a ge in the Administration a few months r than they might otherwise do it. If this comes before us next session—as the Go- nent have pledged themselves to bring it e us at the commencement of the session will have become law before the dissolu- takes place in the natural course of events. nk the only reason that can be shown for ng the measure through now is this: that if es not become law before the commence- t of next session it will be impossible to a no-confidence motion and to turn the ernment out till the session is well ad- ed; and therefore, for the chance of turn- out the Administration two or three months re it might otherwise be turned out, we to have a vicious system riveted on the ntry for all time to come. We are in this ortunate position in opposing this mea- : that we appear to have no one to lead us. find the heads of the Government and of Opposition uniting to force this measure ough. Now, we may ask, why is it that the mier is so anxious to force this measure ough? Does this House not know that the vernment are in favour of Protection, and t the transference of six or seven seats from country to the towns means strengthening hands of the Protectionists throughout the ntry? Does this House not know that Government are in favour of putting the rges for charitable aid and school-build- gs and other charges upon the land by es? Surely this may be another motive the policy which the Premier is following. he can by this measure transfer six or seven nstituencies from the country to the towns, has that additional incentive for the prose- tion of his policy. Let the country members ok to it. The larger the number of repre- ntatives given to the towns, the larger will be e burdens imposed on the land. Then we ow it is the policy of the present Govern- ent to make railways instead of roads. Here, gain, this Bill will help them. It is possible r the country districts to combine with the rge centres to make railways, because there ey have a common interest; but all the his- ry of this country teaches that the roading f the outlying districts has been very inade- uately pushed forward—that it has, in fact, een completely neglected—when it has been ft to be governed by the controlling influ- nce of the large towns. Under the provincial ystem we had the revenues accruing from the rovinces generally spent in and about the neighbourhood of the large towns. If the supreme power is conferred on the large towns this will follow: We shall have railways, but no more roads. Thus we can very easily understand why it is sought to distribute power in this way, in order to further the interests of the Protectionists, in order to further the interests of those who wish to put all charges upon land, and in order to further the interests of those who wish to make railways instead of roads. Now, what is the object that this Bill seeks to attain, and which it actually professes to attain, by this distribution of representation according to population? Is it not to give an equal weight to the vote of every elector in the country? How, then, does this Bill attain it? It is the form and not the substance. Nominally it gives equal weight to every constituency; but does it do so in effect? Why, the experience of every country but this directs us on this point. We know that the power of combination in districts depends on the density of population in those districts. The more scattered the population, the larger the area it covers, the greater the topographical obstacles that intervene between its parts, the greater will be the sectional voice which will speak from the different parts of the district in different tones. The result will be that, year after year, the voices of the country districts will be silenced in this House, and the only voices which will speak with clear tones will be the voices of the masses acting together in the cities. We know perfectly well that local questions take the greater part of the attention of this House, and we know that the cities can always unite upon local questions. However much two or more candidates may divide the electors on large questions of policy, they all unite as one man on local questions; and therefore on those local questions the cities will be represented and the country districts will not be represented. How can large, scattered districts keep touch with this House and their representatives? They cannot do it. Is it possible for political questions to be brought before them with anything like the directness, or in anything like the time, that they can be in large cities? It cannot be done. The result will be, if we pass this Bill, we shall make the electoral districts in the country more scattered and more divided than they are at present, and we shall therefore cause a more confused voice to come from the country as against more union in the voices from the towns. We see that this consideration of territorial extent has governed the electoral distribution of districts in all new countries. In New Zealand they have recognized territorial considerations in the distribution of electoral districts from the first, and in all the colonies of the Australasian group it is so. Under the Proclamation of 1853 this colony was divided into thirty-seven districts. The population of the colony was then 32,554, and therefore each member in this House then represented a constituency of 879 souls. Under the distribution of 1860 each member represented 1,583; under the distribution of 1862,

2,264; under the distribution of 1865 each member represented 2,881; under the distribution of 1870 each member represented 3,356; under the distribution of 1875 each member represented 4,474; and under the distribution of 1881 each member represented 5,400; and under this Bill each member will represent a population of 6,302. Now, why was it that this system of representation was adopted in the past, and, as I think, for the good of the colony? Simply because it was recognized that unless the districts were confined within certain limits representation would be a farce; and so it would be now. A man cannot represent in anything like a satisfactory manner a district which is as large as or larger than an English county. The districts must be confined within reasonable limits if we are to have satisfactory representation. Now, I hold that the country constituencies at the present time are reduced to the smallest limits advisable; and if we make them larger than they are at the present time—if we increase their size as it is proposed to increase their size under this Bill—we shall simply annihilate the country representation to a considerable degree, and leave only the representation of towns in this House. Therefore I hold that this Bill, while it professes to equalize votes, really effects an enormous disparity between the votes of the town and the votes of the country. It is said by some honourable gentlemen who represent country constituencies—and in saying it they stultify themselves—"Let us get the Bill in Committee, and in Committee we will remodel the Bill." They can only get into Committee by alliance with the city members. It is only by the members from the North Island and the cities combining that this Bill can be taken into Committee; and if this Bill is taken into Committee the union must fail there, and therefore it is the merest waste of time for honourable members who represent these different sections to take the Bill into Committee with the idea that they can remodel the Bill there. Why, the whole reason for the city members going into Committee on this Bill is to gain power for the cities as contrasted with the country. If that is so—if my assumption is correct—then they would rather not have the Bill at all than have it put into a form that will suit country interests. Then, if the country members take the Bill into Committee, and it is so moulded as to injure country interests, how will they explain their action to their constituents? How will honourable members explain their action in imposing injustice on their constituents for all time in order that they might gain a temporary advantage for their party or for particular constituencies? Then, I would say a few words about the number of members in this House. I admit that when I was new to politics I was under the impression that the number of members might be reduced with advantage to the country; but a little acquaintance with the politics of the country has shown me that that opinion was wrong. I believe that, so long as the public works policy is to be continued, if there is to be any change in the number of members it must be in the direction of increasing rather than in the direction of decreasing them. If we contrast the number of the representatives in this colony with the representation in all the other colonies we find that the representation in New Zealand is smaller than that in three of them, and a little larger than that in two of them. I stand, therefore, very fairly in the matter. I hold that weight is to be attached to the argument already advanced in this House that if we reduce the number of members in this House we shall reduce the material from which future Administrations may be formed, that we shall greatly increase the opportunity for corrupting majorities, and that we shall greatly disable this House for performing functions which have more particularly devolved upon it since the abolition of provinces, of attending to the local matters which have to be dealt with by us. If provincial administration were re-formed we could dispense with a proportion of our members. While we have to carry on public works, while we have to attend to local matters, we must necessarily keep up the number of the members of this House. What could we gain by reducing the number? If we reduced the number by twenty we should only save £4,000, or £5,000, or £6,000. Is that gain be compensated for by what we may be lost? I think not. In conclusion I can only say that this Bill is the form without substance, that it takes the name of a great principle in vain, telling us that it is giving every section of the community a fair and equal voice in the direction of this country's affairs, when it does exactly the opposite. It is a retrograde step upon the Act of 1881; and I ask that on a question of such great importance, as it seems to me, honourable members will put away all considerations of party, all considerations of North against South, of East against West, all considerations of city against country, and vote so that we may have time to consider what ought to be done. At this late period of the session this House is not in a frame of mind to take up this question. I believe that it will be admitted, even by the supporters of the Bill, that the House is not in a fit frame of mind to deal with this question, and therefore, although I disagree entirely with the principle of the Bill, I put this argument to those who support the Bill: that it must have much fuller and better consideration next session than it can have this session.

Mr. BRUCE.—I should not take any part in this discussion had it not been for a remark made by an honourable member during the course of this debate. The honourable member for Greymouth asked why the voice of the member for Rangitikei was not heard, in connection with this measure, in reference to the representation of the seamen of the colony. I wish very briefly to explain; and while doing so I may say that, on behalf of the seamen of New Zealand, I thank the honourable member for Greymouth for the sympathy and support he gave me on a previous occasion. But my

political education has now so far advanced that I recognize this fact: that it is one of the unwritten laws of parliamentary procedure that any measure of importance such as this must emanate from the Government of the day. That has been one of my reasons for not moving in this matter on this occasion. And, although I do not speak with authority, I believe that the sympathies of the Premier lie in the direction of giving the seamen of this colony a voice in this Assembly, and I have no doubt—though, as I have said, I have no authority for saying so—that he would introduce a provision of that kind into this measure if he thought there was any chance of carrying it. But it is my impression that public opinion is not yet sufficiently ripe to stamp with its approval such a measure at the present time. I may also say that I think this would be an exceedingly inopportune time for its introduction; for I believe that there is a very widely spread feeling in the country that the number of representatives in this House should be rather decreased than augmented. It is my opinion also that, the subject having received so much ventilation during the last two sessions of Parliament, and also, presumably, in the country, it will receive every attention at the hands of the constituencies at the next election, and if I come back to this House I do not expect to come back single-handed on this question. I do not for one moment believe that this democratic young country will deny her seamen the right to make their voices heard in this Assembly—in the Assembly of a community of which they themselves form an important integral part—nor do I believe that this colony is desirous of seeing those evils and abuses spring up in her mercantile marine which in that of the Mother-country are still an outrage on civilization and a dark blot upon the reputation of Great Britain. I should now like to make a few remarks in reference to this Bill itself. On the whole, I approve of the principle sufficiently to vote for its going into Committee. I believe that it is desirable, although I do not say that it is absolutely necessary, that, under our changing circumstances, some self-adjusting automatic machinery should be devised for arranging and rearranging the boundaries of our electorates. I believe also that the population basis is at present, subject to some modifications, of all bases the most practicable one. I have said "at present," because I do not accept this measure as anything but a temporary solution of the problem of representation. I hope to live to see a modification of the Hare system adopted in this colony. I also say "subject to certain modifications," because I am strongly of opinion—not because I am a country member, for I have always held the principle strongly—that the country ought to be much more largely represented proportionately than the urban populations. I believe that the productive and progressive forces of the colony ought to have the greatest representation in this Assembly. The interests of town and country are identical; but there can be no doubt, I think, that the urban constituencies are too short-sighted to see that. We have been told during this debate that the cities are more intelligent than the country. I think that the honourable member for Wanganui said that the town is the brain of the country.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Hear, hear.

Mr. BRUCE.—Let us measure that statement by the standard of results. I have no wish to make invidious distinctions; but where does the cry for Protection and for bursting-up land-taxes arise? In the urban constituencies. It comes from the unthinking masses in the urban constituencies. It is the city constituencies which mainly send members here pledged to support the policy—or, rather, the fallacy—of Protection, which, scientifically considered, is as dead as the Ptolemaic theory of the solar system.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—Not practically.

Mr. BRUCE.—Not practically, unfortunately, but scientifically it certainly is. I feel that I shall, to a certain extent, be going over ground already well trodden, but I wish very briefly to refer to some views expressed by my honourable friend the member for Inangahua. He dealt at some length, and very ably, I think, with the necessity for the increased representation of the country districts; and I would point out this to the House—for I am sure it is a fact which cannot be contradicted: that four thousand men in a city can so organize, consolidate, and combine their forces as to make their pressure at least equal to that of eight thousand men in a scattered and thinly-populated country district. I wish to look at the question from another point of view. We are all well aware what an alarming feature, at the present day, is the undue gravitation of the country population to the cities. We have here, at present, in one of the cities of the colony, five hundred unemployed men clamouring for work. Now, it goes without saying that we all sympathize with men who want work and are unable to find it—honest, deserving men. It is unnecessary for any one to get up to give expression to that opinion in this House. But, from my experience of the unemployed—and I have had a little experience of them; I have been one of the unemployed myself, not in this country, but in other countries—I say, judging from my own experience, I have formed a very strong opinion indeed that the cases of deserving poverty in their ranks are very few indeed as compared with those which are absolutely undeserving. We have a number of these unemployed in Auckland, and we are told they are artisans; and no doubt they are. It is said a number of them are ironworkers; and no doubt that is so. And we already know what pressure they have brought to bear in this House; and if we increase the number of city representatives their influence will be still more felt; and in what direction will it go? In the direction of Protection, unquestionably. I wish now to refer to one or two of the remarks that fell from the honourable member for Inangahua, which appeared to me extremely illogical for

one of his logical turn of mind. The honourable member told us—in fact, he appealed to a certain section, for that was the way in which I took it—he appealed to a certain section not to pass the Bill. Why? Because it would give three members antagonistic to the Government—because, presumably, the three North Island members would be in opposition to the Government.

Mr. MENTEATH.—Will the honourable member allow me to explain what I did say? I said that certain members, I feared, were influenced by an unworthy motive—which was, to gain an advantage for their party of three members; and that that was the spirit in which they approached this question.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the honourable gentleman guarded himself against imputing unworthy motives.

Mr. MENTEATH.—I expressed the hope that that suspicion on my part was not well founded.

Mr. BRUCE.—I accept the honourable gentleman's explanation. I did not attribute to him that he had imputed unworthy motives; but this fact remains: he assumes that it would give three members to the Opposition. Is that not so? Very well. The honourable member goes on to appeal again to the House, or to certain sections of it, not to pass this Bill. Why? Because it would give six supporters to the Government from the city constituencies. How can the honourable member reconcile those statements?

Mr. MENTEATH.—I would explain again that in considering this Bill I expressly stated that I put party considerations entirely on one side.

Mr. BRUCE.—Sir, again the honourable member appealed to the House not to pass this Bill, because it would give six members probably pledged to Protection, which is one of the features of the policy of the honourable gentlemen who sit on the Government benches. Why should such an appeal have come from a Government supporter? He has actually appealed to this House to vote against this measure because it will give six supporters to the Government which he is keeping on those benches. And, again, the honourable gentleman said that certain sections of this House would join together to put this Bill into Committee; but what would it be when it came out of Committee? It would be in a very mutilated form. From his reasoning one would imagine that the country members had sold themselves absolutely; but, if the Bill comes out in a form they do not wish, they can vote against it when it comes out of Committee, as I certainly shall do if I do not think that fair concessions are given to the rural constituencies. A word or two in reference to the amalgamation of city electorates. I have given this subject considerable thought, and I believe their amalgamation would be inimical, not merely to the country districts, but to the cities themselves. As I have said, the interests of town and country are absolutely identical; but if Protectionist members are returned by the cities, which exercise undue weight in this House, what will the result be? By checking the expansive forces of the country the cities themselves will suffer. That is just as certain as that two and two make four. What are our towns? They are a creation of the country districts, for which they act as distributing centres. They are the effects, the country being the cause. For that reason I object to the amalgamation of city electorates. I believe that would unduly increase the power of the cities, and I have not the slightest doubt that a brilliant oratorical demagogue could get up and appeal to the passions of an urban constituency by invoking all sorts of visionary illusions, and those who came here to act with him would be merely his nominees or satellites. There is something under this amalgamation of city electorates, and it is a thing the country representatives ought to watch most jealously. I admit there is a great deal of force in the arguments advanced by the honourable member for Inangahua in reference to the physical and geographical features of the colony; but, as I have said, I do not accept this as a final solution of this representation problem. I regret that the question of North *versus* South should have been introduced into this debate. It is true that we here are North and South members; but we are, first of all, New Zealand members, and we should remember that, and not allow any other motive to influence us on the floor of this House. I cannot understand this cry of North *versus* South. Why should it be? Because a magnificent highway of commerce—Cook Strait—runs between the two Islands? I can see no reason in that. I wonder, if we had dug it out as a canal, would the cry then have existed? Now, I wish to say two or three words in support of my action in voting for this measure. I quite agree with the remarks that fell from the honourable member for Akaroa. I believe we have to look towards a possible contingency. I admit it is not a probable contingency, but it is possible that there may be a revulsion of feeling in the colony during the recess which might meet the present occupants of the Treasury benches with a vote of want of confidence when we reassemble here; and if that were the case we should certainly have to go to the country on the same basis as two years ago. And also I believe that this adjustment of boundaries of electorates may take longer than many honourable members imagine; and, if next session this Bill becomes law, then the Commissioners might not be able to adjust the boundaries in time for the elections. The Premier combated that idea this evening, I believe; but I do not think he knows exactly what time it will take. These are the reasons which mainly induce me to vote for this measure; but I reserve to myself full powers to vote in Committee as I think fit, and I have pretty well indicated during the course of my remarks what direction I shall take in Committee.

Sir R. STOUT.—I would first explain, in reference to what has been stated by the honourable member for Inangahua, that I have

never looked upon the Representation Bill as a party question. I think we ought not to deal with it as a party question at all, but that we should try to get the best Bill possible, and, in doing so, sink all party differences. Of course I admit what the honourable gentleman says is true—the urban constituencies will be increased in power; but the increased power is a consequence of increased population, and I think, as the country districts are willing to have a population basis, they cannot object to the towns and suburbs getting a share of the increased representation. It would not be right that they should be unrepresented. Take Newtown, for example, in South Wellington: the result will be that perhaps Wellington will get another member on account of the increase of population in that suburb. The Dunedin suburbs may also have two or three members; and Auckland, I think, the same. I think the House should not object to give them the representation they are entitled to on a population basis. As to what the honourable member for Rangitikei said, I have said that I must stand by this principle of population and none other, and I hope honourable members will understand that I cannot consent to any amendment further than I have gone in the Supplementary Order Paper. If that is not done I shall be bound to drop the Bill, because I cannot consent to being a party to a Bill which does not contain the population basis.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—Might I be allowed to ask the Premier a question? He said that unless there was a substantial majority in favour of the Bill he must be content to abandon it. Now, I want him to tell me what he considers a substantial majority. Would ten, or twenty, or thirty, be a substantial majority?

Sir R. STOUT.—I think ten would be too substantial.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—Will the Premier say five?

Sir R. STOUT.—Well, about five.

Mr. BRYCE.—I should like to say that my feelings as a North Island member are not really very strong, and that no North Island member can rely upon a vote from me on any subject simply for the reason that I represent a portion of the North Island; and he could not upon this subject now. I gave a tolerably fair proof of that, I think, when the former Representation Bill was introduced under the auspices of my own Premier, Sir John Hall. I then supported him very loyally in the matter, and it was really on the distinct assurance from him that, if any readjustment took place in which the North Island might possibly be favoured, unquestionably the members of the South Island would show similar generosity to what was then shown to them, and that certainly they would offer no factious opposition. That was the position my own Premier took up, and I supported him most cordially in the matter on that understanding; and therefore it is that I think some unfairness has now been shown by a few members from the South Island. There is a very great peculiarity in the proposal for the carrying of this Bill by the Government at present, because I am very well assured—and members will correct me if I am mistaken—that both the Government whips have been actively canvassing against this very measure. From their silence on the subject I assume that it is so.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Only one of them.

Mr. BRYCE.—I said that both the Government whips, I understand, have been actively canvassing against this measure introduced by the Premier; and the Premier adds force to what I state by saying that there was something peculiar which occurred on another occasion.

Sir R. STOUT.—That makes it not peculiar.

Mr. BRYCE.—It is peculiar in both cases. An interjection has, however, come from one of the honourable gentlemen to whom I alluded, saying that only one of them has been canvassing against the Bill. That, of course, lessens the peculiarity, if it is the case, to that extent. I understand that one or more members of the Government is or are against this measure also, and that they have not hesitated to canvass against the measure. I am not going to give particulars: that is always dangerous to do. I shall abstain from that; but there are peculiar rumours on the subject. I am told that there really is no reason existing now why we should not go to a division at once, because the result of these efforts is said to be that there is a majority for the Government against a Government Bill. If that is so there can be no possible reason why we should not immediately go to a division, and have the Government defeated by the aid of themselves and of their own active friends. I do not think it is quite creditable that the Government of the country should act in that way. I quite understand and appreciate the party difficulty the Government is in, and I should not like to press matters in regard to that difficulty in the way of argument, because it is a difficulty we must all recognize and occasionally feel; but I want to put it in this way—particularly to the Premier, because I do not know that it has occurred to him with sufficient force: He has stated that, under certain conditions, he will abandon the Bill for the present session; and I presume that, under somewhat similar conditions, he will abandon it next session, because, if these are matters of principle to him this session, they will be the same next session, and, if he expresses an intention of abandoning the Bill this session under certain conditions, if those conditions occur next session he will also abandon the Bill next session.

Sir R. STOUT.—No. The reason I gave was that we were nearing the end of the session. Whatever happens to the Bill this session, I shall bring in a Bill containing the same principles in almost the same words next session.

Mr. BRYCE.—The honourable member said he was wedded to the principle of representation by population.

[illegible] any [illegible] arguing [illegible] certain [illegible] be car- [illegible] that of [illegible] this [illegible] matter of [illegible] should [illegible] session [illegible] principle [illegible] My [illegible] will not [illegible] let some [illegible] member says [illegible] ques- [illegible] government [illegible] those con- [illegible] a ques- [illegible] under such [illegible] for grave [illegible] consult my [illegible] to press un- [illegible] to put [illegible] my mind [illegible] assume that, if [illegible] a matter of [illegible] conditions [illegible]: and I [illegible] compliment of [illegible] the same [illegible] principle, and he [illegible] he would do [illegible] to carry [illegible] he would make [illegible] fullest sense [illegible] traversing [illegible] population [illegible] to another [illegible] representation Bill. [illegible] logical argu- [illegible] gentleman's [illegible] whether he has [illegible] be the very [illegible] abandonment of [illegible] session. [illegible] be interrupt- [illegible] but I hope, if [illegible] the sense of the [illegible] beneficent pro- [illegible] will be a large [illegible] of the Bill. [illegible] as a joke. [illegible] joke at all. [illegible] it seems to [illegible] abandonment of the [illegible] session will be very [illegible] that I think [illegible] from this session [illegible] serious, even in [illegible], because, if [illegible] there is, from a [illegible] through this session, then I apprehend that the trouble next session may be almost infinitely increased. This Parliament, as is well known, will expire early in August of next year, and I think I shall show, presently, that it is necessary that a Bill should be passed for the readjustment of representation previous to the expiration of Parliament. If so, does not the honourable member see that he is really putting half a dozen or a dozen members, as the case may be, into a position of paramount power next session, if they choose to exercise that power in a determined manner? I think that both the Government and the Opposition would admit that it is almost an absolute necessity to carry the Representation Bill next session; and those members who stood out against it, with the expiration of Parliament on the 9th of August staring them in the face and in full view, would, I say, get into a position of such power that, if they were the least unscrupulous, they could make their own terms and conditions; and that is a contingency which any one proposing to abandon this Bill this session must keep in mind and fairly view. This is what I think on the subject. The Representation Act itself expires, I believe, on the 1st December, 1887. If there is no Representation Act passed I believe we shall get into a most serious condition politically, or, rather, constitutionally. In fact, I am not able to appreciate the full consequences. I do not know what they will be.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Go back to the old Act.

Mr. BRYCE.—No; no election could take place under the old Act. It would be an impossibility, for this reason, if for no other reason—and there are others: that no electoral rolls exist under that Act, and no power exists to make those rolls; and that reason, I apprehend, would be sufficient of itself to show that the country would soon get into a very serious condition indeed—so serious that I fail now to appreciate and understand all the consequences that might arise from it. It seems to me that an Act of the Imperial Parliament would very likely be necessary before we could be set going again. Therefore I come back to this: that the Government, knowing that would be the position, would be perfectly willing to say that a Distribution of Seats Bill was absolutely necessary to be passed; and if half a dozen or a dozen members, with a certain amount of unscrupulousness—because that would be necessary—persisted in opposing this Bill, with the knowledge that the 9th August was rapidly approaching, they would be in a position to name their own terms, and their terms would have to be conceded to them. Therefore I come back to this again: that, great as the party difficulty may be in passing the Bill during the present session—and I, for one, am not disposed to undervalue that difficulty, or to place that difficulty on the Premier or the Government—that difficulty will be infinitely increased next year; and, if it is proposed to shelve this Bill for the mere purpose of avoiding difficulty, that object, certainly, will not be effected. As sure as can be, the difficulty, in an enormously-increased

e, will have to be faced next year, to the ding inconvenience of the Government, indeed, of all members of the House who a reasonable Representation Bill to be d. I commend that view of the case to Premier. I commend it to his attention, this reason: that, although I admit his lty and sincerity in desiring to keep faith those who are supporting him to carry this through, it is one thing to keep faith in the r of his promise and another thing to unake to exert himself in order to carry his sure. I cannot conceive that what has going on with the whips and the members Government in the way of canvassing inst their own Bill could be possible if the mier exerted himself as he ought to do in r to carry this Bill. I commend the seriness of the position to the honourable tleman; and, at all events, it will be on ord that I have pointed it out. If the House oses, nevertheless, to shelve this Bill in the e of avoiding a difficulty, at any rate it has n pointed out to them fairly that, by avoid- a small difficulty now, a much greater iculty will exist next session.

Mr. BARRON.—I do not think there will be at great amount of difficulty next session ich the honourable member for Waitotara ems to anticipate. The Premier has prosed that Parliament shall meet in April, d therefore we shall have four months fore it is dissolved under the present law, d I presume the Government will bring own a Representation Bill early in the sesion, if, indeed, it be not amongst the very st Bills introduced. There can be no doubt, d our whole experience in Parliament shows, at no sustained opposition can possibly be ept up for so long a period as three or four onths. I take exception, also, to what the onourable gentleman implied, in so far as he id that the opposition to this Bill was chiefly n the part of members from the South Island. do not think it is at all for the reason that the outh Island has now a preponderance of repreentation that there is this opposition to the Bill. I believe that there are many members rom the South Island who, like myself, are ntirely at one with the Premier in his desire o pass this Bill this session, and who will give him loyal support in trying to get it through. The honourable member for Inangahua had some objections to the Bill, chiefly arising from the fact that he does not think population is the proper basis; but you may search around for some reliable principle on which to frame a Representation Act without being able to discover anything so reliable or easily understood as the proposed basis, and there is an amount of elasticity given to that basis in this measure which will prevent it being applied absolutely and rigidly to any district which might be injuriously affected if nothing else were taken into consideration. That is to say, there is a thousand in one case and five hundred in another as a margin for considerations other than that of population. One of my principal reasons for desiring to see this Bill go into Committee is, that I have long held that the number of members in this House might be reduced—not reduced merely to a small extent, but materially reduced. Therefore I shall propose that the blank in the Bill be filled up with the number "sixty." Honourable members may think that is rather a radical proposal; but I am sure that if they would agree to that, and would fall back upon ten thousand as the quota, as we very well could do, they would find that we should have a Parliament that probably would do the business of the country quite as well, more economically, and quite as satisfactorily as the large number who are now assembled here for three or four months every year at considerable and unnecessary expense. If we reduced the number of members I presume that would be followed by a reduction in the number of Ministers. With seven Ministers in this House voting solidly, and two whips voting somewhat unanimously——

Sir R. STOUT.—The honourable member cannot count. There never were seven Ministers in this House.

Mr. BARRON.—I acknowledge the honourable member is an authority on educational attainments, and I will, of course, submit to his statement. We will, then, take one off, and say that six members of the Ministry voting solidly and two whips voting with them makes a solid vote of eight in a party division. The influence of so many Ministerial votes in a House of ninety members is a very disturbing element, but in a House of sixty members it would be overwhelming. I presume, therefore, that the House would take action so that there should be only three or four—three for choice—Ministers in this House; and let such other Ministers as may be necessary discharge their duties in another sphere. I shall vote for going into Committee on the Bill, in the hope that I shall have an opportunity of inserting "sixty" in the blank, and, if that is not agreed to, I shall then vote with pleasure for any number less than the present one. The honourable member for Moeraki has given notice that he will move "seventy-five," and I shall vote for that, of course, if my own amendment is not carried, and if no intermediate number is proposed.

Mr. SUTTER.—The honourable member for Waitotara has displayed a great number of "bogeys" and other dismal things to frighten honourable members; but what do they all amount to? Other honourable members have quite as much interest in the welfare of the country as he has, and it is not at all likely that they are going to bring the administration to a state of stagnation by their actions. Members of this House have more respect for the country and themselves than to do such a thing; and, even supposing some honourable members should stonewall this Bill next session, the House could easily pass a temporary measure to keep the present Act going. I shall vote against the Bill going into Committee, and for the motion of the honourable member for Port Chalmers as the [illegible]ble course

to adopt. I do not give the honourable member for Waitotara credit for that amount of patriotism which he appears to assume to himself. I say the people of the country ought to have a voice in deciding this matter. If we meet our constituents during the recess we shall know whether they will take population as the basis, and we ought to know that before we decide. I again appeal to honourable members not to be frightened by this "bogey" about all the machinery of government being stopped, and having to appeal to the Imperial Government to get us out of the difficulty.

The House divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question."

AYES, 36.

Atkinson	Hamlin	Richardson, G.
Ballance	Hirst, H.	Rolleston
Bryce	Hobbs	Stout
Buchanan	Johnston	Thompson, T.
Buckland, W. F	Lake	Tole
Conolly	Locke	Trimble
Dargaville	Macarthur	Wakefield
Fergus	Mitchelson	Whyte
Fisher	Montgomery	Wilson.
Fitzherbert	Moss	*Tellers.*
Fulton	Newman	Barron
Grey	Peacock	Bruce.
Hakuene		

NOES, 39.

Bevan	Kerr	Richardson, H.
B.-Bradshaw	Lance	Ross
Brown	Larnach	Samuel
Buckland, J. C.	Levestam	Seddon
Cadman	McKenzie, J.	Steward, W. J.
Cowan	McMillan	Sutter
Dodson	Menteath	Taylor
Duncan	O'Callaghan	Thomson, J. W.
Fraser	O'Conor	Vogel
Gore	Parata	Walker.
Grace	Pyke	*Tellers.*
Guinness	Reese	Hursthouse
Hatch	Reid	Macandrew.
Joyce		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Beetham	Turnbull
Hurst, W. J.	Coster
Mackenzie, M.	Ivess
Moat	Garrick
Ormond	Allwright
Russell	Harper
Smith	Pere
Stewart, W. D.	Holmes.

Majority against, 3.

Motion negatived.

On the motion, That the words of the amendment be inserted,

Major ATKINSON said,—I must say a few words on this occasion. Under ordinary circumstances I should have been taken greatly by surprise at this division. But, after the extraordinary proceedings we have had from the present Government, I confess that I am not so surprised as I feel I ought to be, for I venture to say that no more disgraceful scene has ever taken place in this House than has just taken place. Why, here is the Premier, standing upon principle, bringing down a Bill which he assures us is necessary for the good government of the country, and it is defeated by three of his own Ministers. Can we believe the Premier in the future for one moment when he says that he will next session bring down a Bill and stand by it? Where is his backbone? Where is his principle?

Mr. TAYLOR.—This is not a party question.

Major ATKINSON.—It is not a party question; and that is why I am speaking as I am. I am speaking now for the credit of the House. I believed that the honourable gentleman was sincere in proposing this measure.

Mr. SEDDON.—So he was.

Major ATKINSON.—Then I say, Let this House adjourn immediately, and let the Premier tell those members of his Ministry who voted against it that he can no longer retain them in his Government. That is bringing the matter home. If the Premier is sincere, how is it possible that he can any longer remain in a Government with colleagues such as these? The thing is an impossibility. The Treasurer had to complain of a want of discipline the other night. He told us that one member of the Government, after agreeing to a matter in Cabinet, voted differently——

Mr. GUINNESS.—I rise to a point of order. Is the honourable gentleman correct in referring to a previous debate?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Was it on this Bill?

Mr. GUINNESS.—It was not on this Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Do not address the Speaker of the House in that tone, Sir.

Mr. GUINNESS.—I beg pardon for speaking excitedly. I mean to say that the honourable gentleman is referring to a debate which was not on this Bill at all, when he said that the Colonial Treasurer charged one of his colleagues with want of discipline.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I must request honourable members to abide by the rule which directs that they must abstain from referring to previous debates. I thought the honourable member (Major Atkinson) was referring to something which occurred at a previous debate on some of the earlier stages of this Bill; which would be in order.

Major ATKINSON.—I was not referring to any debate. I was referring simply to some by-play which went on on the Government benches the other day. Of course, if out of order I will not refer to it. I will only ask honourable members to recollect for a moment what occurred the other day. I will only ask them to recollect that, on more than one occasion, we have had this terrible exhibition of so-called constitutional government—not government according to the rules of the Constitution, but, apparently, simply to retain their places there, permitting each other to vote differently upon the most vital questions which concern the well-being of the country. I say there is no effort amongst those honourable gentlemen to govern on principle. No; convenience from day to day is the only thing that is thought of. Then we have the Premier, who is very power-

on principle, who would stand or fall on nciple, but the very instant that a principle applied to his Government it may go to the r winds of heaven for all he cares, and he l remains with his colleagues upon those ches. Is not this bringing constitutional ernment into disrepute? Is it possible that can have constitutional government if this t of thing is to go on? The thing is an abso- e impossibility; and I say the country will believe in the sincerity of the Premier after s exhibition to-night. If the honourable ntleman's colleagues had gone into the lobby h him, and he had been beaten by his own ips, still the country would have believed in n; but, when we see the division actually rried by his three colleagues, what will the ntry think of the so-called sincerity of the nourable gentleman? And then his back is be stiffened during the recess. Can we be- ve it? What is to alter the circumstances ring next session? Is the honourable ntleman to bring down a Bill then and ow his colleagues to walk into the lobby ainst him? And, if not, I want to know why t? I heard a speech from the honourable ember for Inangahua this evening which I eply regretted—a speech which did not do edit to this House and which did not do edit to the honourable gentleman. I have ard several speeches in the same line— eeches which, I confess, I have regretted more an almost any speeches I have heard in this ouse, because they show that that honour- ble gentleman is not fulfilling the hopes that his House entertained of the position he was ing to take in our ranks. What did he do? e appeared before us as a great patriot—he gged us to consider this measure upon prin- ple. He told us that there was a mean ndeavour—although he did not make the rect accusation, he did what was worse: he insinuated it—he insinuated that the only ject that we who desired this Bill should pass his session had was that a certain honourable member—I presume he referred to myself— oped to obtain three extra seats to support imself. That was the accusation; and yet e honourable gentleman is quite prepared at the Bill should be passed next session.

Mr. MENTEATH.—No, certainly not, as is.

Major ATKINSON.—Not to be passed at ll?

Mr. MENTEATH.—No.

Major ATKINSON.—That is to say, that the Vest Coast is to be represented at double the ate of any other constituency throughout the olony. That is the honourable gentleman's dea of patriotism—that a West Coast digger is o have twice the representation in this House hat the citizens of other parts of the colony re to have. I say that such insinuations s the honourable member has made are be- eath contempt. What we are working here or now is a great principle—the principle that he population of the colony are to be repre- ented. And why do we ask that it should be passed this session and not next session? Not because it will make any difference whatever in sides here or there. A very large majority of this House—seven-tenths, at the very least—have said that a Representation Act must be passed; and how is it possible to impute motives to us who are asking that one should be passed at the present time? It is out of the question. As far as motives go, it makes no difference at all to us—even supposing it is true that the passing of the Bill would have a certain political influence, which I do not believe for a moment; but even if it were true it could not be applicable, because the Bill, according to the view of a very large majority of this House, is to be passed next session though it should not be passed this session. Why is it that we are so anxious to have it passed this session? Has not this very division shown us the necessity for it? Has it not shown us that the Government have no backbone? Why, even the Premier, after advocating a direct principle, shrivels up instantly, and permits his colleagues without a word—in fact, I fear, without even feeling ashamed of it—to pass into the lobby against him, and defeat the Bill which he declares he will next year stake his existence upon. And even that was said only in a half-hearted manner. The honourable gentleman has said that he will have to consult his colleagues. What can be the result of that consultation? Is he to come down in the same way as now, and then is he to permit honourable gentlemen representing small constituencies, who are not prepared to give their fellow-colonists an equal share in the representation, to say that this Parliament shall be dissolved upon the present representation? That is what the honourable gentleman is asking for; and he, as well as the older members of this House, knows that, without a shadow of doubt, a dozen men next session can prevent the Representation Bill passing. I say the Premier knows it.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Major ATKINSON.—Then I will not say he knows it, because, apparently, he knows very little indeed about either constitutional usages or parliamentary government. But I will ask the House, what hope can there be of obtaining a Representation Act next session? When we passed the Representation Act in 1881, how was it done? Did the then Government shrink from it? Is it not true that the Government of that day had to face just the same difficulty that the honourable gentleman had to face to-night?

Mr. SEDDON.—And afterwards compromised.

Major ATKINSON.—I do not know what the honourable member means by "compromise." I will deal with that presently. I ask this: Had not the Government of that day to face the difficulty which the honourable gentleman has had to face now? It will be seen from the division-lists that almost the whole of the Government supporters went into the "No" lobby, and almost all the Opposition went into the "Aye" lobby with the Government. The Bill was carried by the Government with the

assistance of the then Opposition; and that could have been done now if the Premier had put down his foot and told his colleagues that they were to do their duty before the country and this House and vote for a Bill which the Premier looked upon as an important matter of principle. But no; the whips and three of the Ministers were all busy working against their Premier. And the Premier is content to occupy such a position in this Assembly! We know he has never been Premier of the Government. First the Treasurer took the command, and then the Minister of Mines tells the Premier he can go to heaven if he likes before he will vote as the Premier wishes; and then one after the other of the Ministers walk into the lobbies against the Premier. And still the honourable gentleman is the Premier of the colony! But he is not the master of the Government, or the leader of this House. I will tell him this: that, powerful as he may think he is, he will have to stiffen his back—he will have to have the courage of his opinions, not only on the public platform before a large audience—it is easy enough, when hearing the cheers of a large audience, to be a great man. But we want a man who, if he is truly great, will be firm and sincere, and will take and keep his proper position when he sits as leader of this House. Now, could there have been any difficulty in carrying this Bill to-night? Just think of a Government that will permit their chief whip time after time to work against them to—I am told by a supporter of the Government—trap their own supporters! I do not know what that refers to; but I have no doubt it refers to some very creditable proceeding. But I ask, is constitutional government possible, can we hope to govern in this young country, can we hope for anything but the contempt of the country, when we see a Premier afraid to lead this House,—when we see some of his Ministers and his whips canvassing against his chief measure, and—as I am told by a Government supporter — trying to trap his supporters? What can be the result of this but the disgrace of our Constitution, the disgrace of constitutional government, when the honourable gentleman can presume to go on in this way? The honourable member for Waitotara has shown us what may be the effects of our not passing this Bill this session. An honourable gentleman has said the Act of 1881 was passed by compromise: of course, there must be compromise in all these matters. When that Act was passed I venture to say there was not a southern man in the majority but what, either in distinct words or by implication by the words of his chief, undertook to pledge himself, by all by which it was possible to pledge himself, that when the time arrived he would again vote for redistribution, whether it was north or south or east or west that was to gain.

Mr. TURNBULL.—No.

Major ATKINSON.—I say Yes; and I say, too, that the honourable member for Timaru was one leading member in doing it.

Mr. TURNBULL.—The provincial members were called together separately.

Major ATKINSON.—Not a bit. I say the honourable gentleman himself led me to believe that.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—The Nelson members never did.

Major ATKINSON.—No, they never did. I said the southern members who voted with the majority. The minority fought honestly; and they fought as they will fight next session. I was speaking of the majority. Well, those who remember the scenes that occurred on that occasion know the enormous difficulties we had in forcing that measure through the House, although there was an enormous majority for it. I ask them how it is possible, during a short session next year, to get a Bill through at all. The honourable member for Inangahua told us to-night that we are not to have a fresh Representation Act at all.

Mr. MENTEATH.—What I did say was that we should not have a Representation Bill on the lines of this one.

Major ATKINSON.—Well, these are the lines of his Premier. What is the honourable gentleman going to do? Is he going to vote against his Premier? That does not alter the position at all. My argument is that the honourable gentleman is going to vote with those who are against any new Representation Bill at all, because I venture to say that next session, if he is in the same mind as now—and I do not doubt that he will be—we shall not be able to introduce a Representation Bill on any lines to suit the honourable gentleman. He would be able to say, with a clear conscience, and quite truthfully, "I am very sorry; but I must walk into the 'No' lobby."

Mr. MENTEATH.—Compromise.

Major ATKINSON.—Such a compromise, I suppose, as we have had to-night. We were taught what "compromise" meant last session by the Colonial Treasurer. We found that compromise between the advocates of a property-tax and the advocates of a land-tax meant an increase of the property-tax. It is some such extraordinary compromise as that that the honourable gentleman will assist in. I presume it will be the compromise which his speech to-night explains—the compromise of leaving things alone. That, apparently, will suit the honourable gentleman and his district. And I say to those other honourable gentlemen—the honourable member for Gladstone, for instance, who talks about "bogeys" being raised by the honourable member for Waitotara—that we shall have infinitely more difficulty in getting an Act through next session.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Do without it.

Major ATKINSON.—Exactly. Now the cloven foot has appeared. "Do without it," says one honourable gentleman. I quite understand those honourable gentlemen who say that; I do not blame them, so long as—

Mr. SUTTER.—I never said anything of the kind—that I was against a Representation Act being passed.

Major ATKINSON.—I referred to the honourable member for Timaru, who interjected. The

ourable member for Gladstone is one of ie who have been referred to as having n "trapped": he does not know it.

Ir. TURNBULL.—They have caught an bird then.

Iajor ATKINSON.—No doubt the honour- member has been "trapped." But what e can we have of a Representation Act next ion?

Ir. SEDDON.—What did you do when you e in office?

Iajor ATKINSON.—When I was in office colleagues voted with me or they left me. y did not remain on those benches and e against me. When one of my whips dis- eed with me he ceased to act. We are told t we are to meet in the first week in May t year, and that our first work will be to pass tepresentation Bill. We met about a week er than that this session; and here we are, er one of the hardest sessions we have ever l, without any opposition at all in the way of ion—with the most moderate criticism from inning to end—the honourable gentlemen osite have not had one single hour of opposi- n from us but what was legitimate criticism. t I would ask, what amount of work could we re got done, with those competent gentlemen those benches, if we had been such an position as we have had in late years? And reason why I refer to that is this: I want know what likelihood there is of passing a presentation Bill through the House, with these honourable gentlemen here who are termined we shall not have a fresh Repre- ntation Act—for that is evidently the deter- nation of a large number of honourable ntlemen, and I have no doubt they will avow penly as soon as it suits their convenience do so: it would look too bad just yet. One nourable gentleman has said it already, and an see in the faces of others that they are inking it; and it will come out before long. it, with the experience, the energy, of honour- le gentlemen opposite, their determination, eir backbone, their power of putting on paper at they mean, what are the chances with a sen determined men such as the honourable mber for Kumara, and the honourable mem- r for Timaru, if he takes it into his head— d apparently he has done so now—I ask, at chance would the honourable gentlemen posite have against an opposition of that sort?

Mr. SEDDON.—What chance is there this sion?

Major ATKINSON.—No chance at all, if the vernment "lobby" against it in spite of our istance, and when the honourable gentlemen nt certain things carried. But, looking at e experience we have had of that Govern- ent, what chance will they stand if such ntlemen as these are determined a Repre- ntation Act shall not pass? Why, the Pre- er would crumble up like a sheet of brown per after the first week. No doubt he would me down and say, "My colleagues will not me," or "Some one has told me the danger. cannot be done; I am very sorry, but it can- t be helped." At any rate, all his power of resistance vanishes, apparently, as soon as he takes his seat in that chair. I do not know what occurs in Cabinet; I have not seen him there: but it seems to me that the only place where the honourable gentleman is grand is on a public platform before a large audience, when telling them what he is not going to do—for hardly anything he has assured the people he is going to do has he done; he has failed in everything. And I ask, coming back to the subject, what chance will there be next session of the honourable gentleman carrying the Bill through, in the conditions I have stated? Do you think, with the pressure my honourable friends can offer, the Premier will have us here in May? Do you think, if he gets a letter from them about the beginning of May, he will have the early meeting then that we have been told of? Of course not. It will not suit the rest of his colleagues, because they are determined not to have a Representation Act—that is the meaning of their vote to-night. The Minister for Public Works says "No." Well, if he is sincere, why not pass it now? What possible object is there in putting it off? If you cannot carry the Bill now, can you carry it next session? The Opposition as a body has offered the honourable gentleman its support to carry the Bill through. I ask, with the strength of the Government and the support of the Opposition, how long would it have taken to carry this Bill through? We could have carried it through in the course of two or three days.

Mr. SEDDON.—Oh, could we?

Mr. GUINNESS.—Never.

Major ATKINSON.—"Never," says the honourable member for Greymouth. What is the honourable gentleman opposite going to do with these two honourable gentlemen next session?

Mr. SEDDON.—It will be all right next session.

Major ATKINSON.—Oh, yes; it will be all right next session. I want to know what possible excuse we have for postponing this measure. It is simply because those honourable gentlemen say it shall not be done. There is no reason whatever. There is no excuse for going to the people, because the people's mind is made up.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—No.

Major ATKINSON.—I say Yes, undoubtedly.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—No, no, no!

Major ATKINSON.—Yes. There let it stand. I venture to say, when next the honourable gentleman comes back he will say, "No, no, no," still. His mind is made up without consulting his constituents. That is an idle excuse, and nothing else. There is no possible advantage in postponing it. An honourable gentleman says it can be altered. But, if we have the population basis, we must go by the census; so that, if there should be an increase of population by next year, that cannot help them.

Mr. SEDDON.—Keep the present basis, and I am satisfied.

Major ATKINSON.—What does the honourable member mean by that?

Mr. SEDDON.—Keep to the Act of 1881.

Major ATKINSON.—Now the honourable gentleman has entirely changed his ground. Is he prepared to vote to retain the present number?

Mr. SEDDON.—Yes.

Major ATKINSON.—I hope the Premier will take a note of that; and I shall call upon the honourable gentleman to vote against the amendment, and vote for going into Committee to-morrow; and we can fill in the blank with the present number. I ask the honourable gentleman, if he is sincere, to vote for that, and let the Ministers vote as they like. They do not matter at all—we need not count them for the future. Let those who can vote straight indicate their own mind. If the honourable gentlemen are sincere—and I suppose they are—let them show it by voting against the amendment; and then we can go into Committee to-morrow, and we can fill up the blank with the present number of members, and there will be no difficulty about it whatever. But, of course, that is not what the honourable gentlemen want. They do not want their constituencies touched at all. Sir, I am sorry to have troubled the House at this length; but I felt so moved—not at the loss of the Bill, for that is a matter of unimportance, to my mind, as compared with the degradation the Government are bringing on the colony by their action. To my mind, we have never before seen anything like it in constitutional government. I venture to say that such a thing has never occurred anywhere else under constitutional government as that, upon a Bill of the first importance, the Premier should permit himself to be defeated by three of his own colleagues—for if those gentlemen had voted on the other side we should have had a considerable majority. I ask, how can the honourable gentleman defend such a position, and how are we to believe that next session the honourable gentleman will suddenly show that backbone of which he has shown himself to be utterly wanting during the whole of this session, from beginning to end?

Sir J. VOGEL.—If I had any doubts as to the vote I have given, the remarks of the honourable gentleman who has just sat down would satisfy me that I had recorded my vote properly. I am not accustomed to look to him for advice and guidance; but the anger which the honourable gentleman has shown is quite sufficient to prove to myself and my colleagues that the vote which we have given is right and proper, looking at the matter from our side of the House.

Major ATKINSON.—Which is your side?

Sir J. VOGEL.—I may tell the honourable gentleman that we are in no way responsible to him, and we do not recognize his right to tell us the way in which we should vote and conduct our business. The passionate language which the honourable gentleman has just used, and the position he has taken up in reference to various members of the Government, is part of the policy which he has pursued during the whole of the session, and which I might characterize in a very few words, as the manner in which he has attempted to throw himself at the head of the Premier. From end to end of the session he has been saying, as plainly as possible, "Take me; I am ready to come over if you will have me." Every honourable member in the House has noticed it, and the Press of the colony has been full of references to it. Only the other day a paper which I have before now described as the best edited paper in the colony—and I am sure the honourable member agrees with me in that estimate—the *Lyttelton Times*, stated that the honourable gentleman and one of his colleagues were urging the Premier to reconstitute the Cabinet and to take them in. Then, another paper, the best evening paper in the colony, the *Evening Post*, contained the same insinuation put in different words, though not less unmistakable—that these honourable gentlemen were throwing themselves at the head of the Premier; and, in another paper, an Auckland one, which, if not so good a paper as others in the colony, sometimes contains very well written articles and generally supports the honourable gentleman, I see the same statement also made, coupled with the remark that it does not see any harm in such tactics, but rather approves them as a method of breaking up the Government. The honourable gentleman's conduct, and the object he had in view, have been very patent. He has shown intense jealousy of me. From one end of the session to the other there have been constant objections raised to me; and when not condemning me the honourable gentleman has devoted himself either to praising the Premier in the most fulsome manner, or to scolding him for being guided by his party and his colleagues. Let me tell the honourable gentleman that this has not only been noticed this session, but also was noticed last session, though it was then done less openly. Last session I and many of my friends were under the impression that the honourable gentleman's idea was this: "If we can divide forces in the Cabinet we shall be strong enough to form a party of our own and turn the Government out." That, I thought, was the honourable gentleman's idea last year; but this year he seems to be under the impression that the Premier is so strong in the country that it is impossible to dislodge him except by creating disunion in the Cabinet, which he, no doubt, hopes would lead to a coalition Government, in which the Premier would take him in. That this has been the object of the honourable gentleman is, I am sure, in the mind of the House and the country. The honourable gentleman has been constantly talking of divergence between the views of the Premier and some of his colleagues, and especially we have been told that this was manifested by a speech made by the Premier at Invercargill. I should like to ask the honourable gentleman one question, and I should be glad if he would answer it. Has he read that speech—has he read the full report of it, or has he simply read the telegraphic summary?

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; I read the full ort, in either the Dunedin or Invercargill ers.

Sir J. VOGEL.—Then I can only say that he not done justice to his memory, or he must e misread the speech, for that speech is y similar to one which I delivered about the ne time in Auckland. I shall take an opportunity of putting that speech before the House or to the end of the session, so that the use may see how completely it has been ceived by the many remarks which have n made as to the meaning of that speech, d how absurd are the accusations which ve been based upon it. But, Sir, I go yond that, and say that we are under no ligation to give any account of our actions the honourable gentleman. It is quite ficient for us if the House, and the party at supports us, are satisfied. The honourable ntleman is nothing to us. As to this Bill, at is the position? The Premier, early in e session, stated that he would, if it were ssible, consider the question; and when he ought that there was a chance of passing the ll he introduced it; but it was his intention carry it with the assistance of his own party, d not by the assistance of the honourable mber for Egmont and his party.

Major ATKINSON.—He will never carry it thout.

Sir J. VOGEL.—We do not look for his sistance. We have no desire to break down e constitutional walls that divide us. Let m look after his own followers. The other y my colleague had a new experience hen he went into the lobby on the second ading of the Bill; and he must have conatulated himself that he got out again. that lobby he found himself surrounded faces quite unfamiliar to him; and it as not to be supposed that, in view of e division-list which was recorded on that casion, he would attempt to carry this ill through unless he found that he had a bstantial majority behind him, composed of ose upon whom he had a right to call. Is it be expected that the head of the Governent would proceed with a Bill of this kind if e found he could only do it by placing himself the mercy of those who do not acknowledge im as their leader, and who would not have esitated to place him in a difficulty when e wished to give effect to his wishes in Comittee on the Bill? It was therefore not only atural, but quite proper, that the Premier hould at once tell the House that he would ot proceed with the Bill unless he had a ubstantial majority, composed of those whom e could call upon to support him. As regards ly own vote, I owe no account to the honourble member for Egmont, and his anger has ot the least effect upon me; but I will tell the onourable gentleman why I acted as I did the ther day, and why I voted as I have done o-night. I did not think there was time this ession to carry through so important a meaure; and I am quite sure of this: that when he measure comes up next session and is discussed in a reasonable manner—supposing that it is discussed in a reasonable manner—the honourable member for Egmont would be one of the first to attack the Government if they attempted to carry such a Bill through in three or four days, or even in a fortnight. He would be one of the first to say that the measure was so important that it should not be hurried through. Feeling that that was the case, I have been sure in my own mind that it was not practicable to carry the Bill through during the present session. I might have voted for going into Committee on the Bill; but when the amendment of the honourable member for Port Chalmers was moved it so completely expressed my opinion that I had no hesitation in supporting it, and I am quite prepared to take the responsibility of doing so. I do not see what right the honourable member for Egmont had to take exception to my vote. Either the Bill is a party one or it is not. If it is a party Bill, is it to be expected that the Premier will go against the wishes of his own party and place himself in the hands of the Opposition? If it is not a party Bill, what right has the honourable gentleman to complain that we on this side of the House do not vote in a block? I do not see how the honourable gentleman can get out of that dilemma. Is it a party Bill or is it not? If it is a party Bill, why should we vote to please the honourable gentleman? If it is not a party Bill, why should members of the Government not vote as they think fit? If the honourable gentleman has felt aggrieved at the action of the Government, it has been open to him from one end of the session to the other to challenge their conduct. The honourable gentleman was good enough to say that if the Premier wishes to secure success in the future he must have more "backbone." I, in turn, will indulge in prophecy, and I predict that the honourable gentleman will not get back to these benches unless he has the courage of his opinions, and votes as he thinks fit, and requires his followers to so vote, instead of being led by them. And when the honourable member talks of being unfairly treated by the Government we cannot forget the treatment which the Government have received at the hands of the honourable gentleman. The Government have often been invited to consider this or that question as not a party question, and not to ask their supporters to vote with them as a matter of party obligation; but, whenever we have done so, honourable members will bear me out in saying that we have almost invariably—I do not say invariably—found ourselves confronted with a party vote on the other side, although the understanding was that the question was not to be a party one. Now, the honourable member takes upon himself to say what the Premier's colleagues will do next session, and to predict their opinions upon the subject. As far as I know, those of my colleagues who voted with me to-night have voted upon the ground that our supporters were not inclined to wait to see this Bill go through, and that we were not inclined to carry such

one of his logical turn of mind. The honourable member told us—in fact, he appealed to a certain section, for that was the way in which I took it—he appealed to a certain section not to pass the Bill. Why? Because it would give three members antagonistic to the Government—because, presumably, the three North Island members would be in opposition to the Government.

Mr. MENTEATH.—Will the honourable member allow me to explain what I did say? I said that certain members, I feared, were influenced by an unworthy motive—which was, to gain an advantage for their party of three members; and that that was the spirit in which they approached this question.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the honourable gentleman guarded himself against imputing unworthy motives.

Mr. MENTEATH.—I expressed the hope that that suspicion on my part was not well founded.

Mr. BRUCE.—I accept the honourable gentleman's explanation. I did not attribute to him that he had imputed unworthy motives; but this fact remains: he assumes that it would give three members to the Opposition. Is that not so? Very well. The honourable member goes on to appeal again to the House, or to certain sections of it, not to pass this Bill. Why? Because it would give six supporters to the Government from the city constituencies. How can the honourable member reconcile those statements?

Mr. MENTEATH.—I would explain again that in considering this Bill I expressly stated that I put party considerations entirely on one side.

Mr. BRUCE.—Sir, again the honourable member appealed to the House not to pass this Bill, because it would give six members probably pledged to Protection, which is one of the features of the policy of the honourable gentlemen who sit on the Government benches. Why should such an appeal have come from a Government supporter? He has actually appealed to this House to vote against this measure because it will give six supporters to the Government which he is keeping on those benches. And, again, the honourable gentleman said that certain sections of this House would join together to put this Bill into Committee; but what would it be when it came out of Committee? It would be in a very mutilated form. From his reasoning one would imagine that the country members had sold themselves absolutely; but, if the Bill comes out in a form they do not wish, they can vote against it when it comes out of Committee, as I certainly shall do if I do not think that fair concessions are given to the rural constituencies. A word or two in reference to the amalgamation of city electorates. I have given this subject considerable thought, and I believe their amalgamation would be inimical, not merely to the country districts, but to the cities themselves. As I have said, the interests of town and country are absolutely identical; but if Protectionist members are returned by the cities, which exercise undue weight in this House, what will the result be? By checking the expansive forces of the country the cities themselves will suffer. That is just as certain as that two and two make four. What are our towns? They are a creation of the country districts, for which they act as distributing centres. They are the effects, the country being the cause. For that reason I object to the amalgamation of city electorates. I believe that would unduly increase the power of the cities, and I have not the slightest doubt that a brilliant oratorical demagogue could get up and appeal to the passions of an urban constituency by invoking all sorts of visionary illusions, and those who came here to act with him would be merely his nominees or satellites. There is something under this amalgamation of city electorates, and it is a thing the country representatives ought to watch most jealously. I admit there is a great deal of force in the arguments advanced by the honourable member for Inangahua in reference to the physical and geographical features of the colony; but, as I have said, I do not accept this as a final solution of this representation problem. I regret that the question of North *versus* South should have been introduced into this debate. It is true that we here are North and South members; but we are, first of all, New Zealand members, and we should remember that, and not allow any other motive to influence us on the floor of this House. I cannot understand this cry of North *versus* South. Why should it be? Because a magnificent highway of commerce—Cook Strait—runs between the two Islands? I can see no reason in that. I wonder, if we had dug it out as a canal, would the cry then have existed? Now, I wish to say two or three words in support of my action in voting for this measure. I quite agree with the remarks that fell from the honourable member for Akaroa. I believe we have to look towards a possible contingency. I admit it is not a probable contingency, but it is possible that there may be a revulsion of feeling in the colony during the recess which might meet the present occupants of the Treasury benches with a vote of want of confidence when we reassemble here; and if that were the case we should certainly have to go to the country on the same basis as two years ago. And also I believe that this adjustment of boundaries of electorates may take longer than many honourable members imagine; and, if next session this Bill becomes law, then the Commissioner might not be able to adjust the boundaries in time for the elections. The Premier combated that idea this evening, I believe; but I do not think he knows exactly what time it will take. These are the reasons which mainly induce me to vote for this measure; but I reserve to myself full powers to vote in Committee as I think fit, and I have pretty well indicated during the course of my remarks what direction I shall take in Committee.

Sir R. STOUT.—I would first explain, in reference to what has been stated by the honourable member for Inangahua, that I have

haps, a proof of cunning, or of merely clever tactics, on which small men depend, but there was in it a large and true statesmanship. It looked like an earnest desire to do what he thought was for the good of the country, and not merely a trick contrived to keep up appearances, and to keep, at all cost, the seats on those benches. The Premier had, I hoped, taken up a proud position, and was giving a triumphant answer to those who doubted his earnestness. Now, with a divided Government, with a House influenced largely by considerations of local gain, with parties not clearly defined, and with a large measure like this to be submitted to the country, it appears to me that there can be no doubt as to the proper course. That course is to submit the Bill to the country, and to have a dissolution. The Parliament that would meet next year would then be a free Parliament. It would come duly accredited by the people to consider this measure, and it would be perfectly independent to criticise the conduct of the Government of the day. If there should be a change of Government there could not be a dissolution on account of it; because a new Parliament must necessarily be elected after the passage of this Bill. There would be some hope, in a new Parliament, of the Legislature being placed in a more happy condition than it is in at present with the Government split in half, and with the House going wild without a policy and without leaders. I would venture to submit this as the natural, proper, and constitutional course for the House to take on this occasion. And therefore I move, That there be added to the words of the resolution "it is desirable that the Bill should be submitted to the country, and that a dissolution should take place before the next session."

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Sir, when the honourable member who has just sat down spoke as he did I felt, at any rate, that he was expressing his honest convictions, and that he felt very strongly—and the House feels very strongly—that we are all in a false position this evening, that we are likely to continue in a false position, and that the only hope of our coming back to constitutional government is by adopting some very strong measure; and, therefore, when he proposed to add to this resolution the words that he has now moved, I volunteered to second them; and I will say briefly what I think upon the question. I do not think that these words express properly what is the best and proper thing to be done at the present time; because I think there can be no question as to what is the proper course, and what I still hope may be the course that will be taken—because we have as yet had no indication from the Premier to-night of what he is going to do. He is bound, Sir, as a man of honour, and as a man placed in the position he is placed in by the liberal opinion of the country, to say, "I will have no more to do with those who have placed me in such a false relation to those who have hitherto trusted me." If the Premier does justice to himself, and if he does justice to the House, he will say, "I am going to-morrow morning to place my resignation in His Excellency's hands or call on my recalcitrant colleagues to do so." That is the only constitutional and proper course. I do not entertain the opinion that in the present confused state of parties any Government will retain their seats on those benches with profit to themselves and the country until there has been an appeal to the people. But the Premier has brought up one of the largest questions that could come before a popular Assembly to be determined, and he is bound to pledge himself, as leader of the House and as leader of the country, to carry his measure or to leave his position. The next step, no doubt, would be that the Crown should call for Ministers to sit on those benches who would be bound, the first thing they could do, to bring down a measure for the redistribution of seats. No Government could then take the place of those honourable gentlemen without having the courage of its convictions, and saying it would appeal to the country and carry on His Excellency's Government in a decent, respectable, and orderly manner—which it has not been carried on in up to the present time. Therefore I say that the honourable member for Parnell has arrived *per saltum* at what must come eventually. We have got to go to the country; and the sooner we go the better, in order to get back from the position of disorder that we are in into one of order. We have been told to-night that the Ministers owe no account to us: at any rate, the honourable member for Egmont was told that the Government owed no account to him. But I say that the Ministers owe an account to the country and to the House for one of the most extraordinary positions that any House or popular Assembly has ever been put into in the history of constitutional government. We are told, again, that the real reason why three Ministers went against their chief was that there was no time to carry this measure. I do not wish to say disagreeable things more than the circumstances warrant me; but I feel that such an explanation will not be accepted. We have had this measure on more than once during this session. It has been recognized, in answer to questions and in other ways, that the question of representation was to be dealt with during this session, and there is no doubt that the House has been led to believe that it would be dealt with this session; and it is no answer or explanation whatever to say at the last moment that three colleagues of the Premier went against their chief because they thought there was not time to consider the matter. The Premier brings it down as a Government measure—representing the House and representing the people—and Ministers say it is not a party measure; and they fling it to the winds, as if it were not a Government measure—as if it were of no account. They say there is no time for it. I will tell them what the real reason is: The Ministry have during the past three sessions been, like certain lower animals, propelled by

Sir R. STOUT.—I shall never bring in any other Bill, nor consent to it.

Mr. BRYCE.—That is what I was arguing upon. The Premier says that, under certain conditions—namely, if an amendment be carried introducing other principles than that of population — he will abandon the Bill this session. I would argue, if it be a matter of principle that under those conditions he should abandon the Bill this session, that next session under like conditions—as a matter of principle —he will abandon the Bill also.

Sir R. STOUT.—I will consider that. My feeling would be to say I would. I will not say I would abandon it; but I would let some one else deal with representation.

Mr. BRYCE.—The honourable member says that he would make that a Ministerial question—that he would break up the Government rather than deal with the Bill under those conditions.

Sir R. STOUT.—It is not fair to ask a question of me as to what I might do under such circumstances. That is a matter for grave consideration. I should have to consult my colleagues. Those are my feelings.

Mr. BRYCE.—I should be sorry to press unduly on the Premier. I want, however, to put something which is of importance, to my mind in connection with it. I should assume that, if he abandoned the Bill this session as a matter of principle, next session under similar conditions the same principle would be at stake; and I pay the honourable member the compliment of supposing that his conduct would be the same in regard to that matter of principle, and he has gone so far as to say what he would do would be to leave it to some one else to carry out, which can only mean that he would make it a Government question in the fullest sense of the term, and that, if anything traversing that principle of representation by population was introduced, he would leave it to another Government to carry the Representation Bill. That is, I think, a sufficiently-logical argument, founded on the honourable gentleman's statement. I want to ask him whether he has really considered what would be the very serious consequences of the abandonment of the Representation Bill next session.

Sir R. STOUT.—I do not like to be interrupting the honourable gentleman; but I hope, if this Bill is lost this session, the sense of the country will so be roused to its beneficent provisions that next session there will be a large majority in favour of the principle of the Bill.

Mr. BRYCE.—I accept that as a joke.

Sir R. STOUT.—No, it is no joke at all.

Mr. BRYCE.—The consequences, it seems to me, at any rate, of the abandonment of the Representation Bill next session will be very serious indeed.

Sir R. STOUT.—Hear, hear.

Mr. BRYCE. — So much so that I think the postponement of the Bill from this session to next session is exceedingly serious, even in view of that other contingency, because, if there is trouble, as undoubtedly there is, from a party aspect, in forcing the Bill through this session, then I apprehend that the trouble next session may be almost infinitely increased. This Parliament, as is well known, will expire early in August of next year, and I think I shall show, presently, that it is necessary that a Bill should be passed for the readjustment of representation previous to the expiration of Parliament. If so, does not the honourable member see that he is really putting half a dozen or a dozen members, as the case may be, into a position of paramount power next session, if they choose to exercise that power in a determined manner? I think that both the Government and the Opposition would admit that it is almost an absolute necessity to carry the Representation Bill next session; and those members who stood out against it, with the expiration of Parliament on the 9th of August staring them in the face and in full view, would, I say, get into a position of such power that, if they were the least unscrupulous, they could make their own terms and conditions; and that is a contingency which any one proposing to abandon this Bill this session must keep in mind and fairly view. This is what I think on the subject. The Representation Act itself expires, I believe, on the 1st December, 1887. If there is no Representation Act passed I believe we shall get into a most serious condition politically, or, rather, constitutionally. In fact, I am not able to appreciate the full consequences. I do not know what they will be.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Go back to the old Act.

Mr. BRYCE.—No; no election could take place under the old Act. It would be an impossibility, for this reason, if for no other reason —and there are others: that no electoral rolls exist under that Act, and no power exists to make those rolls; and that reason, I apprehend, would be sufficient of itself to show that the country would soon get into a very serious condition indeed—so serious that I fail now to appreciate and understand all the consequences that might arise from it. It seems to me that an Act of the Imperial Parliament would very likely be necessary before we could be set going again. Therefore I come back to this: that the Government, knowing that would be the position, would be perfectly willing to say that a Distribution of Seats Bill was absolutely necessary to be passed; and if half a dozen or a dozen members, with a certain amount of unscrupulousness—because that would be necessary—persisted in opposing this Bill, with the knowledge that the 9th August was rapidly approaching, they would be in a position to name their own terms, and their terms would have to be conceded to them. Therefore I come back to this again: that, great as the party difficulty may be in passing the Bill during the present session—and I, for one, am not disposed to undervalue that difficulty, or to place that difficulty on the Premier or the Government—that difficulty will be infinitely increased next year; and, if it is proposed to shelve this Bill for the mere purpose of avoiding difficulty, that object, certainly, will not be effected. As sure as can be, the difficulty, in an enormously-increased

against this Government. I am not going to please him. He is one of the irreconcilables, and he will remain one till some person takes pity on him and gives him a seat on the Treasury benches. He has not shown the least desire to help me in any measure. Vote after vote he has given against me. I have now stated to the House the position of the whole matter, and I do not think anybody can say that I have ever failed to keep a promise which I have made to the House. I say, although the Bill will not be pressed through the House this session, a Bill on the same lines, and, I hope, in the same language, but certainly a Bill containing the same principles, will be brought in next session, if I am spared, and it will be about the first measure to be brought on, and I will attempt to get it passed. Of course some amendments may be required; but I will do my best to have justice done to all parts of the colony on the population basis. I have no fear in accepting the population basis. I do not look to districts in dealing with this question. I believe there has been too much looking to districts in the past. I believe we shall never get rid of this local-district feeling until this Parliament ceases to be a huge board of works. I believe that New Zealand will get a proper democratic feeling when it gets representation based on population independent of districts. If I had not stated openly in the House that this was not to be taken as a party question, but a question on which every person was to vote as he pleased, my colleagues would not have voted against me. As to the Government whips, I do not look on the Government whips as persons with no opinions. It is well known that on another question one of the Government whips fought against me, and the two voted against me. I think the honourable member for Wairarapa voted against his Government on more than one occasion, and the honourable member for the Dunstan did the same thing on one occasion, when they were Government whips. I remember that, on a most important question in the Land Bill—I think it was dealing with the Canterbury runs—in 1877, the members of the Government then did not vote together, far less their whips; so that it is not to be expected that on every matter every member of the party is to vote as the Government think fit. I think I have said sufficient to show the position to the House. As to the honourable member for Parnell, what would be the result if his amendment were carried? The result would be this: that for the next three years we should go on with the old representation and rolls. That would be to exclude growing districts from having any increased representation. I hope the honourable member will withdraw his amendment, because I really think the result will be calamitous to the whole interests of the colony. Some honourable members say that representation should not be based on population. I think that is a fair matter for discussion in the country during the recess. I may tell them there is no other thing on which we can base representation but population. If they base it on taxation, certainly that will not suit; and they cannot base it on area.

Mr. PYKE.—The number of electors.

Sir R. STOUT.—There are such things as stuffed rolls. There are such things as this: Some men may go round and get a large number on the roll immediately preceding the time when the Assembly is dealing with representation. Or this may happen: We may have Registrars who will insist on taking a large number of names off the rolls, whereas others may not do this. I hope honourable members will believe that, though this measure may not pass this session, I shall redeem a pledge which I now give that a measure like this shall be one of the first—if not the very first—measures brought in next session, and I shall do my utmost to get the measure passed.

An Hon. MEMBER.—As a Government measure?

Sir R. STOUT.—As a Government measure.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I should like to point out that some of the honourable members who have spoken in favour of going on with this Bill have been most unfortunate in what they have said. The honourable member for Geraldine told us that the House has been led throughout the session to believe that a Representation Bill would be passed this session. Now, I say that on the 22nd June the Premier told the House that it was not his intention to deal with the subject this session—that if time permitted he would go so far as to introduce a Bill, so that it might be circulated and discussed in the country. On the same occasion the honourable member for Egmont asked the Premier whether an opportunity would be given for expressing an opinion as to whether a Representation Bill should be introduced; and in answer to that the Premier told the honourable member that he could move a resolution on the motion for going into Committee of Supply. Now, I would like to ask, has the honourable member for Egmont ever moved such a resolution? has he ever even given notice of it? He has not; and therefore it is most unfair to say that the Premier has led the House to believe throughout the session that the question would be dealt with this session. Then, the honourable member for Egmont told us how the Hall Government had carried their views into effect, and that this Government had not done so; that the Hall Government carried their Bill, but this Government could not carry theirs. Now, the Hall Government did nothing of the kind. They did not carry out their views; because the Premier of that Government told the people of Leeston what he was going to bring forward, but he never brought it in. The Bill which he introduced was different in every particular from the Bill he told the people of Leeston he would bring in. Then, we were told by the honourable member for Egmont that if a whip of his voted against him he would tell him at once that he must leave the party; but we have it on record that a whip of the honourable member absolutely moved a motion

which was equivalent to a vote of want of confidence in the Government, and took a division on it. It is not my intention to speak at length on this subject; but I must refer to what was said by the honourable member for Egmont in reply to the honourable member for Inangahua. He said that that honourable gentleman's idea of fairness was that the West Coast should be over-represented, and that his utterances were beneath contempt. Well, all I have to say is that the utterances of an honourable member who would attribute such motives are beneath contempt. The honourable member for Inangahua said nothing of the kind. He stated that he altogether disagreed with the population basis, because the Premier said that population was to be the only basis. There is no place that I know of where that basis is adopted.

Mr. Moss's amendment negatived, and Mr. Macandrew's motion agreed to.

PROPERTY ASSESSMENT BILL.

Sir R. STOUT said the only amendment made by the Legislative Council in the Property Assessment Bill was one to enable others than the directors or managers of companies to send in returns of property. The only question which arose was, whether the Council could amend the Bill; but, in order to get rid of that difficulty, he moved, That the amendment be agreed to, as the amendment was in furtherance of the purpose of the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had looked carefully into the matter, and he did not think the amendment affected so materially the privileges of the House as that he should advise the House to raise a question of privilege. But, still, he thought that it should not be allowed to pass without their taking cognizance of the matter by making a special entry to the effect that the amendment was agreed to by the House as it was in furtherance of the intention of the House.

Amendment agreed to, and special entry ordered to be made in the Journals of the House.

HARBOURS BILL.

Mr. LARNACH.—Sir, I have to report that the Managers of the Free Conference on the Harbours Bill have been unable to come to any agreement.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think it is competent to ask for another Free Conference; but the House should be careful in the choice of Managers, and make sure that those Managers represent the views of the House and maintain that the effect of one amendment made by the Legislative Council is a violation of our privileges. It is distinctly improper that any one should represent us at the Conference who does not hold those views.

Mr. LARNACH.—I move, That the following new Managers be appointed: Major Atkinson, Mr. J. McKenzie, and the mover.

Major ATKINSON.—I have no objection to act; but I am afraid that I shall be the only unanimous man named.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The Managers must hold the same views, and insist on the withdrawal of the amendment which infringes our privileges.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Were not two of the members now to be appointed members of the former Conference, and did not the other member, who is being left out, differ from those two honourable members? I hold that honourable members ought to maintain at all hazards the privileges of this House. I may say that I object to those two honourable gentlemen who were willing to give up the privileges of this House. I only go upon what I have heard, and I state my objection because I think it is a matter of great importance that members who are on Conferences should fairly argue and endeavour to maintain the privileges of the House which are intrusted to them. Therefore I hope that no one will be appointed on this Conference who is not prepared to uphold the opinions which you, Sir, as guardian of our privileges, have expressed. For that reason I think the gentlemen who, I understand, were willing to give way on this point should not be appointed to be Managers on this Conference again.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I have already said that it would be highly improper to appoint any one to be a Manager on this Conference who is not prepared to uphold the privileges of this House.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I have no desire to be on this Conference; and, if the honourable member for Akaroa alludes to me as one of the Managers who were ready to give way in regard to the privileges of the House, I can assure him he is altogether wrong.

Mr. LARNACH.—I should like to say that I would not yield to the honourable member for Akaroa or to any other honourable member on the question of upholding the privileges of this House—that I was prepared to uphold them, and never yielded them in connection with the matter which was intrusted to my management. The only reason why I moved that my name should be on this fresh Conference is that the Bill was originally brought in by me and has been in my charge, and therefore I thought I ought to be on the Conference to watch it. I will, however, move, That the Premier, Major Atkinson, and Mr. Sutter be Managers of the second Conference.

Mr. TURNBULL.—The Premier's time is very fully occupied in this House, and I would suggest that the honourable member for Akaroa be appointed instead of the honourable member.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I must decline.

Mr. SEDDON.—Are we aware of the opinions of the honourable member for Gladstone on this matter? He is not present.

Sir R. STOUT.—He has taken a great interest in the Bill.

Mr. SEDDON.—But as to the question of privilege?

Mr. BRYCE.—It seems to me that it is quite competent to appoint as Managers honourable members who hold different opinions on the subject; for, whatever may be their individual opinions, I take it that, as Managers of a

Conference, they must give up those opinions and carry out the resolution of the House. I am glad to hear the Minister of Mines say that he was not of a different opinion from that of the honourable member for Port Chalmers. What I understood from the honourable member for Port Chalmers was, that he had endeavoured to uphold a certain view of the case, preserving the privileges of the House, which the other Managers were willing to yield. Therefore I came to the conclusion that the honourable member for Port Chalmers was right, and that the other two Managers were wrong; for, whatever their private opinions might be, they were there to carry out the views of this House.

Motion agreed to.

LOCAL BODIES' LOANS BILL.

Sir R. STOUT said the Managers appointed to confer with the Managers for the Legislative Council of the Free Conference regarding the Council's amendments in the Local Bodies' Loans Bill had been unable to come to an agreement.

COUNTIES BILL.

Sir R. STOUT brought up the following report from the Managers appointed to confer with the Managers for the Legislative Council of the Free Conference regarding the amendments made in the Counties Bill:—

"The Managers of the Conference on the Bill intituled the Counties Bill have the honour to report that they have come to the following agreement—namely,—

"(1.) That the Legislative Council does not insist on its amendment in section 157.

"(2.) That the following clause be substituted for clause 195, as amended by the Legislative Council — namely, 'If the number of votes given for the proposal within the several ridings taken together is not less than three-fifths of the total number of votes given at the poll to be taken as aforesaid, and if one-third in number of the ratepayers vote in favour of the proposal, and the number so voting are entitled to more than one-third in number of the votes which can be exercised by the whole number of ratepayers, then, and not otherwise, the resolution in favour of the proposal shall be deemed to be carried, and the Council may proceed with the proposal accordingly; but, if not, then the resolution shall be deemed to be rejected, and the Council shall not so proceed.'"

Report agreed to.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS BILL.

Sir R. STOUT brought up the following report from the Managers appointed to confer with the Managers for the Legislative Council of the Free Conference regarding the amendments made in the Municipal Corporations Bill:—

"The Managers of the Free Conference on the Bill intituled the Municipal Corporations Bill have the honour to report that they have come to the following agreement—namely,—

"(1.) That the amendments made by the Legislative Council in sections 135 and 137 shall not be insisted on by the Legislative Council.

"(2.) That the proviso added by the Legislative Council to section 219 shall be amended by striking out the words 'separate rates or,' as suggested by the House of Representatives.

"(3.) That the amendment made by the Legislative Council in section 182 shall be agreed to by the House of Representatives.

"(4.) That the amendment made by the Legislative Council in the First Schedule shall not be insisted on by the Legislative Council."

Report agreed to.

LEGISLATIVE EXPENDITURE.

On the motion for going into Committee of Supply,

Mr. O'CONOR said,—The House is well aware that a Committee was appointed to deliberate on the expenditure under the heading "Legislative." That Committee has given a very voluminous report, and one of very great importance, and I propose to ask the House to pass one of the resolutions passed by the Committee—that is, the 9th, That the Government should be directly responsible for all parliamentary expenditure, and that all officers should be under the direct control of the Government. I do not propose now to ask the House to adopt the whole of the report, but I hope it will consent to indorse this particular recommendation. Honourable members are aware that the general practice under which the expenditure of this Legislature is conducted is, that the Speakers make certain recommendations to the Government, and in that way the Government consider themselves free from responsibility in the matter. I am one of those—and the Committee agree with me—who condemn that system, in the first place, because the recommendations coming from the Government are presented with the apparent sanction of our Speaker, and we are not in the position to, as it were, censure the action of the Speaker by criticising these estimates. That is a grave objection. But we know also that the expenditure on the Legislature has been increasing annually for some time past; and we know that the great bulk of the officers who are in the service of this branch give no ordinary service whatever during the recess, and they are receiving as salaries from £6 or £7 to £10 a day for the services they render during the session. The Committee has reported unanimously against this, and recommends that the Government take charge of these officers during the recess and utilize their services. I think it would be very much in the interests of these officers themselves, and of the country, that they should not have an enforced period of idleness in the recess. The Committee thinks that, in order to prevent the House being placed in a position of antagonism, as it were, with the Speaker, and with a view to due economy, it is necessary to have the whole of this department under the Responsible Government, so that the House may have some responsible parties to deal with in regard to the expenditure, and that the growth of the expenditure may be

checked and minimized as much as possible. I should have liked to discuss the whole report, which contains some very valuable suggestions; and if I am here next session I shall certainly ask the House to consider it. Before concluding, I may suggest that clause 13 should receive some consideration from the Government. It asks, "That steps be taken during the recess to obtain the necessary information for the completion of the annexed return relating to the procedure of Legislatures in other countries." They could only obtain that information from other countries. The Committee could not obtain it in time, and the Government might get some person connected with the Legislature to complete it. If the whole of the recommendations of this Committee were taken into consideration, something like £7,000 or £8,000 per annum might be saved; and I think that is a very important consideration. But I consider that, above all things—far above the saving—it is necessary to bring the whole of this department under the direct responsibility of the Government, so that when the House comes to criticise this expenditure item by item no Government shall be able to say, "These are not our estimates."

Mr. FULTON.—From a return attached to the report of this Committee I see that, for a few years past, a sum of about £100 has been spent in paying travelling expenses, passage-money, coach-fares, sometimes cab-hire, and extra freight for members' wives.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I never allow any hotel expenses; I allow nothing but coach-fares and steamer-fares.

Mr. FULTON.—There are travelling expenses, passage-money, and cab-fare. I find that there have been as many as twenty members' wives drawing sums of money for the purpose of proceeding to Wellington—I presume, to look after their husbands. I am sorry to say that there has been a resolution of the House, passed in 1883, authorizing this thing. I am happy to say that there are many members who bring their wives with them and who do not make any charge. It is very unbecoming that such a charge as this should appear, and that it should go forth to the world that members, who are already receiving sufficient payment, both for travelling expenses and for their services, should actually bring their wives here and charge the country for it. Especially is this the case in times like the present, when persons are complaining of the depression. If I could have caught Mr. Speaker's eye first I would have moved a resolution expressing the opinion of the House on this subject. At any rate, I feel that I have done my duty in calling attention to it prominently in this House, and I do hope that, even if we cannot pass a resolution doing away with it, members will be ashamed in future to charge this expense to the country instead of providing for it out of their own pockets.

Mr. BARRON.—I regret that the honourable member for the Buller has not seen his way to move the adoption of the whole of the report of the Legislative Expenditure Committee, in accordance with the understanding which the Committee arrived at. This inquiry took a very long time, and the members of the Committee are naturally desirous that the result of their labours should be considered by the House. If the House does not pass an opinion upon it without delay, it will lose most of its value. I would ask you, Sir, if there is no way by which the recommendations of this report might be taken one by one.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I can only propose the amendment submitted by the honourable member.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN.—With reference to what fell from the honourable member for the Taieri, I should like to point out that the cause of what he calls "an abuse" is that the Government, for some sessions past, has been in the habit of sending the "Hinemoa" to Auckland in order to bring down the members, and to send them back to their homes. This was done in order to afford facilities for the members themselves alone; but an abuse crept in by which honourable members brought their wives and families down by the "Hinemoa." It was therefore thought that it was only right and fair that southern members should have the same facilities for their families as were given to the northern members. The whole thing occurred through this absurdity of sending the "Hinemoa" to Auckland. If the Government would give an assurance that this, which was really a thorough abuse, should cease, I have no doubt the abuse the honourable member for the Taieri complains of will be put a stop to.

Mr. SEDDON.—When the motion was before the House that members should be reimbursed the expense of bringing their wives to Wellington I moved to include the words "and their cousins and their aunts." I was defeated on that amendment; and I think I voted against the resolution, which was carried. But something occurred the other day in Wellington to an honourable member, whose name I have forgotten. He told the House that he was bothered by a widow in the morning before he got up. He complained of that. I understand to say that if that member's wife had been up with him in Wellington he would not have been annoyed by the widow in the morning. I do not think this is the way to bring this matter up at all. I think the legitimate way in which to deal with the question was to rescind the motion. It must be very unpleasant to honourable members who have been induced to take advantage of this resolution by the precedent existing for some years to have the matter brought up in this way. I hope that, whatever reason there may be for curtailing the Legislative expenditure, the House will meet it fairly upon the report of the Committee next session. There is no doubt in my mind, that the Legislative expenditure should be considerably curtailed, taking into consideration the state of the country and the earnings of the people. But I cannot vote for the motion now proposed, because it would prevent us from going into Committee of Supply

Sir R. STOUT.—I was not present when this final report of the Legislative Expenditure Committee was drawn up, and had I been there I should not have assented to some of the paragraphs in the report. There are some paragraphs, however, with which I agree; and I think that early next session a motion should be moved, taking the report paragraph by paragraph; and then the Government should act upon the decision come to in bringing in new estimates. I think the Committee has done very valuable work. I believe that, in this, as in everything else, there is need for the House to exercise strict guard over the expenditure. Some saving might be made, but I should not go the length that this report goes in some directions. I hope the honourable member will not press his motion to-night, but will bring it on next session. As to the "Hinemoa," I have not the details before me, but my recollection is that the "Hinemoa's" going north effects a saving: and I understand it is a great convenience to honourable members going north. I have only travelled once or twice in the "Hinemoa" myself during the recess, and I find the Union boats are better.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—The honourable member for Lincoln has been speaking about a matter he knows nothing of. I have travelled in the "Hinemoa" on two or three occasions, and then a great deal of other business was done by the steamer. A large number of policemen have been taken to various stations; and southern members were taken north to see Auckland, and it did them good. About a hundred and eighty immigrants were taken up on the last occasion, and she also took up a large quantity of Government material. The Government always took advantage of the "Hinemoa's" going with members to send in her a number of policemen. There is also a large amount of other work done, all of a very valuable character. There is never any waste of time. Captain Fairchild invariably finds ample work whenever the "Hinemoa" takes the members. Employing her in that way is not the abuse of the "Hinemoa." The abuse is in sending her all round the country with one Minister or a Government officer at an enormous expense.

Mr. CONOLLY.—As the Premier has said that this report—a very important one—shall be considered early next session, I would suggest that, seeing the great difficulty private members have in getting on business of this kind, the Premier himself might bring forward this matter.

Sir R. STOUT.—I hope the Standing Orders will be altered, to give private members greater facilities for bringing on business.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—No one can look at what is going on without seeing that there is no real retrenchment being effected. In fact, instead of retrenchment, we have what might be called extravagance.

Sir R. STOUT.—Reduce the estimates.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—It is very difficult to reduce the estimates. No one can help realizing, seeing what is going on, that we are not really entering on any system of retrenchment, but that, month after month, things are getting worse. I believe that, to a certain extent, is due to the Premier: his good-nature is taken advantage of by various parties connected with the House. I know the Premier himself is very desirous that we should have retrenchment; but, being good-hearted and kindly, he gives way when people apply to him. I am afraid that, unless we take some further stand, instead of retrenching we shall go on from bad to worse, and in the end things will be much worse than now.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I am quite willing, after the explanation of the Premier, to take a negative on the voices.

Major ATKINSON.—I hope the Government will not go on with the supplementary estimates to-night, as they have only just been put in our hands. They are very important, as, to say nothing of what is charged to Land Fund and Public Works Fund, they take away more than the balance of £19,000. Honourable gentlemen say, "Go on." If they are in such a hurry to get home, and are quite willing to vote £200,000 or £300,000 without a word, I shall not dissent; but I do not think it is a very fit sort of proceeding.

Sir R. STOUT.—We are quite willing to take only a few unopposed votes to-night, and the others to-morrow.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I hope we shall not go on, as we have just got the estimates, and have not read them. There is plenty of other business to go on with.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I am rather surprised that the honourable member for Egmont should object, when he must remember that he used to send round the supplementary estimates just as we were going into Committee.

Major ATKINSON.—Never anything like this.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Oh, yes; the messengers used to hand round the estimates just as Mr. Speaker was leaving the chair. The Premier's great fault is want of consistency and firmness. He should be firm, and go on.

Mr. O'Conor's amendment negatived.

On the question, That Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair,

Mr. MONTGOMERY said,—I think it would be only ordinary courtesy to go into Supply, and take the unopposed votes. The others can be taken at leisure to-morrow. Whatever the honourable member for Egmont did, if it was a bad example it should not be followed now.

Mr. JOYCE.—The honourable member for Akaroa shines in the character of Mentor. The question is, whether the Premier is in a position to lead us or not, and whether we are to be guided by his direction. I am exceedingly surprised at the tone of the honourable member for Egmont, for I have a vivid recollection of his way of doing this line of business in years gone by. He never was tired. He used to challenge the Opposition and say, "If you are tired I am not; I will see my estimates through." A change has come over him that is something surprising. He affects, now, a

kind of debility—mental debility, I suppose. I do not quite believe in this sudden decrepitude. I think the honourable gentleman can very well properly check the estimates, and that we can go on with them.

Sir J. VOGEL.—It may shorten discussion if I say that we propose to go on with only a few of the first small votes, and then take other business, if there is time.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I do not think anything will be gained by trying to go on now, for I am quite sure the House will not pass these estimates without fully discussing them. They are for a very large total sum. The whole question of whether we are going to economize or not depends very largely on the way we dispose of these estimates. I see the honourable member for Kumara looking at me. I can understand his desire to get these supplementary estimates passed, because these estimates show votes for the goldfields on almost every page—concealed, however, in a variety of ways.

Mr. SEDDON.—There is nothing for Kumara.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Honourable members wish to compare these with the general estimates. The Minister of Mines has a large number of extra appropriations for goldfields works—very thinly veiled, in most cases.

Mr. LARNACH.—To open up roads.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—There is £6,000 for the new Department of Agriculture, while we have already voted £9,000 for it: and yet the House has never considered at all what that department has done. There is ample room for a full discussion on the whole subject. And, coming to the public works estimates, we find that the votes are, practically, duplicates of votes already taken, as if the Ministers had not known their own minds when they put the original votes down. There are points to which I wish to draw the attention of the Minister of Lands, because he cannot be supposed to know the country thoroughly; but where one does know it he is able to check the estimates. With reference to the estimates for opening up Crown lands before sale honourable members should have time to consider the various items; because it seems to me that there are in these estimates votes for roads in settled districts. I can show items which are absolutely out of place, and which the honourable member has been led to put down by representations that ought not to have been made. Some of these votes have been put upon the estimates for the purpose of benefiting settlers—mostly large settlers—who deserve no consideration at all in the matter. I hope that we shall have time to consider these estimates. I have just looked cursorily over the items, and I have no doubt that these estimates can be reduced by £30,000, and ought to be so reduced.

Motion agreed to.

SUPPLY.

IN COMMITTEE.

CLASS I.—LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENT.

General expenses, £420.

Mr. Joyce

Mr. O'CONOR asked for an explanation of the item, "Preparation of Indices to Appendices to Journals of both Houses and Despatches, £150."

Sir R. STOUT explained that the sum which appeared on these estimates were put down at the request of Mr. Speaker. He believed that the work had been done by officers of the Houses. The Government had simply put the amounts down because they were requested to do so.

Mr. O'CONOR moved, That the item be struck out. He would like to ask the Premier also what was the explanation of the item "Extra assistance to *Hansard*, £35."

Sir R. STOUT understood that one of the *Hansard* staff obtained leave of absence, owing to the illness of his wife. Assistance had to be obtained, and the cost was £35.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE explained that during the session a member of the *Hansard* staff had received a cable message from his home, stating that his wife was dangerously ill, and that he should return at once; and under these circumstances, leave of absence was granted to him. As to the proposed vote of £150 for preparing Indices to the Appendices to the Journals, the work had been done very well and remarkably cheaply. In fact, when it was undertaken he thought that it would have cost double that amount. The sum of £100 was voted last year on account of this work, but the vote lapsed because the work was not completed before the end of the financial year; but there had been so much labour in connection with it that he thought it right to ask the Premier to put down an extra £50. The work had been divided between two of the officers of the House, Mr. Otterson and Mr. Rutherford, and he believed they had done the work in a satisfactory manner.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked what period these Appendices covered.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE said the Indices to the Despatches covered a period of forty years, dating from the arrival of the first Governor in the colony up to the departure of Governor Gordon, and the Indices to the Appendices to the Journals covered the period extending from 1854 to last session.

Mr. BUCHANAN thought in that case the House might very fairly pass the vote.

Mr. HATCH inquired what salary the *Hansard* reporters received.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE said that the Chief Reporter received £600, and the other reporters £300 a year each. That had been their fixed salary for many years past. They had received no increase, nor any addition to their salaries at all, except occasionally when there happened to be two sessions in the year, when he had recommended a small bonus in consideration of the staff being occupied at work practically for six months, and that recommendation the House had always adopted.

Mr. HATCH inquired whether the *Hansard* staff were required to work during the parliamentary recess for the Government without extra remuneration.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE said No. The ar-

rangement made was that the staff should be paid so much for their work during the session, but the payment was spread over the whole year by the salaries being paid monthly. The members of the staff were, of course, at liberty to accept other employment during the recess, but they rarely got any from Government.

Mr. CONOLLY thought that the sum set down for preparing an address to the Queen—£150—was rather large.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE said the work had been put in the hands of the most experienced man who could be found, and it had been done remarkably well. The address was written in sheets, and there were also sheets attached to it, on which were appended the signatures of members; and the whole would be very handsomely bound in book-form, the covers being inlaid with New Zealand wood and ornamented with silver, and silver clasps. He understood the feeling of the House to be that on such an auspicious occasion as Her Majesty entering on the jubilee year of her reign the address sent Home should be a good specimen of colonial art. He might add that it was proposed to obtain lithographed copies of the address and signatures for each member. He did not think that the House would grudge the expenditure.

Mr. O'CONOR said he would like to withdraw his motion for reducing the vote by £150, but he must say he could not see why officers should be paid large salaries for employment simply during the session, and, whenever any extra work was required of them during the recess, should be paid extra for it. The country would certainly want to know what this money was paid for. Some of these gentlemen were receiving £400 and £500 a year for working simply during the session. He believed that the gentleman who had been employed to do this work was in receipt of £400 a year.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE said that two clerks had been engaged on the work, the fixed salary of one being £250 per annum.

Mr. O'CONOR said that, even supposing that two were employed, he could not see that that was any reason why they should get extra remuneration for this work. It might very fairly be included in their ordinary employment. The fact was, the present system in regard to legislative officers was thoroughly absurd; and it should be known to the House and the country that these large salaries were being paid for practically about sixty-five days' work: in fact, they were paying from £5 to £14 per diem for services. Then, they found that one of the *Hansard* staff, who simply had to work during the session, was absent from his duties during part of the session, and an officer was engaged to take his place, and had to be paid at the expense of the country. If the House did nothing else it should really insist that any work done by these officers at any time of the year should be included as part of their ordinary duties. It was for that reason that he had proposed that the item be struck out.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE said that a bargain had been made with these officers to do the work, and they had done it for about a fourth of what it would have cost to be done outside. It was extremely fortunate that they had been able to get officers in the employment of the department to do this work for so small a sum.

Mr. O'CONOR said that the Committee was placed at a great disadvantage; but what had taken place showed the absurdity of the whole system. When a member endeavoured to effect economy, he had to ask the House to vote against Mr. Speaker, who had told them that an arrangement had been made. No member could do that, and the result was that no economy could be effected in this department. He believed that the expenditure on the Legislative Department was reckless and extravagant. There were some officers of the House who earned every shilling they got, and there were many others who certainly did not. He asked the Government to endeavour to effect some change in this. He believed it was utterly useless to attempt to do so so long as the Speakers were in charge of the department. He very much grudged voting this extra payment.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE said the honourable member should have opposed it last year.

Mr. O'CONOR did not understand that the expenditure had been incurred on a vote of last year.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE said that was so. The vote was merely revived this year as it had not been drawn before the end of the year. The vote was, as he had already explained, increased this year by £50.

Mr. J. C. BUCKLAND thought that no money could have been better spent. The work was of immense value, and he was surprised that it should have cost so little. He was as keen for economy as any member of the House, but it seemed to him that they had got very good value for their money in this case. As to the *Hansard* staff, if the House desired to have *Hansard* he thought they should not object to pay for it. He did not think the members of that staff were paid too much money for the work they had to do. The *Hansard* staff was not as strong as it ought to be—the work was very severe; and if they meant to have *Hansard* they ought not to complain of its cost.

Mr. O'CONOR said the honourable member had entirely misunderstood the remarks he had made. His objection was that it came as a matter of surprise to him that this amount was the result of an arrangement made by Mr. Speaker. He did not think he was free to vote on the matter at all. Honourable gentlemen wished to make it appear that he was reflecting on Mr. Speaker; but he did not desire to do anything of the kind. All that he wished to show was that, in consequence of Mr. Speaker having made this arrangement, the House was powerless in the matter. He had no desire to break a bargain Mr. Speaker had made. The idea of questioning the value of the work had never entered his head, but he thought that such work should be done by

officers of the department who had nothing to do during the recess. He would withdraw his motion.

Motion withdrawn.

Mr. HATCH moved, That the amount, "Extra assistance to *Hansard* staff, £[illegible]," be struck out. He thought that when a man received a salary for only a portion of the year he was not entitled to the same consideration by way of leave of absence as were those who were engaged throughout the year. If a gentleman made it a convenience to come here for two or three months during the year, and lived elsewhere for the other nine, earning a good salary, he did not think the Government were justified in allowing him to go away on urgent private business. The principle was wrong, and the Government were doing wrong in continually putting on these amounts; and he thought the House should insist upon the business of the country being carried on in a more business-like style.

Mr. JOYCE said it was with feelings of intense pain that he had heard that the honourable member for Invercargill was so inconsiderate in regard to a member of *Hansard* staff, for no other member of the House owed so much to the *Hansard* staff, to their skill and their trained capacity, as that honourable member. This was a vote that was well deserved. The House had swallowed whole troops of camels, and would presently swallow some more camels, and yet here they were straining at a gnat.

Motion to strike out item negatived.

Mr. HATCH would like some explanation of the item, "Gratuities to Messengers and Library Assistants, £75." If the men were not paid sufficiently, they ought to be paid more; but he did not think that this practice of supplementing their salaries at the end of the session should be continued. It seemed to him the matter required some explanation.

Sir MAURICE O'RORKE said it was, he thought, better to reward these servants at the end of the session than to increase their wages. During some sessions it had been necessary to get rid of some whose services were unsatisfactory, and it was considered the better system to give the reward for good service at the end of the session than to increase the daily pay throughout the session. The hours during this session had been very long—about eighteen hours daily—and the conduct of the officers satisfactory. They had to be out in all weather, and even when indoors they had to occupy drafty positions in the House and lobbies. When the session was over they had to go in quest of work, and find it as best they could. He was sure he met the wishes of the House when he asked the Premier to put the amount on the estimates.

Mr. O'CONOR was in favour of the item. He considered it shameful that the men should have to work sixteen or eighteen hours a day, and that in allowing them to do so the Legislature was setting a very bad example to the country. The case of these men was quite different from the case of those who received annual salaries.

Vote, £420, agreed to.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at half-past twelve o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Saturday, 14th August, 1886.

First Reading—Third Readings—Property-tax Bill—Railways Authorization and Management Bill—Rabbit Nuisance Bill—Special Powers and Contracts Bill—Harbours Bill—New Plymouth Reserve Bill.

The Hon. the ACTING-SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Railways Authorization and Management Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Railways Authorization and Management Bill, Railways Construction and Land Bill, Rabbit Nuisance Bill.

PROPERTY-TAX BILL.

The Hon. the ACTING-SPEAKER announced that he had received the following protest, signed by several members of the Council, in reference to the Property-tax Bill, with a request that it should be entered on the Journals of the Council:—

"We, the undersigned members of the Legislative Council of New Zealand, respectfully record our protest against the passing of the Property-tax Bill, for the following reason:

"That the proposal contained in the 5th section of the Bill to impose a fine upon certain persons who have not, during the past financial year, paid a tax which could not legally be claimed from them is unjust, and altogether opposed to the principles upon which the legislation of the civilized communities of the world is based.

"G. RANDALL JOHNSON.
"J. BARTON A. ACLAND.
"GEORGE MCLEAN.
"W. B. D. MANTELL (so far as the word 'unjust,' inclusive).
"T. FRASER.

"Saturday, 14th August, 1886."

RAILWAYS AUTHORIZATION AND MANAGEMENT BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I move, That the Railways Authorization and Management Bill be read a second time. In doing so I would call the attention of the Council to the fact that the discussion on the chief subject-matter of the Bill was had on the occasion of the New Zealand Loan Bill being before the Council. There is, however, an important provision in this measure to which it is necessary I should direct attention, and that is clause 4, which

makes the branch railway to the Oamaru Breakwater subject to the Public Works Act, and vests it in Her Majesty the Queen. These are the features of the Bill.

The Hon. Captain FRASER.—This railway from Kaukapakapa to Omapere Lake, known as the Helensville Extension, which the present Bill authorizes to be constructed, is going to cost the colony £715,000. It goes along a river, and also up a mountain 1,700ft. high. It will never pay anything whatever. There are 55,000 acres of land which in the North is called good land, but which in the South we should describe as very indifferent land indeed, and there is a quantity of second-class and third-class land as well, amounting altogether to 280,000 acres. And for this we are to make a railway to cost £715,000. The thing is monstrous. How can any sane man entertain such a proposal? I move, That the Bill be read the second time this day six months.

The Hon. Mr. HOLMES.—I second the amendment. The Committee to whom was referred the Loan Bill had before them a number of the officers belonging to the Railway Department. These gentlemen were interrogated as to the reasons that induced the Government to undertake such a railway as this. First of all it was explained that the quantity of the tolerably-good land which the railway would serve amounted to 62,750 acres. Much of that land was bush land, and would take double or treble its value to make it fit for cultivation. Another circumstance connected with it was that the largest proportion of the land in the locality, especially to the west and north-west, was in the hands of the Maoris. The open land—in the South we look upon open land as valuable—was the very poorest of poor land. It is described as covered with tea-tree, and as the neighbourhood where the gum-digging is carried on. That is the quality of the country. But, in addition to that, there is scarcely any settlement there. The only parties in the locality are those connected with this gum-digging. On looking at the map of the locality I was struck by the extraordinary water-facilities there were in that district. Except in some of the great-lake districts of North America, I never saw a locality so well supplied with water-facilities. I should say, from appearances, there were about two hundred miles of water-carriage around the harbour. I should imagine that, if there was a locality in the whole colony which did not require a railway, then this was it, because it is so well served with water-privileges. I think, therefore, that there is no warrant whatever for making a railway in that locality at the present time. It is a mere waste of money. The mere fact of there being no population there is sufficient reason why the railway should not be made. I consider it a wilful waste of public money to extend the railway to such a locality. I had intended to speak on several other of the lines that came before the Committee to which I have alluded; but they are not before us at present. I will therefore confine myself to entering a protest against the formation of this line, knowing that it would cost a large sum of money, and would not pay even the smallest rate of interest that could be imagined for years to come.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD.—I trust the Hon. Captain Fraser will not press his amendment, because his objection, however weighty the matter that it refers to, is in the strictest sense a Committee objection. There is one portion of the Bill—that referring to the small line to the Oamaru Breakwater—which the honourable gentleman must approve of.

The Hon. Captain FRASER.—Hear, hear.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD.—It is simply the 2nd and 3rd clauses, taking them in the technical sense, to which he objects. No doubt they are of great importance, involving the expenditure of a very large sum of money; but I hope the honourable gentleman will see that the proper time to make his objections is when the Bill is in Committee, when he can move to strike these clauses out. And I believe if he does so he will have a very large support in this Council—possibly he may carry such a motion; I do not think that is at all unlikely. But I trust he will not press his present amendment, because if that is carried it will undoubtedly get rid of a portion of the Bill that we all deem to be necessary, or, at all events, very desirable.

The Hon. Captain FRASER.—I may say, in reference to what the honourable gentleman has said, the fact is that, if the amendment is carried, the small line will be swallowed up by the greater one; and I have therefore no objection to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment withdrawn.

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN.—I can say that I have no direct or indirect interest in this Bill; but I must confess that we have now before us an exhibition similar to that which was witnessed last night in another place—a display of the jealousy of one portion of the colony as against another.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I would call attention to what the honourable member has just said. I think it is very wrong for an honourable member to reflect in any way on anything that has occurred in another branch of the Legislature. He says there is jealousy between one portion of the colony and another. The friendly relations which exist between the two branches of the Legislature I am sure are not going to be interfered with by any observations which have fallen from the honourable gentleman.

The Hon. the ACTING-SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman is not in order in alluding to what took place in another branch of the Legislature.

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN.—I said "in another place:" it might have been at Timbuctoo. It is very inconsistent of honourable gentlemen to oppose this Bill, and to run down the character of country which they know very little about. The honourable gentleman has stated that the land is of the poorest description, and that it will grow nothing at all; whereas it is quite the contrary. There are some portions of the country north of Auck-

land of the very richest description, and that will grow anything; and not only that, but the country is well timbered. That of itself would employ a railway for a generation, probably. The country requires either roads or railroads. It has not, nor is it likely to have, roads. It is true there is a harbour running a long way inland, but from its position it is of no practical use to a large portion of the district. The harbour is on the west coast, and it is of no practical use to that portion of the land lying between it and the east coast; and that district varies from twenty to fifty miles in width. There have been many settlers in that part of the country for many years past, and they have never been able to prosper because of the want of communication with markets. In other parts of the colony facilities are given to the settlers to take their produce to market. There is no likelihood of roads being made in this district; therefore it is desirable that railroads should be made. I am not here to advocate the further extension of railroads, or further borrowing; but I rose to speak in order to show that an injustice will be done if this expenditure on a railroad is not to be made because of the arguments which have been used by several honourable members to the effect that there is two hundred miles of water-communication, and that consequently neither roads nor railroads are required. Let us look at the South. There is a railroad there which runs for two hundred miles along the sea-coast and within a stone's-throw of the sea. So that the honourable gentleman's argument falls entirely. The action of the honourable gentleman is inconsistent, and I am sorry to see such a spirit of opposition spring up in this case.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—I am extremely sorry that the Hon. Mr. Chamberlin should have made the remarks which he did, and I think they cannot be too much deprecated. I am sure the Council, as a Council, is not liable to the charge of the honourable gentleman. I believe the Council really does consider, before anything else, when these public works are discussed, whether they will be of advantage to the colony or not, without reference to any particular locality. If there is one thing more than another which the Council is not guilty of it is that narrow, foolish, petty local feeling which, no doubt, does obtain rather too much in New Zealand. I should like to ask the Hon. the Colonial Secretary what harm will be done to our Oamaru line if this Bill is thrown out. This bit of line at Oamaru has been purchased by the Government, and has been worked by the Government for a long time; and I do not suppose the slightest harm will be done if this Bill is not passed. I should like to know that, because it seems to me that nothing very serious will happen if the Bill is thrown out. With regard to the other part of the Bill, I understand that the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker laid down the principle the other day that we ought to make careful inquiry into the circumstances connected with these various lines, and ascertain whether they are likely to pay, and all the rest of it, before we pass a Bill of this kind. We know very little about this line to Omapere. We had it in evidence before the Committee the other day that it would cost about £715,000; that it would go, I think, practically through kauri forest: and there was an estimate given of the number of million feet of kauri timber which the line would bring down. Practically, that was of little use to us, because it gave us no idea whether the line is likely to pay or not. It is possible that it may at some future time be a very valuable line, and I dare say there is some good land there, for it is not likely that over that extent of country there should not be good land; but, so far as I could gather from the evidence, there is nothing to make the line pay but the kauri timber. I do not know whether the line is likely to pay from that only. I think, before we are asked to give assent to a Bill of this kind we should have some further information on the subject; otherwise I think that the Council will be stultifying itself after having laid down the principle which everybody recognized as one by which we ought to be guided in future. Having said that, I will listen to what the Government have to say.

The Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON.—I think honourable members to a certain extent misunderstand the object of this Bill. No doubt it is to authorize the construction of a railway, at some time or another, to the particular place mentioned; but it does not follow that the construction is to take place in any limited time. The vote of the money for the construction of the railway will have to follow afterwards. It was shown to us distinctly that there is a very large area of the most valuable timber in the colony in this district; that there are very many—I forget how many—million feet of kauri timber which this line would open up, and it was, no doubt, to a very large extent with the object of bringing that to the market that this line is proposed to be constructed: but that was not the only object. Before I leave that point I wish to point out that we have already passed votes for several railways in the South which run simply to timber-forests, and we had no evidence to show that any of these forests would yield a tenth part of the valuable timber which is to be obtained from this particular district; but those lines happened to be passed at some earlier period, and therefore the question of authorization did not come up. This district is very favourable for fruit-growing. It is a district within which the Government have before them proposals for opening up experimental farms for giving an opportunity to the people of the district to learn the culture of such fruits as are suited to that warm climate. The district, I know, has been inhabited for many years, and I know that one great reason why it has not gone ahead is the utter impossibility of getting any produce to market. In 1867 I went to that district, and one day as I was walking through the country I met a settler who, in conversation with me, mentioned that he had come from the United States; that he had been induced to come by an offer which he had seen in an advertisement

he papers. I asked him regarding his posi-. He said, "I have nothing to complain of espect of the land—the land is good enough; I cannot possibly get any of my produce to ket." He had brought with him sufficient ney to place a few head of stock on the land enable him to keep his family in the neces-ies of life until he could get a crop. He l his crops were remarkably good, and that cattle had done well, but he could get hing to market, and that his money was ng exhausted. A few months after I saw the man packed up his things and went k to the States; and that was the case with reat number of those who had lived in that trict. It is said there is a fine water-sys-n there. I acknowledge it is so in certain ts; but the line that this railway would take uld only strike the river high up, and if ds were to be sent down the river it would olve about a hundred miles of carriage more an if the goods went by rail through the ntry. The river is very winding and is diffi-lt to deal with for small craft. It is a very ge river, and the rise and fall of the tide is ry great. The entrance of the harbour is a ry dangerous one; I myself very nearly lost r life there. Again, the harbour is full of nd-banks, so that, in the existing state of ings, the navigation is not easy, and I feel tisfied that the expense of sending goods by at way would destroy all profit. However, I not think I need say more on that point. or do I want to say anything more with re-rd to the more northern portion of this line, cause I myself do not suppose that that ex-nsion will be carried on for many years. The ason for this Bill now coming before us is is: Parliament has already authorized the nstruction of the railway to a place called aukapakapa. The Government now propose carry it four miles beyond that point; but ney cannot do that unless this further autho-zation is made. As far as I understand it, is is in a district that is already settled, and is by no means a bad district. It is a dis-ict of small holdings—there are no large runs, nd so on, there. There is nothing of that escription to be assisted by the line. The ttlers are all small dairy-farmers, and keep a w sheep and cattle and other things. Some f these persons have been here many years, truggling on. They have got their comfort-ble homesteads. They are certainly not ealthy, because they have not had an oppor-unity of carrying their produce to market. If his railway is made so far it will open up that istrict to a large extent. Mr. Knorpp, engi-eer, in his evidence, stated that the land is f very fair quality, and some of it very good. There is a large tract of very valuable timber, nd the district is likely to become a great ruit-growing one. And, besides that—and this s much more immediately to the present oint—there is the Albertland Settlement, which would be tapped by the extension as now proposed to be authorized. In authorizing this railway, my own opinion is that there would be no fear of the line being carried beyond that district for very many years. I believe, however, the district is one of much more importance than honourable members think.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK.—I think we ought to be cautious how we spend our money in assisting people to go to isolated places. It has been said that we have sanctioned the construction of railway-lines to timber-country in the South. We have sanctioned those lines, and it cannot be helped now. I think it is a mistake to open up railways simply to good timber-forests. I think there is no better stock that the country can keep than some of these waste lands with fine timber on them. We are not doing justice to those who come after us if we do not preserve these forests. I am certain that in future years this timber will become much more valuable than it is at present. Timber is being wasted very much at the present time. I may say that I was one of those who voted for the Midland Railway being made under the present conditions; but I would never have voted for that line if it had to be made out of Government money. My opinion is that this line should be constructed by a syndicate. If we defer construction of the line long enough the chances are that we shall find people who will come forward and construct it.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—As Chairman of the Committee appointed to consider the Loan Bill, perhaps I may say a few words on this subject. Probably a good deal has been said on one side and on the other under a mistake. I think the general opinion will be that what was said by Mr. Knorpp on this line should be read. I would first say this: that I am not expressing an opinion one way or the other at present as to the making of the railway. This railway commences at Auckland, and is completed for between thirty and forty miles, and I believe that the part which is completed is the best-paying railway in New Zealand at the present time. I have been told that the line pays 7 per cent. It is authorized for four miles farther than it is constructed, and the vote for the railway is for the purpose of constructing it for some distance further than the line is authorized. It opens up communication with Auckland. The Committee examined Mr. Knorpp on the subject. I will read that gentleman's evidence, because it will save any further discussion on several points. One honourable gentleman says the land is good, and another honourable gentleman says that the land is not good. We have a good authority in Mr. Knorpp, who tells us what is the condition of the land and the state of the forests. I read from Mr. Knorpp's evidence as follows:—

"*The Chairman.*] What is your office?—I am Inspecting Engineer to the Public Works Department.

"Were you ever employed in going over the line from Helensville to the Bay of Islands?—Yes; I have been several times, in different years, sent up to make a preliminary report—an investigation of the country.

"Did you make reports in writing?—Yes; they are all printed in the parliamentary papers.

"Is it a difficult or an easy line?—Some parts are easy and others difficult: it would be about an average line.

"What sort of country does it pass through?—The country varies very much: some of it is first-class—as good as any land in the country—and some of it is poor land. It passes through several gumfields and through a good deal of forest. I have a map here showing the proposed route, and also the different kinds of land through which the line passes. (Explains map. You will find it stated in the reports that between Maungakaramea and Omapere there are supposed to be 250,000,000ft. of kauri, 20,000,000ft. of totara, and 2,000,000ft. of puriri: 150,000,000ft. of the kauri is on Crown lands, and 100,000,000ft. on land in private hands and on lands belonging to the Natives.

"From the reports of the Crown Lands Office we find that there are 67,210 acres of first-class Crown land?—That will be good agricultural land—some of it as good as any in Hawke's Bay or Canterbury; some of it is open and some timbered. There are 182,296 acres of second-class and 39,447 acres of third-class land.

"There is authority for the line as far as Kaukapakapa?—There is authority for that on the estimates.

"But no authority for the remaining portion of the line?—I do not know about that."

That was all the evidence taken on that subject—as to the description of the land this railway would go through.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—In the first place, I wish to express my entire disapprobation of the element which the Hon. Mr. Chamberlin has attempted to introduce into this debate—namely, the notion that there is jealousy between the North and the South with regard to the construction of railways. It cannot for a moment be supposed that the North has any jealousy with regard to the South, because recently we passed every measure which affected the South Island without a single expression of opinion in any way whatever. I am quite sure that the South will be equally generous to the North, and will allow this measure to be passed if it is worth being passed by the Council. We have been informed on more than one occasion here that there is no such thing as party feeling in the Council, and I am quite sure that no such feeling has ever been or will be shown here. The Hon. Mr. Miller said that the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker had laid down a principle. I am quite sure the honourable gentleman must be dissatisfied with the way in which his name is bandied about in this Council as being an authority on this subject and on that. However, we are informed that the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker has laid down a principle. I am not aware that he has laid down any principle. The Council laid down the principle referred to. When the Public Works Act of 1882 was under consideration Parliament laid down the principle that no railway should be constructed except by authority of a special Act. We are asking nothing more in this Bill than the authority to construct a railway. We cannot construct the railway unless we have the money. Every sixpence of that money will have to be passed by Parliament; but before any expenditure can take place we must have an Authorization Act. The 3rd clause of this Bill makes this a special authorization of the construction of this line. Without an Act of this character it is impossible to construct a single mile of that railway. In moving the second reading of the Loan Bill, I called the attention of the Council to the fact that all the lines mentioned in the schedule had been authorized with the exception of the Helensville line. However, that statement did not appear to satisfy honourable members; and a Committee was appointed. That Committee found my statement absolutely correct. We are now asking simply for the authorization of the construction of this line. It is not to be supposed that we shall construct this line the whole way and expend the money all at once. That will be impossible. We shall go on spending as our means will allow us. If it is not considered a good line Parliament will not vote the money. We are merely asking for the authority, and nothing more. I hope the Council will allow the Bill to be read a second time. Before I sit down I should like to say, in reference to the point raised by the Hon. Mr. Miller, that the Government have purchased the land and have paid for the property, and there is no title to it: therefore it will be seen that in these circumstances a hundred and one things may be done if this Bill is not passed.

The Council divided on the question, "That the Bill be read a second time."

AYES, 18.

Acland	Grace	Robinson
Barnicoat	Johnson, G. R.	Shephard
Bathgate	Mantell	Swanson
Buckley	Martin	Walker
Chamberlin	McLean	Whitaker
Dignan	Reeves	Wigley.

NOES, 8.

Fraser	Miller	Taiaroa
Holmes	Peacock	Wilson.
Lahmann	Shrimski	

Majority for, 10.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

Schedule.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE moved, That the words "to the Omapere Lake" be omitted, with the view of inserting the following words: "an extension for five miles."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the schedule."

AYES, 5.

Bathgate	Reeves	Whitaker.
Buckley	Swanson	

NOES, 20.

and	Johnson, G. R.	Robinson
micoat	Kenny	Shrimski
amberlin	Lahmann	Taiaroa
man	Mantell	Walker
ser	Martin	Wigley
ce	McLean	Wilson.
lmes	Peacock	

PAIR.

For.	Against.
Williams.	Shephard.

Majority against, 15.

Amendment agreed to.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

RABBIT NUISANCE BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—In moving the second reading of the Rabbit Nuisance Bill, I need scarcely inform the Council that it is a Bill which has been introduced at the instance of the Joint Committee of both Houses of Parliament which sat for a long time during the present session for the purpose of endeavouring to devise means for the abatement of what is known as the "rabbit-pest." The Bill is divided into three parts: the First Part provides further authority for the destruction of rabbits, and is inserted because the department considers it necessary for its own protection; the Second Part relates to the prevention of the spread of rabbits; and the Third Part is of an administrative character. With regard to the First Part, perhaps the Council will allow me to make a short explanation. Under clause 33 of the Sheep Act of 1878 power is given to the officer in charge of the district where a run has been abandoned to enter upon the run for the purposes of cleaning the sheep. In doing this the officer has to expend money in destroying rabbits, and this Bill enables the expenses to be charged against the owner of the run. Possession was taken of some runs in the Kaikouras a short time ago for this purpose. Immediately afterwards application was made to the Government that they should also enter upon deserted runs for the purpose of ridding them of rabbits. While the Government were certain that they had the power to enter upon such runs for the purpose of cleaning flocks, I was doubtful whether we had the power at the same time to interfere with the rabbits. The Bill also provides that the Inspectors shall give notice to owners with a view to simultaneous poisoning throughout the districts. It has been observed that there has hitherto been a display of leniency on the part of Magistrates in imposing fines on those who fail, in the opinion of the Inspectors, to take reasonable steps to clean their holdings. We propose to increase the fine from £20 to £100, at the same time giving the parties the right to appeal. It is questionable whether, under the existing Act, there was any right to appeal. In my opinion there was not. The matter was left in the discretion of the Inspector. With regard to the second portion of the Bill, I may explain this is to constitute districts, so that persons belonging to those districts may have what is called local self-government in connection with the extermination of the pest. It is proposed that Boards of Trustees shall be appointed, that a roll of stockowners shall be taken, and that the Boards shall have the authority to exercise all the powers conferred by the Rabbit Act within their jurisdiction as soon as the Act comes into force in those districts. Powers of a satisfactory character with regard to fencing are also given. The Third Part is, as I have said, the administrative portion of the Bill—one which I hope will be found to work satisfactorily as soon as it is put into operation. I do not think there is anything else to explain. The Bill has received a good deal of attention, and I now move, That the Bill be read the second time.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—Before this Bill is read the second time I should like to say a few words upon it. The Bill as originally introduced contained only thirty clauses. As it now stands it contains forty-one clauses. I may state that the way in which some of these clauses were inserted in another place was something the like of which I have never seen in all my years' experience in the Legislature. Not one of these clauses was read—only the marginal note was read in each instance by the Clerk of the Committee. Some of the clauses I should wish to refer to. In the first instance, a tax is proposed to be placed on the population in the districts where this Bill is brought into force. We have fourteen million sheep in the colony, and if each sheep is to pay a tax of 1d., taking the number at twelve million sheep, this will yield, in round numbers, £50,000. The Crown will be called upon to subsidize this to an equal amount, and I do not think, in the present circumstances of the colony, that we are justified in incurring such a great responsibility.

The Hon. Mr. ROBINSON.—It is provided in the Bill that it shall not be more than £5,000.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I should also like to call attention to clause 36, which renders people liable to pay the tax in a county, although they are not proprietors of any sheep whatever. I think that is a hard and arbitrary law, and I think it my duty to call the attention of the Council to the clause. Why the people should be called upon to pay double for a thing in which they have no direct—I do not say indirect—interest I am at a loss to understand. I think it will press very heavily on the people.

Bill read a second time.

SPECIAL POWERS AND CONTRACTS BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I have some very strong objections to offer to some of the clauses in this Special Powers and Contracts Bill, and when I state those objections I think it will be found that they are reasonable, and that they will commend themselves to members of this Council, and I may intimate that at the

close of my remarks I shall make a proposition on the subject to the Council. In order to show how this Bill has got into the form in which it is at the present time, I propose to call the attention of the Council to the origin of special-powers-and-contracts legislation. I do so because I am not aware of any such legislation in any other country than New Zealand. Certainly there is no such legislation in England, nor, so far as I can find, in any of the other Australasian Colonies. Whatever credit or discredit, therefore, belongs to the invention of this kind of legislation, it belongs entirely to New Zealand. The first Bill of this kind was passed in 1877. At that time Sir George Grey's Government was in power, and they passed a Bill to "authorize the Governor to complete certain unfulfilled engagements relating to land, and for that purpose to issue Crown grants in certain cases." So far as I see, although that Bill has been the foundation of the present difficulties we have got into in reference to Bills of this character, that Bill appears to be a reasonable one. Consequent on the war and other circumstances there were a number of promises made by the Governor or Sir Donald McLean and others; and it was reasonable that effect should be given to them. They passed a Bill with a short title and one clause, and they put in the schedule eight cases in reference to promises made to Natives, seven cases in reference to engagements in connection with confiscated lands, and eight cases in reference to engagements in connection with Crown lands. The Bill passed on the 20th of November, 1877. All this appears to have been reasonable, and, if we had stopped at that and not extended the scope of these Bills, I do not think any mischief would have come. Such a method of legislation was a convenience, and if it had not been abused we should have been entitled to some credit for the invention of it. In 1878 another Act of this kind was passed, and such Bills have been continued yearly ever since. That Act was also of a limited character, and contained a preamble, which has been carried down to the present day, as also has the title. The title has never been altered, and, although we have entirely altered the construction and purposes for which the Bill was intended, the same title continues to the present day. It is "An Act to grant certain Special Powers to the Governor to issue Crown Grants, and to enable him to carry out certain Contracts and Promises." Then it goes on to say, in the preamble,—

"Whereas it is expedient and necessary to give the Governor power to issue the Crown grants, and to do, execute, and perform the several acts and things, set forth in the second column of the First Schedule hereto, in fulfilment of the promises and for the several reasons and purposes set forth in the first column of such schedule."

That was not an unreasonable Bill; but, unfortunately, it got rather an extension beyond what it ought to have had. Then another Government came into power, of which I was the Attorney-General. And, whatever I may say at the present time, I have no desire to cast any reflections upon any Government, because I feel myself as much implicated in this matter as anybody else. But I say we have come to the point at which we must stop. We cannot possibly go on in the direction in which we are going. In 1879 an Act was passed having a similar title and a similar preamble to those which were in the former one. The one of 1878 had only thirteen different cases in it. The one of 1879 extended that number to thirty-seven; and I must give my colleague at the time, Mr. Rolleston, credit for having added to the Bill a feature altogether different from those that previous Bills contained. He not only put in the Bill the several cases which required to be dealt with, but he invented an additional column for the purpose of explaining the objects for which the clauses were proposed. He is entitled to the credit of that invention, and I confess that I am also a party to it. I recollect perfectly well its being submitted to me. I thought at the time that that would be a very good way of explaining the cause of doing these things; and the present Bill will be found printed after the same manner, the first column being explanatory of the cause of the clause mentioned in the second. Then we come to the Act of 1880. But I should say, with reference to the Act of 1879, that the Bill consisted of twelve pages and contained five clauses and thirty-seven cases; in the Bill of 1877 there were four pages, two clauses, twenty-three cases, and one schedule; in 1878 there were five pages, five clauses, fifteen cases, and one schedule. The Council will see that it is increasing, like a snowball, as it goes. In 1880 there were nine pages, four clauses, and twenty-three cases; in 1881 there were fourteen pages, five clauses, and forty-two cases. I do not disguise that at that time I was Attorney-General, and my colleagues were in power. In 1882 there were thirteen pages, five clauses, and forty-three cases. At that time I was both Premier and Attorney-General. In 1883 I held the same offices. In 1883 the Bill contained thirteen pages, four clauses, and thirty-two cases. There the matter ended, so far as I had anything to do with it. In the next year I was not in office, nor did I attend the session of the Assembly. Then a remarkable increase took place. I do not mean to say that if I had been here that year this would not have taken place. Well, to continue, in the Bill of 1884 there were twenty-five pages, seven clauses, and sixty-five cases, instead of thirty-seven as in 1879—showing a remarkable increase in one year. Then in 1885 the Bill contained twenty-five pages, eight clauses, and sixty-eight cases. That is going beyond all reasonable limits, embracing cases which ought never to have been introduced in any way into such a Bill. Then we come to the present Bill, and here we find something totally different from anything we have had before. We have thirty-nine pages, eighteen clauses—instead of one as in 1877, when the thing began—and seventy cases. Well, Sir, the remarkable thing is that these Special Powers

l Contracts Bills have been, all the way ough, called local Bills. Without referring former ones, I say that the present Bill conns something relating to most of the dists from the North Cape to Stewart Island. m not aware that there is any large district this colony that this Bill has not something say about. Although the scope of the preit Bill has been enlarged as compared with e original Bill in 1877, the Bill has retained e same title and the same preamble. Let us what the contents of this Bill are. The acting part—which was a single clause in e Act of 1877 providing, "that the Governor ay issue such Crown grants, and do, execute, d perform the several acts, deeds, matters, d things as are specified in the schedule"—s been extended in this Bill to at least a dozen parate enactments. It contains provisions in ference to land inalienable for a longer period an twenty-one years except with the conent of the Governor. I do not know that ere is any objection to that, and therefore pass it over. Then we come to section 6 of e Bill, which, above all others, is, to my mind, e most objectionable. It is,—

"Notwithstanding the provisions of section e hundred and thirty-two of 'The Land Act, 885,' any holder of a pastoral deferred-payent license may, with the consent of the and Board, surrender his license, and obtain om the Board in exchange a lease of the ame land as a small grazing run, with peretual right of renewal, under Part VII. of The Land Act, 1885.'"

What do we do in this clause? We are ltering one of the most important laws in the olony—one of the most elaborate and one of he most important—an alteration which deerves and ought to have a Bill by itself. No ne, taking up our land-laws and looking to see n what state they were, would think of looking n this Bill for any alteration or amendment. ooking at the Land Act of 1885, and looking lown it to see what alterations have been nade since, one would miss the alteration proosed in the Bill now before us. One would ever dream of finding in a Bill of this chaacter, headed a local Bill, an important alteraion of the land-laws of New Zealand, the nost important laws that exist in the colony. cannot conceive that anything worse could e placed in a Bill of this kind, and, so far as his Bill is concerned, it is a novelty: we have ever had an attempt made in any former Bills o introduce anything so monstrous as this. Then we go on to the next clause, which ays,—

"The Public Trustee is hereby authorized rom time to time to pay over to the Auckland Hospital and Charitable Aid Board, or to such ther Board or Trustees for the time being having the control and management of the Provincial Hospital at Auckland, all surplus moneys heretofore accrued or which may hereafter accrue in his hands, as the same are defined in section five of 'The Auckland Hospital Reserves Act, 1883;' and such moneys shall be applied by the said Board for the purposes of the aforesaid hospital, and not otherwise."

Here we have an important statute put under the head of local Bills, altering another of the most important statutes in the colony. I do not think it is worth while to go through the whole of these, but I will just take two or three more from among those which appear to me to be the most unreasonable. With reference to the Auckland Hospital Board clause, why it was put in here in this form I do not know: the money there authorized to be paid to the Board virtually belongs to the Government, and might be disposed of without introducing a clause for the purpose into such a Bill as this. Nobody, I apprehend, would look in such a Bill as this to find anything altering the Auckland Reserves Act of 1883. Then, the Borough Council of Ross is authorized to collect rents from the leases of land; and then there is another important alteration of an existing Act, but it is not so glaring as some of them. Still, it is quite enough in itself, if we were looking at the matter strictly, to condemn the Bill. Then we come to another local Bill—"Agricultural College rateable property." That refers to the Rating Act. I do not think we have many more important Acts on the Statute Book than the Rating Act, and yet we find an alteration introduced here, when an amending Bill ought to have been devoted to an alteration of that Act. Then we come to an extraordinary clause—that referring to the Christchurch Drainage Board, empowering them to borrow money on overdrafts, which is afterwards again referred to in the schedule. The Christchurch Drainage Act was passed in 1885. Some of these things, no doubt, are very proper to be done, although a great many of them are not; but it is not proper to put them in the form in which they are here. In another clause we have a sort of loan Act: the Selwyn County is authorized to raise a loan of £3,000. That is an alteration of the Counties Act, and enables the Selwyn County to supersede the authority in the Counties Act for raising a loan. Then the County of Waihemo is authorized to raise a loan; and, a mistake having been made in the Caversham Drainage Act of 1884, we are asked to rectify that. This is surely a conglomeration of everything which has been picked up in all directions that wants anything doing to it whatever. Here comes one that is more serious than the others—clause 13, by which the West Coast Reserves Act is amended. This Act was passed in 1881, and in 1884 there was an amendment of it. In this local Bill, so called, which is introduced for all these different purposes, we find most essential and important alterations made in those Acts of 1881 and 1884. Well, Sir, I will not go further into that. I think it is sufficient for honourable members only to read this Bill to condemn it: to see these things in such a Bill as this is sufficient to induce them to reject it. Then we come to the clause validating the Nelson Borough Council election. It may be very proper to do that; but here we actually introduce a separate Bill beginning with a

preamble—"Whereas" and "And whereas," and so on. Why this could not be put into a separate Bill I do not know. This is one of those things in the Bill which in themselves are unobjectionable; but the form in which it is introduced is highly objectionable. Then we come to an Auckland case—the validation of the Devonport Borough rate. Probably there is very good reason why it should be validated. This is a newly-constituted borough, and they have made some mistake, apparently; but, instead of setting it right by an amendment of the law dealing with boroughs, which might have been done, an amendment is introduced into this Bill. We have again the words "Whereas" and "Be it enacted," and all the language usual in a separate Bill. All these begin with a long preamble, and then follows "Be it enacted." Here, in fact, we have the most extraordinarily-constructed Bill I have ever met with. Almost every subject is matter for a Bill in itself: in fact, it is a conglomeration of Bills on a variety of subjects, all mixed up together and put in this wonderful document. The last part of the enacting portion of this measure is a long Bill for the apportionment of hospital and lunatic-asylum reserves at Nelson and Wellington. That may or may not be a proper thing to do; but how is it possible for the Council, at the end of the session, to go into the matter and say whether or not it is proper? I do not for a moment say that this is not a proper thing to do; but I do say that this is a most improper way of doing it. I venture to say that no such thing as this Bill can be found anywhere in all the legislation that has taken place in the whole world in the last hundred years. It is an innovation to the credit for which I do not know how far my honourable friends on the Government bench are entitled. I certainly give them credit for ingenuity in making it as mischievous as they could possibly make it.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—We have followed your example.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I am complaining that the honourable gentleman has not followed my example. If he had only kept to the schedule he would have followed my example. I admit, at once, that I may have been wrong; but that does not make this any the more right. I had precedents, and I followed them. They were bad precedents, no doubt, but the honourable gentleman has not only followed my precedent and those I followed, but he has improved on them, and made a ten times more mischievous precedent than all that has gone before. The First Schedule contains seventy paragraphs, and there are seven other schedules. That is altogether a novelty. I do not suppose my honourable friend the Colonial Secretary claims any credit for the innovation. What I suppose happened was this: One man said he wanted one thing done, and another wanted another thing done; so they each handed in their contributions to the draftsman, and he crams it altogether in this Bill. I cannot think my honourable friend the Premier, as Attorney-General—whose talents I very much respect—can have given any consideration to this Bill. I am quite sure if he had seen it before it was brought in he would never have thought of passing it. No doubt it got into the House and, having gone several stages there, there was no going back; so it was tinkered up, first by the Waste Lands Committee and then by the House, and sent on here. It is generally supposed that a Bill of this kind must be brought down with the recommendation of the Governor, but I do not see how this Bill could have been sent down in that way, or how, after it was so sent down, entirely fresh matter, not recommended, could be put in. It does appear to me that it has all been done without any consideration whatever. I admit, at once, the extent to which I have been a party to legislation of this character; but I should never have consented to the introduction of such a Bill as this if I had seen it, and probably the Hon. the Colonial Secretary never saw this Bill till it came here. Here is a Bill longer than almost any Bill we have passed on the largest subjects—thirty-nine pages: I do not think even the Land Act is longer than this. I am sure the Council will at once relieve me from going through the whole of this. I hear some honourable gentleman say, "Yes, certainly." I think he is wise. It would not be edifying to go through all this Bill in detail. As I understand, the Committee to whom the Bill was referred by the Council spent three days on it, and they say they have been wholly unable to completely attend to and do justice to it. Yet, now, here at eight o'clock in the evening, with the prorogation staring us in the face, we are called on to legislate on all these subjects. I say it is impracticable and impossible to pass the Bill as it is, and if it is passed I shall have nothing to do with it. I shall not attempt to amend it in any way, because I think that is impossible at this period of the session. I will now call attention to the schedule. Paragraph 18 is an alteration of an Act of some importance—the Thermal Springs Act of 1881. Now we are going deliberately to make alterations in the tenure of the statutory leases, and we are asked to make a number of essentially-important alterations in this way in the Thermal Springs Act—an important public Act. I do not understand the division that has taken place in the subjects of this Bill. Some of them are little Bills, and some are pretty long Bills, mixed up in the enacting part of the Bill. They do not continue that plan, but, in a long schedule, alter general Acts of Parliament of an important character by a side-wind, as it were. Paragraph 19 of the schedule is a very funny one. It is "To enable effect to be given to a recommendation of the Waste Lands Committee of the House of Representatives, session 1883, on the petition of Stephen Earl." A most curious reason for this is given. James Whitney sold sixty acres of land to Stephen Earl, and we are to give a grant to Earl only, it appears, because Whitney sold it to him. Whitney sold to Earl, and the Crown is called upon to make a grant of the land to Whitney. Now,

this proposal violates a principle which has been maintained for a great number of years—that the Government will not grant a title to derivative claimants; because it involves the Government in tracing the title from the original owner down to the person who seeks to get the title, and therefore the Government becomes responsible for the validity of all the intermediate deeds and conveyances, which is unreasonable. To avoid this, some years ago there was an invention for which I was to some extent responsible, and that was, to antevest the legal estate. If that were done in this case, even though Whitney were dead the land would be granted in his name, and that would have the same effect as if the land had been granted to him when originally acquired. Then, if several parties had successively bought the land since, they could trace their title back to Whitney. This is what ought to be done in cases of this kind, because, then, present claimants, if their deeds are good, get a good title. By that course any number of conveyances there are or might have been in dealing with that land are given effect to, and the Crown takes no responsibility of validation; but if the Crown takes all the responsibility for the validity of all the conveyances there may have been, and if there was anything wrong with any of them, those affected would necessarily have a reasonable claim for compensation against the Government. That appears to me to be a strong objection to this proposed provision. I have no doubt that Earl is entitled to this land, but this is not the way to give him a title. Then, here is a paragraph about the Mokau. I have heard for a good many years past about Joshua Jones and the Mokau Coalfields; but I do not know anything about the merits of this matter: but it would, to a certain extent, require careful investigation. We are asked to authorize Nevil Walker to get land for coal-mining purposes on the banks of the River Mokau. That may be very right; but to introduce it in a Bill of this character does seem to me to be out of all reason. Then, in paragraph 29 there is this proposal to give title to a derivative purchaser. We are told that—

"Te Katene, a member of the Native Contingent, having completed the service required of him to entitle him to 80 acres of land under the regulations for the time then being in force, which authorized original service to be computed, together with substituted service, was refused his grant on the erroneous supposition that he had not served sufficiently. Katene having sold his interest, authority is required for a grant of the land Katene was entitled to to be made to his derivative purchaser."

Now, Katene may have sold the land in the same way to three or four parties; but the Government are asked to grant a title directly to this derivative purchaser, and to take all the responsibility of his title being a good one. I apprehend that no one has seen all the deeds here may be, or traced the conveyances, and even if we had all the instruments before us to-morrow we could not test them here. If this land is dealt with at all it should be antevested in the way I have said. No doubt there were many cases of hardship in earlier times until this expedient of antevesting was devised; but now the difficulty can be got over in a very simple way, without throwing any risk or responsibility on the Government, as there would be in the two instances I have referred to in this Bill. Then, there is paragraph 51, occupying nearly five columns, no doubt for a very proper object, and one which ought to be done; but it is an alteration of an important Act relating to Christchurch. They have had difficulty there with their drainage, and Acts have been passed to enable them to complete it. Now, in this extraordinary Bill we have this subject dealt with in two places—first in the enacting part, and then again in the schedule. Why the whole of it was not done as legislation on the subject has been done before I do not know. No doubt the Colonial Secretary can account for all these things, and will account for them by-and-by; but I would not undertake to account for them all in a week or a fortnight. Perhaps the honourable gentleman can see through it all quicker than I can; and, as he asks us to pass this Bill, I suppose he will undertake to explain everything: for I apprehend it is the duty of the Government, when they ask us to pass any measure, to be able at least to explain it. But I do not ask the honourable gentleman to do it in this case, because he could not do it before the prorogation: there is good work here for any one for a month. There is one very extraordinary matter here, even for this most extraordinary Bill. A Bill was brought in as a local Bill which the Joint Committee of both Houses who had to consider it reported not to be a local Bill at all, but to be a private Bill. But, instead of its being brought in as a private Bill, we find it in this measure. What has been pronounced by a Joint Committee to be a private Bill is put in this general Act, which seems to me a monstrous thing. I have picked out a few of these things. No doubt there are some equally bad left, but I have not even had time to read all the Bill, and I must ask the Council to consider the bulk to be represented by the samples. This style of legislation is the most objectionable that can possibly be found. It is in defiance of all the rules laid down for the construction of statutes, especially in the Royal Instructions: in fact, I do not know how the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary have got over that difficulty. If I had my time as Attorney-General over again I would not attempt to get over it, because I do not think that it is what a Government ought to do. It was perhaps bad enough in my time, but this is far worse than anything ever before attempted; we never attempted anything as bad as this. The Royal Instructions say,—

"The Governor shall take care, as far as may be practicable, that in the passing of all laws each different matter be provided for by a different law, without intermixing in one and the same law such things as have no proper relation to each other."

That is a fundamental principle of legislation. It has been violated from time to time, no doubt; but now we have come to a position which we have never arrived at before. I shall claim the vote of my honourable friend Mr. Reeves on this question, because the other day he told us that the settled-land law was becoming so bad a thing that nothing could be done with it, and soon if left alone it must come altogether to an end; and for that reason he would not attempt to amend it. Now, I ask the honourable gentleman to tell me if we could concoct anything worse than this Bill. I do not think if we deliberately tried we could do anything worse than what we have here. We have public Bills, local Bills, private Bills, Bills for raising loans, and Bills for appropriations all mixed up together. Here are proposals to grant £5,000 for the Girls' High School at Wellington, and the same sum for a similar school at Auckland: so that this may be an Appropriation Bill, which we cannot amend at all. We have nearly a hundred of all sorts of Bills mixed up into one, in defiance of all principles of legislation. If honourable members look over the Bill they will be able to pick out a great deal of the same character as that I have called their attention to. I am quite aware that this is a difficult matter to deal with, and I have no doubt there may be some things proposed to be done by this Bill which should be done at once. I have not read all the Bill; but I have seen some matters that ought to be attended to now: for instance, this difficulty about collecting rates at Devonport, and the question about validating elections at Nelson. It may be necessary to legislate on these things to enable certain local bodies to carry on during the year; but I am not aware of much more in the Bill that is of immediate importance. Some of these matters have stood over for thirty years, and I think we can very well let them stand for one year more without causing any great difficulty. I think I have said enough to show that the Council would be justified in doing what I am going to propose. I propose that the greater portion of this Bill shall stand over now, and be properly considered and dealt with next year in a proper manner. But I should be sorry to throw any difficulty in the way of the Government where it is absolutely necessary that they should have power to do anything required before next session. I have noticed two matters of that kind, and there may be some more; and what I propose is, that we should lay this Bill aside: and then it will be open to the Government to bring in another Bill doing only what is absolutely necessary to be done this session, and I shall have great pleasure in assisting to pass such a Bill. But I, for one, cannot be an assenting party to a Bill of this kind being passed. This may, and possibly will, be the last session of the General Assembly that I shall attend, and I should very much regret it indeed if the last act I performed in this Council was assisting to pass a Bill of this character. Sir, I move, That this Bill be laid aside; and, if that is done, I can only repeat what I have said, that as to anything which is really required to be done this session, I shall be glad to assist in passing another Bill to do it.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—I am Chairman of the Committee to which this Bill was referred, and I may say that in the process of getting the Bill through that Committee I had a *mauvais quart d'heure*—a very bad quarter of an hour indeed. Sir, there is in this Island a district that was called in the early times Toki-Rau—it is now known as the Bay of Islands—and Toki-Rau, being translated, means "a hundred axes." Whether or not in a Runanga or Maori Witenagemot at some time the chiefs of the tribes succeeded in grinding a hundred axes at a sitting, I do not know; I have a theory that the title of that district is derived from that singular parliamentary performance: I think it is not improbable. This Bill does not contain exactly a hundred "axes," but as nearly so as it is possible to come. It certainly marks an epoch in legislation. It is the most wonderful Bill that has ever appeared before my eyes during my long parliamentary experience. Sir, there is a parliamentary receptacle known as the "waste-paper basket," the locality of which is indicated by the legend, "Rubbish may be shot here." It appears to me that, the parliamentary rubbish of the session having been shot into this basket, some *chiffonnier*—some "rag-picker"—has picked them over and presented this lot to Parliament as treasures to be inscribed on the Statute Book of the colony. I hope the Legislature, or this branch of it at any rate, will do nothing of the kind. I shall support the amendment that the Bill, for the present at least, be laid aside, when, if those rags that are really valuable are picked out, and if we are asked to give the Crown power to keep specific promises that have been made—if these instances are shown, no one will be more ready than myself to assist in passing the necessary legislation. At present I refrain from criticising this measure as I otherwise should do, and shall content myself by voting for the amendment.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON.—I do not think the Bill should be laid aside. There is very little good in it; but what there is ought to be done. I think there are a few things in it that are reasonable and proper to be carried out. As to the general question, I think a more preposterous system of legislation than this could not be conceived. It is certainly a very rapid system, as Sir Frederick Whitaker says; it is a system by which we repeal and set up public Acts, local Acts, and private Acts; and we not only legislate in this most extraordinary manner in the enacting part of the Bill, but we do still more extraordinary things in the schedule. Here is an instance in the schedule which I will call attention to. It is paragraph 52. There is a rather complicated arrangement—probably a very good one—between private parties, and we are asked to carry out that arrangement in a general Act. Why there was any difficulty in getting a private Bill to do that I cannot conceive. In fact,

nearly the whole of the matters in this measure ought to be dealt with as private Bills; and I do not think, if they were promoted as private Bills, there would be any difficulty at all in passing them. However, I can only reiterate what has been said before as to the danger of passing legislation of this kind. There are seventy of these things in this Bill this year—there may be a hundred and forty next year. Practically, there is nothing to prevent almost the whole of the legislation of the session being put into this Bill, and all sorts of things being done and interests affected without the persons concerned knowing anything at all about it. How can any one interested know anything of these things without wading through this Bill, which they would think to be the last place in which to find it? The most important private right may be taken away by a line in the schedule of this Bill, without the persons from whom it is taken knowing the least about it until it is too late. A more monstrous thing than proposing seventy Bills for all sorts of things in this way cannot be imagined. I agree with the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker that there are several things proposed to be done by this Bill which ought to be done. Besides the instances that were mentioned by him, there are two very ancient land claims to be given effect to, apparently on the recommendation of an honourable member of this Council made as long ago as 1858. I can hardly conceive that the honourable gentleman recollects all these things for so long a period; but perhaps his memory is refreshed in one of these cases by seeing a rather singular name—the name of Apes. I do not know whether that recalls anything to the honourable gentleman. After thirty-three years it cannot be expected that the honourable gentleman's memory improves; and, if he has a good recollection of it now, perhaps it would be well to dispose of it, because we are not certain his memory will be so good next year. So I think that ought to be passed: that is only reasonable. I do not think these half-caste children should be disinherited because of a fault of memory on the part of the honourable gentleman. I think the whole of the enacting part of the Bill is absolutely wrong, and ought not to be passed. The 18th clause is drawn in the form of an Act, with recitals and enacting clauses. If that had been a local Bill, as it ought to have been, who would have had the audacity to include land in two districts in the one Bill? That is utterly intolerable. No such thing is allowed at all. It is opposed to all principle, and to the object of these Acts. Who would dream of looking in an Act of this sort for such questions as are dealt with here? I think we should do very well if we passed the one clause giving effect to some few things in the schedule, and negatived the whole of the rest of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—If what the honourable member proposes were practicable we might consider it; but I know there is no other view practicable except that proposed by my honourable friend Sir Frederick Whitaker. Besides, as a point of order, I would ask, is it possible to introduce a Bill again after it has been before the House and considered by a Joint Committee, who declare that it is a private Bill? How can a private Bill be introduced here? This measure embodies a private Bill, and I hold that it cannot be introduced. It is utterly impossible to pass it. There is the Christchurch Drainage Bill, which, we know, has been a source of irritation in Christchurch for a long period, and heavy fights are taking place over it. How do we know, if this Bill were brought in as a local Bill, that we should not hear objections to it? Who would think of looking in this measure for all the subjects that are dealt with in it? If any one of these subjects comes before a Court of law, how are legal gentlemen ever to think of referring to this Bill? It is useless going over all the different questions dealt with in the measure, after what has been said, for that would only be once more finding fault with the clauses. There are certain things in the Bill which it is necessary to deal with this session, and I, for one, if they are sent forward, will assist to pass them; but I really cannot support this Bill. I am bound to vote against it, because I cannot see any way of amending it.

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN.—The speakers who have addressed the Council have taken great pains to find out the shortcomings of this Bill. It is much to be regretted that these honourable gentlemen did not do this on the motion for the second reading, and before the Waste Lands Committee went to the trouble to examine all the clauses. It must not be forgotten that a great many of the clauses of this Bill have been introduced in another place as local Bills, and that all the Standing Orders have been complied with, and, but for the session coming to so sudden an end, and private members' days being suspended, we should have had these local Bills to deal with instead of finding them in the clauses of this Bill. There is scarcely a single clause in this Bill on which evidence has not been taken. The Committee have recommended that some of the clauses be struck out. As it has been acknowledged that there are a great many of the clauses in the Bill which are not objectionable to the Council, I think we should go into Committee and there throw out those clauses which are objectionable, leaving the other clauses. Sir Frederick Whitaker said he thought the Premier had no hand in this. I can assure the honourable gentleman that a great many amendments have been made in the Bill by the Premier. I trust that the Council will go into Committee; and then the Hon. Dr. Pollen can point out what clauses are admissible and what are not. I fully agree that there is a great deal in the Bill which ought never to have been there; but I say, Let us go into Committee, and retain the clauses which are approved of.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—The honourable gentleman asked why I did not make all these objections when the Bill was read a

second time. He has forgotten altogether the mode in which the Bill was introduced. The Bill was read a first time on the day on which it was brought up from the House. The Colonial Secretary then asked that it be read a second time without debate and then referred to the Committee. In order to facilitate the operations of my honourable friend the Bill was sent straight away to the Committee. There was no opportunity of saying anything on the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN.—I stand corrected. I now remember that that was the case.

The Hon. Mr. MILLER.—I do not think the honourable gentleman's argument at all in accord with the report of the Committee, of which I think he was a member. Of course, at this period of the session it is not possible for honourable members to go into the merits of a Bill like this. Honourable members, as a rule, are guided by the report of the Waste Lands Committee; and the Committee has taken a great deal of trouble in connection with this Bill. The most that can be said of that report is that it damns the Bill with faint praise. It starts off by saying, "If the Bill be allowed to proceed," then certain amendments are recommended. We know pretty well what the meaning of that is. It seems to me, after the statements of those honourable gentlemen who have gone into the thing, that it is quite impossible for us to dissent from the proposal made by the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker. The only argument that I have heard at all in favour of the Bill is that there are one or two little things in it which are good; therefore it is said, "Let us pass a whole lot of things that are bad." There is an old adage, "Do a little wrong for a great right;" but here that is reversed, and it is, "Do a great wrong for a little right." I do not think that is a doctrine that I can subscribe to, and therefore I must give my vote for the amendment. Such a Bill as this is without precedent. There is nothing on record similar to it; and if we pass it I think we shall establish a precedent. If we pass a Bill of this kind it will be held that the Council will pass anything.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD.—The Bill was not even circulated at the time of the second reading, and, from a remark of the Colonial Secretary in moving the second reading, I should say that he was not aware of all the provisions of the Bill. Therefore any plea put in in mitigation of punishment for this iniquitous creature which we have before us falls to the ground. There is no doubt that Sir Frederick Whitaker has conclusively proved his case—that as the Bill stands it is without precedent, and that what was, in the first instance, probably, a system which might be defended has grown to such proportions that it must be put an end to; and I see no other course but to lay this Bill aside, and leave it open to Ministers to introduce a Bill which can be passed with expedition.

The Hon. Captain FRASER was understood to say,—With regard to clause 21, it is true that Katene returned after deserting us in the war, but through his desertion he lost every claim to the land. I shall have great pleasure in supporting the amendment.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—I have no doubt that the easiest way to get some good from the measure is to lay it aside. As to the case of Katene, he comes out of it very well. It is our duty to save the Natives from being swindled by white men; but we can never save Natives from being swindled by Natives, judging from the cases we have seen.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT.—I do not rise to defend the indefensible; but I think that setting-aside of this Bill would be attended with some amount of injustice and with a great deal of inconvenience. I say "indefensible" because this is an indefensible mode of legislation. There is no doubt about that. It has been shown that every Government has found it convenient to adopt a Bill of this kind, and that no Government can point to another with scorn in that respect. I think this Bill should be allowed to go into Committee. This Bill is, I think, only slightly worse than its predecessors. Probably this will be the last measure of the kind that Parliament will see, for we seem to have fully awoke to the absurdity and injustice of legislation being done in this way. The Bill is a great improvement on what it was when it was introduced into Parliament. Some of the worst clauses have been struck out, and it is proposed to strike out some others. I think if the Council will go into Committee they will find the Bill not nearly so great a mass of absurdities as is represented by those who are opposed to the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES.—I should like to say a few words, as the honourable gentleman who has made that very eloquent speech in moving that the Bill should be laid aside has claimed my vote for certain reasons. It is gratifying to me to find that the honourable gentleman at last understands the argument that I used; because when he replied to me—I will not say purposely, but—he did misstate what I said. However, he seems at last to have arrived at an understanding of the argument I used; and on that he bases his claim to my vote. I am sorry that I cannot promise him my vote on those grounds, because I can conceive circumstances under which a very much worse Bill even than this might be brought forward. The honourable gentleman alluded to the fact that it was possible he might never return to this Assembly, and I am sure, if that were really the case, we should all feel extremely sorry and grieved. I do not take that view of the matter. On the contrary, seeing the remarkable vigour of the honourable gentleman, I am sure we shall see him here again, and, I trust, for many years; and, what is more, I feel pretty nearly sure, taking the uncertainty of tenure of office into account, that we shall see my honourable friend holding the offices of Premier and Attorney-General combined; and in that case I am perfectly certain that we shall have a very much worse Bill of this kind brought forward than we have before us. Therefore I cannot promise

my support on this occasion. Moreover, is another reason why I cannot promise my vote. I only like to take advice from whom I thoroughly believe in, and when all that, within the last twenty-four hours, rd my honourable friend assume the posi- of the unblushing advocate of the concoc- of fraudulent balance-sheets, that makes loubt his advice; and that is another reason I shall not give him my support on this sion.

e Hon. Mr. G. R. JOHNSON.—I shall cer- ly vote with the Hon. Sir Frederick Whit- to lay the Bill aside. My reason for doing is this: If we are to follow the course pro- d by this Bill we may at once set aside all machinery that we have adopted for the pur- of examining Bills of a local character, or private Bills. It seems to me an utter e that a Bill should be sent up to us in this . It has been said that several of the ses in this Bill are absolutely the embodi- t of local Bills presented to Parliament in ther place, and that, simply because the e of the session did not allow of their being perly dealt with, therefore they are sent o us to pass them in this way. We know this Bill has been presented to us. It was a second time before we had the Bill in hands, and, with the press of work thrown our shoulders, it was utterly impossible for ourable members, unless they thoroughly e themselves up to this matter and neglected other work, to make themselves acquainted h the contents of the Bill.

he Hon. Mr. TAIAROA.—I consider that s Bill is of great importance to the Natives, I hope that it will be committed. If that lone, I shall then make some proposals with erence to some of these clauses, which I nk might be amended. I hope the Bill will gone on with, because there are a number matters in it which affect the Natives, and ich have stood over for many years, and I uld like to see these subjects dealt with. me of these lands are lands about which the tives have petitioned for over twenty years, d it is only now that any step is being taken satisfy those demands.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—I would just like say one or two words in reply to several eeches which have been made on this impor- nt question. In doing so I labour under a eat disadvantage, and for this reason: that tacks of every kind seem to have been made the Government that would only have en justified if they had introduced a Bill thout precedent of any kind whatever. Not- thstanding the fact that the Government ve been blamed for introducing this Bill in e way it has been introduced, I have only llowed a precedent which has been laid down er since I have had the privilege of sitting in is Council. The usual course adopted on ery occasion has been to read the Bill a cond time, and afterwards to refer it to the Waste Lands Committee, where it invariably ndergoes a scrutiny worthy of that Committee. I think it would only be fair that, in the first place, I should reply to the few observations made regarding this measure by my honourable friend Mr. Wilson. The honourable gentleman attacks the Government for the bad drafting of this Bill. But this Bill has not been drafted by the Government: this is a Bill which has been drafted by almost every member of the Council. For the honourable gentleman to talk about the way in which the Bill is drafted is simply ridiculous. Let me remind the honourable gentleman of a Bill which he prepared some time ago. Here it is. In handing it to me—in pieces—he wished me to hand it over to the printer. But I have kept it as a curiosity, and to hand it down as a specimen of what can be done in the shape of drafting; and, so far as he is concerned, I do not think he had better make that observation again. I now come to the observations of my honourable and learned friend Sir Frederick Whitaker. And before I say anything in reply to that honourable gentleman I would like to say that I think he has been very badly treated in this Council. There seems to be a sort of understanding on the part of some members of this Council that we must not dissent from anything that the honourable gentleman says, or that he recommends to be carried—that, because the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker has said it, therefore it ought to be done, and that we must not go contrary to his wishes in regard to this matter or that—that, in fact, we must follow him blindly. Now, I am sure that my honourable friend would be the last in the Council to wish this to be the case. That he is not perfect, and does not pretend to be, is evident from the fact that he has got up in this Council and admitted his own shortcomings in this Council over and over again. He has gone very carefully over this Bill. He has picked the eyes out of it, and has pointed out all its defects. Let the Council understand that I do not mean to say for a moment that there are not defects in this Bill, or that it is a perfect measure. I think the honourable gentleman admitted that he was in office in 1879. Let us look at the Special Powers and Contracts Act of that year. Here we find the following:—

"19. In 1874 the Bishop of Wellington *was informed* that an acre of land would be granted as a site for an Episcopalian church. But, by regulations under 'The New Zealand Settlements Act, 1865,' religious bodies could only purchase half an acre at the upset price. The Church authorities have purchased half of acre No. 135, and now desire to purchase the remainder."

The purchase was of course authorized. Now, that is about as pretty a thing as any one ever saw. I have several more of them, but I will not follow the example of my honourable friend. I may remind him of a maxim that is known to lawyers—"*Testimonia ponderanda, non numeranda, sunt.*" When this Bill was introduced into the Council some one—I think it was the Hon.

the Speaker—remarked that it was a class of legislation that should not be recommended. In my place, on that occasion, I admitted that I did not agree with this class of legislation. I do not agree with it now. But this Bill has gone through the ordeal of a scrutiny at the hands of the Waste Lands Committee of this Council, and it has also gone through its stages in another branch of the Legislature, and I think it should now be allowed to pass. All the evidence that could be obtained on the matters referred to was taken, and was such as to lead the Committee to arrive at the conclusion that the Bill, in respect to the matters now contained in it, was an essentially necessary one. My honourable friend Sir Frederick Whitaker says this is a class of legislation that is unknown in any other part of the world; but he shares the credit of having continued this kind of legislation, and says that the credit of the invention of the columns belongs to a colleague of his. Then he goes on to quarrel with the legislation because the number of pages and clauses increases, and he argues that therefore it is a bad Bill. That is a line of argument which, I am sure, my honourable friend would not admit for a moment if it were adopted by anybody else. He further said that nobody looked for an alteration in the law in such a Bill as this. It is well known among lawyers that, if you cannot find a certain thing in the Acts specially relating to it, the proper course is to look in the Special Powers and Contracts Acts; so that in that respect I do not think my honourable friend is altogether correct. I can only say that I hope the Council will not agree to lay this Bill aside. Bills of this character have been introduced into the Assembly from time to time ever since the abolition of the provinces. It is quite true that most of the obligations which were then incurred are now pretty well settled; and I hope we shall not have much more of this kind of legislation. But I trust the Council will follow the example that has always been followed in previous years, and allow this Bill to undergo a second reading. With reference to the matters contained in this Bill, some are of a private, some of a personal, some of a local, and some of a general character; and I hope the Council will, in the exercise of its rights, do what it has done before in regard to such matters. At the same time, I do not wish to find fault with the Council for entering its protest to-night against this class of legislation. I have said before that I am not in favour of it, and never was; but, considering the nature of the contents of the Bill, I do hope that the Council will, on this occasion, allow the Bill to go into Committee.

The Council divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the question."

AYES, 11.

Acland	Dignan	Reynolds
Barnicoat	Lahmann	Taiaroa
Bathgate	Martin	Wigley.
Buckley	Reeves	

NOES, 15.

Chamberlin	McLean	Shrimski
Fraser	Miller	Swanson
Grace	Pollen	Walker
Johnson, G. R.	Robinson	Whitaker
Kenny	Shephard	Wilson.

Majority against, 4.

Bill laid aside.

HARBOURS BILL.

The Hon. Mr. WILSON brought up the following report of the Managers of the Free Conference on the subject of the amendments in the Harbours Bill:—

"In clause 16 it was agreed to insert after 'ferryboat,' the words 'when actually towing a vessel.'

"In respect to clause 23, it was agreed that the rate should remain as fixed by the House of Representatives.

"In clause 24 it was agreed to add 'including goods consigned to and the property of the Colonial Government.'

"In clauses 26, 27, 28, and 29, it was agreed to add the following proviso: 'Provided always that clauses twenty-six, twenty-seven, twenty-eight, and twenty-nine shall not come into operation except upon a petition signed by a majority of the ratepayers in the Moeraki Riding of the Waitaki County, and of the ratepayers of the Borough of Hampden.'"

Report agreed to.

NEW PLYMOUTH RECREATION RESERVE BILL.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS moved the second reading of the New Plymouth Recreation Reserve Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES said this was a Bill which it had been decided was a local Bill. There had been a great division of opinion upon it. The Bill had been virtually dropped, and was now reintroduced by some mysterious arrangement. The suspension of the Standing Orders which had been granted by the Council, he contended, applied to Government Bills and Government Bills only. He would therefore like to ask the ruling of the Chair as to whether this motion could be put.

The Hon. the ACTING-SPEAKER.—There is no doubt that this Bill is a local Bill. It was referred to Committee B, and was reported on by that Committee on the 6th July last.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said the Bill was originally sent up to the Council, and was a local Bill, and its second reading was moved by the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker. In some way or other it had remained, he did not know where, for some considerable time; but it had been discovered, and he had to request that it should be passed into law now. The amendment in the Bill was a compromise arrived at between the parties concerned.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN thought the manner in which this Bill had been lost sight of was highly reprehensible, and some explanation ought to be given as to where it had been.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER thought it

was only reasonable that the Council should expect some explanation on this subject from the honourable member who had had charge of this Bill. He had been asked, originally, to assist in carrying the Bill through the Council by Major Atkinson. He took charge of the Bill, and there was a very strong opposition to it. It was read, however, a second time, and then referred to a Committee, of which the Hon. Mr. Reeves was Chairman. As the Bill originally stood neither party was anxious for it, and on considering the matter he thought he would be able to redraft the Bill and effect a compromise. He did so, and, with one exception, he believed the Committee thought it was a reasonable arrangement of the whole matter. Then a difficulty arose, and it was decided that the Bill should be considered by the Town Council of New Plymouth. After that he heard no more about it till last evening. He then found that the Government had taken the matter up, under the impression that it was a thing that ought to be settled and be got out of the way by the Bill being carried through. At the present time it was not his Bill: he was not in charge of it. The Government had taken it up, and desired that it should pass in order to get it out of the way.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES said a good deal of what had fallen from the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker was news to him, and news of an agreeable nature. As Chairman of the Committee he was aware of the circumstances that had been explained by the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker, but he was not aware, till informed just now, that a compromise had been arrived at between the parties who were opposed on a certain clause of this Bill; and it surprised him, because Major Atkinson had consulted him on this particular clause, and had tried to come to an agreement with the other parties, but had failed to do so; and since then he had never heard any more of the Bill or of this clause till he saw that an amendment had been added to the Bill now in the hands of the Hon. the Colonial Secretary. According to his recollection of the difference between the parties, this amendment would not be at all a satisfactory one; and, unless he had the positive assurance of his honourable friend—and he did not think the honourable gentleman spoke quite positively of the compromise—he should feel bound to oppose it. If the Hon. Sir Frederick Whitaker was certain of the fact that this clause which was about to be introduced was the effect of a compromise between those parties, then by all means let the Bill proceed without any further discussion.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN, speaking to a point of order, had not the least objection to the Bill being allowed to proceed, but asked the Hon. the Colonial Secretary to give notice for its second reading for the following Monday.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY had no objection to follow that course. The only difficulty was this: If the second reading were delayed, then he would run a risk of losing the Bill this session. There could be no objection to the clause which was to be inserted. He moved, That the second reading be made an order of the day for Monday next.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER said he had only stated what had been stated to him about the compromise. Whether a compromise was actually come to or not he did not know. After the matter was referred to New Plymouth he had not heard anything of this Bill till last evening, when he was told by Mr. Samuel that a compromise had been come to.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES thought it would be as well if the Hon. the Colonial Secretary would not press this Bill. The introduction of Mr. Samuel's name in the matter pretty well satisfied him that no compromise had really been entered into. The honourable gentleman who originally had charge of this Bill had stated that he was not clearly aware that a compromise had been come to. The fact of Mr. Samuel's name being introduced, who had all along carefully kept aloof in this matter, satisfied him, or, at any rate, made him suspect very strongly, that no compromise had been come to between the two parties in New Plymouth. Moreover, the very nature of the amendment that was proposed seemed to point in the same direction. There was a want of finality and definiteness about it. The two parties to this little difference held very strong opinions, and the whole matter turned on the appropriation of the surplus revenues. Now, the amendment in this Bill left the matter exactly where it stood before. He thought if the honourable gentleman would take his advice—and, as Chairman of the Committee, he had paid some little attention to this matter, which, though it might be considered a small matter by some, was not a little matter to the persons concerned, and had created a great deal of feeling—he would allow the Bill to drop. Doubtless, these gentlemen would then settle the matter between themselves during the recess, and they would bring in a Bill next session which would be satisfactory to all parties. To press the Bill through with an amendment of the kind proposed would satisfy no one, and practically, he believed, to do it would be contrary to the Standing Orders in reference to local Bills. It was hard to conceive how this Bill had suddenly become a Government measure, and he did not think it was to the credit of the Legislature that it should be transformed in that way. He hoped the Hon. the Colonial Secretary would adopt the course that had been suggested.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY thought it would be as well to postpone the matter till Monday. If it was then found, from any cause, that it was undesirable to proceed with the Bill, he should not press it unduly.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT thought, as there seemed to be a very strong feeling about the question, which appeared to be a burning one locally, it was undesirable the Bill should be proceeded with at so late a period of the session, when the Council could not go into the matter very carefully. He did not think the proposed settlement would be any settlement

at all. He thought it, on all accounts, desirable to postpone the matter.

Order for the second reading discharged and made an order of the day for Monday.

The Council adjourned at twenty-five minutes to ten o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Saturday, 14th August, 1886.

Field-officers—Martin's Bay and West Coast Mail Service—Special Settlements—Gaol and Lunatic-Asylum Attendants—Agent-General—Owhaoko and Kaimanawa-Oruamatua Reinvestigation of Title Bill—Local Bodies' Loans Bill—Supply—Parliament Buildings—Supply—Harbours Bill—Railways Authorization and Management Bill.

Mr. Speaker took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

Prayers.

FIELD-OFFICERS.

Major ATKINSON asked the Defence Minister, If he will embody in the new Volunteer Regulations a clause to the effect that all rifle battalions of six companies and over shall be entitled to their proper number of field-officers—namely, one lieutenant-colonel, two majors, and one adjutant—as recommended by Colonel Whitmore, Commander of the Forces, in his report laid before Parliament last year? He understood that the Minister had framed new regulations for the Volunteers and Militia throughout the colony, and he was rather anxious to call the honourable gentleman's attention to this question of officers. He saw that there had been some dispute and correspondence in Wellington on the subject, and he wished to be allowed to express an opinion—which he had no doubt the honourable gentleman fully shared—that it was of the greatest importance to have a proper staff of officers. He was very glad to see that the force was now being officered by gentlemen who were properly examined before appointment. The difficulty they had experienced in the old days was not in getting men, but in obtaining competent officers to handle them. He just wished to express his view for what it was worth—that it was very desirable the force should be rather over- than under-officered, so that value might be got for the expenditure. It was most important to have efficient officers, especially in the higher grades.

Mr. BALLANCE was much obliged to the honourable gentleman for calling attention to the matter. It was the intention of the department to issue new regulations immediately after the session, which would provide for battalion officers as suggested.

Colonel TRIMBLE asked when the new regulations were likely to be issued.

Mr. BALLANCE could not state the exact time; but as soon as possible after the session they would be submitted to all the Volunteer officers for their remarks and suggestions before being finally issued.

Hon. Mr. Barnicoat

MARTIN'S BAY AND WEST COAST MAIL SERVICE.

Mr. FERGUS asked the Government, Whether they will give effect to the recommendation of the Goldfields Committee re extending steam-communication to Martin's Bay and West Coast sounds? There was a service now from Hokitika to Jackson's Bay, receiving a considerable subsidy from the Government. He desired, and the Goldfields Committee had recommended, that the service should be extended down the coast and round, say, to Dunedin. He thought that that could easily be done by an arrangement with one of the shipping companies or the owners of small steamers. At the present time residents in Dusky Bay and in the sounds possessed no means of communication with the outer world, and a number of prospectors at Dusky Bay were as long as six months without seeing another living soul—quite isolated. The waters of the sounds teemed with fish, and there were numerous places where settlement could take place, of which a great many people would avail themselves if opportunities were given to settle there, and if the Government would offer facilities for regular steam-communication to be established. A settlement had been established a great many years ago at Martin's Bay, but through the criminal neglect of the Government it had been almost allowed to fade out of existence. A number of people, however, were still there, and there would be more there and elsewhere if the Government would grant the reasonable request of the Goldfields Committee, and which he now preferred.

Sir J. VOGEL said the question was one that the Government recognized the importance of, and which they would look into. Of course it was a question of cost, and he was not clear whether the honourable member's idea was to have a service between Dunedin and the West Coast, with an extension northwards, or whether he wished it to be in connection with Greymouth and Hokitika, and round to Dunedin. The service now was unsatisfactory, and the Government desired to make it of a more reliable character.

Mr. FERGUS said it was a matter of indifference to him which way the service went, so long as it connected the southern portion of the Island with the service that now went to Jackson's Bay.

Mr. MACANDREW remarked that there was a vote on the estimates for £1,800 for a steam-service between Hokitika and Jackson's Bay, and that ought to secure the service that the honourable member for Wakatipu wanted.

Sir J. VOGEL said the present service was unsatisfactory, owing to the large number of bar harbours which had to be served; but the Government would do all that they could to get a regular service, and to get the service which the honourable member for Wakatipu desired.

SPECIAL SETTLEMENTS.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked the Government, Whether they are prepared to assure the House that they will recommend for adoption next

n the purchase of land for special settle-
s in suitable localities, when such pur-
has been advised by the Waste Lands
ds of the colony? He had meant to move
tion on the subject on going into Com-
e of Supply, but, to save the time of the
e, he had given up that intention, and
asked this question instead. He believed
ajority of members would agree that it
advisable some action should be taken in
us parts of the colony near the centres of
lation, under the Land Act, for the pur-
of establishing special village settlements.
oped a favourable reply could be given.

r. BALLANCE was afraid he could not
the honourable gentleman the assurance
would like to have. It was a very large
tion, involving the resumption of private
, and it was surrounded by very great diffi-
ies. He proposed, however, to consider the
ter carefully during the recess, and to bring
n proposals on it next session.

r. O'CALLAGHAN said it appeared to him
t the legislation in the Land Act was fully
quate to meet this question, which was of
ch greater importance than the honourable
tleman seemed to suppose. The honour-
e gentleman thought the Land Act did not
power to deal with it as it ought to be dealt
h; while the fact was that full power was
en by that Act.

OL AND LUNATIC-ASYLUM ATTEND-
ANTS.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN asked the Government,
ether, during the recess, they will take into
nsideration the great disparity which exists
ween the salaries and allowances of gaol
rders and those of lunatic-asylum attend-
ts, as shown in a return laid before the
use this session, with the object of providing
at a more uniform system of payment may
adopted towards these two classes of em-
oyés, whose duties are equally onerous and in
any respects similar? He had frequently
ought this matter before the House; but the
turn laid on the table this session showed
at there still existed a remarkable disparity,
nounting, in fact, to something like £40 or £50
king the average from the highest to the
west, between the salaries paid to gaol attend-
nts and those paid to attendants in lunatic
sylums. It was very advisable that the matter
ould be put on a proper basis, and he hoped
e Government would, during the recess, en-
eavour to arrive at some more equitable
stem.

Mr. TOLE said this question was one which
fected not only his department, but also that
f the Colonial Secretary, and he would confer
ith his colleague during the recess, and see
hat could be done.

AGENT-GENERAL.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Government,
Whether it is their intention to renew the
ngagement with Sir F. D. Bell as Agent-
General? Many people were anxious to know
whether the Government were going to renew
their engagement with a gentleman whose services were very highly appreciated, and he should be glad if the Government was able to give the House any information on the subject.

Sir J. VOGEL had to say the Government recognized the excellent services rendered by the Agent-General, and proposed to ask him to extend the term of his engagement by two years.

OWHAOKO AND KAIMANAWA-ORUAMATUA REINVESTIGATION OF TITLE BILL.

Mr. BALLANCE.—In reference to the report of the Owhaoko and Kaimanawa Committee, I beg to move, That this Bill, which has been read a first time in the House, be now read a second time; and I propose to ask that it be committed after Order of the Day No. 1. It is intended that the Bill shall contain a proviso to clause 2 so as to give protection to the lessees of the reserves, as the report of the Committee does not affect the lessees, and it was proposed that they should not suffer in consequence of any alteration of the title to this land. I move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. CONOLLY.—I have no doubt the Bill will substantially carry out the report of the Committee; but there will be a necessity for amending the preamble. The preamble of the Bill conveys, to my mind, imputations against the Judges of the Native Land Court which the Committee certainly does not agree with. I shall therefore—if the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill does not move the amendment of the preamble—move an amendment so that nothing of the kind shall be conveyed.

Mr. BRYCE.—I think the Bill, with some slight amendments, will carry out the report of the Committee, and, after the full consideration it has received, I think perhaps there is no great objection to the Bill being passed, even at this late period of the session. There is one distinction in the report that probably has failed to attract the attention of the Native Minister. The point is this: that, whereas in the case of Owhaoko the recommendation is that there should be a rehearing ordered, in the case of the Kaimanawa Block the report simply sets out that a *primâ facie* case for rehearing has been made out. Now, a *primâ facie* case is not usually taken as sufficient to justify legislation; and, therefore, what is in my mind, and certainly was in the minds of some of the members of the Committee, is that, whilst in the first case there ought to be a rehearing secured by legislation, a distinction should be made in the second case, and that merely an extension of time should be granted to make application to the constituted authority for the granting of a rehearing. The reason is this: The Committee of the House, speaking generally, is certainly incompetent to go sufficiently into questions of Native title to lead it to any distinct conclusion as to title; and so, speaking generally, the Committee is not in a position to recommend rehearings. There is a constituted

authority appointed by law for the purpose of considering questions of rehearing, and I apprehend that the Committee of the House should, in all ordinary circumstances, merely extend the period for making application to the constituted authority. In one of these cases the Committee distinctly recommend the granting of a rehearing; but there is this very exceptional feature in connection with it: that all the authorities were agreed that in the Owhaoko case a rehearing should be granted: the Minister in whose power the decision at one time was, the Chief Judge, and the hearing Judge agreed that a rehearing should be granted; so that the Committee infringed no general rule in recommending that a rehearing be granted, but simply affirmed the opinion of the constituted authority upon the question. In the other case, however, the Committee only state that a *primâ facie* case has been made out; and I should recommend that a distinction be made in dealing with these cases, and that in the Kaimanawa case an extension of time be granted to make application to the Chief Judge for a rehearing; and the Chief Judge might take further evidence beyond the *primâ facie* evidence which is set out in the report as having been taken by the Committee. I recommend that to the attention of the honourable member as a matter of some importance of general principle—not only in reference to this particular case, but in reference to the general principle that a Committee of this House is scarcely competent to go into questions of Native title, and, moreover, from the fact that the Committee has only professed to come to a conclusion upon *primâ facie* evidence, and *primâ facie* evidence should not be held to justify distinct legislation by this House.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I see the distinction the honourable gentleman has made; but I am not sure that he has altogether established the principle, because this is an extraordinary case, and we are really proceeding by legislation to alter the decisions of the Courts.

Mr. BRYCE.—In the Owhaoko case everybody agreed that there should be a rehearing; but, for some reason it is not necessary to go into now, the rehearing did not take place.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I see the distinction, but I do not think it warrants any alteration in the Bill, because the conclusion of the Committee that there is a *primâ facie* case would really be a direction to the Court to rehear it. I think it would virtually amount to that, and I do not think the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court would refuse to rehear this case after that expression of opinion on the part of the Committee. We have devoted so much time to taking evidence before the Committee for the purpose of elucidating these cases that I think it is better to provide for rehearing in all the cases. I quite agree with the principle the honourable gentleman laid down, except in extraordinary cases, that where a Committee has come to the conclusion that there is a *primâ facie* case to warrant a rehearing, the time might be extended to enable the Court to hear further applications with regard to rehearing. That is, no doubt, a very important principle. With regard to the remarks of the honourable member for Picton about the preamble, I shall be very glad indeed to receive from him any amendment which he thinks will carry out the report of the Committee, and remove any stigma which might be implied in the preamble. If the honourable member will hand up his amendments, I will consider them.

Bill read a second time.

LOCAL BODIES' LOANS BILL.

Sir R. STOUT.—Before the Orders of the Day are called on, I should like to say that, as I reported last evening, the Managers have not been able to agree on the Local Bodies' Loans Bill; and as, if this Bill is not carried even in its present shape, all Road Boards will be prohibited from getting any advantage from the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill, but will be forced either to amalgamate with counties or to go without any of the advantages of the provisions of that Bill, I think it is unfair to place them in that position, and therefore, though I do not agree with the amendments made by the Council, I think it best to accept them this year, so as not to prevent those Boards from getting some aid in carrying on colonising operations. I move, That the amendments be agreed to.

Mr. MACARTHUR.—This appears to me to be a very much more serious affair than members of the House generally are aware of. Here is a Bill containing an important part of the financial proposals of the Government, which has been amended in a vital part by the Upper House. Now, all precedents as to this matter at Home show that the House of Commons has been very jealous of any amendment by the Lords of any Bill relating to local taxation. They will not allow the Lords to interfere in any way with a Bill passed by the Lower House imposing local taxation, either as to the levying, collecting, or expending it. It is true there are no precedents exactly bearing on this particular point, that a majority should be required to carry a proposal for a special rate to pay interest and sinking fund upon a loan; but that arises from the different circumstances that exist here from those in England. At Home the rate is imposed by the House of Commons itself by a Bill, and not by the voting of the ratepayers as in New Zealand. But I maintain that there is no essential difference. If we, as the representative House, choose to delegate our power to tax to a certain section of the community, and to leave it to their option whether they should be taxed or not, I maintain it is a breach of the privileges of this House for the other Chamber to amend that Bill in any way. I fully admit what the Premier said just now—that it will be very inconvenient for Road Boards, River Boards, and Town Boards to be excluded from the operation of the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill by the rejection of the Bill altogether. I fully admit that inconvenience, and shall be glad to see it obviated; but there

is a higher ground to take over and above that inconvenience, and, in agreeing to the amendment, I maintain that we are creating a precedent which the other Chamber can quote for years against the privileges of this House. Although it would be an extreme measure, I should like to see this, as an important part of the financial proposals of the Government, tacked on to the Appropriation Bill. I should like to hear your ruling, Sir, as to the question of privilege, and as to whether I am correct in what I have stated.

Mr. SPEAKER.—If any honourable member thought this was a matter of the infringement of the privileges of the House, it should have been raised as such before the matter was made the subject of a Conference. But, having adopted that course, it is now too late to raise the question of privilege. Even if it had been raised in time, I should have had very great doubt as to whether I could have held that our privileges were infringed. I have been watching those Bills very carefully, especially with regard to rating-powers.

Mr. MACARTHUR.—After your ruling, Sir, I cannot go any further; but I hope the Government will add to their motion some proviso that will show that we do not in this House waive any of our privileges.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I wish to express my regret that we have either to abandon this Bill or to accept the amendment. Here is a Bill of a most valuable nature, the operation of which will be, at any rate, very much crippled, if not rendered almost useless, by this amendment—an amendment which, I take leave to think, is not sanctioned upon any principle of logic that can be found. The amendment provides that persons who are dead and persons who are absent shall be taken as voting against a loan. Such a principle is pernicious and mischievous in the last degree. It is quite possible that absentees may wish that the loan should be granted; but there is no opportunity given to them to vote in its favour. On the other hand, if they are unfavourable to the loan I think they should take the trouble to be represented and vote, if such is practicable. Those industrious persons who have charge of the progress of the various districts should not find such an impediment placed in their way; for they are confronted with the opposition of those who sleep and enjoy themselves, whilst others are working for the benefit of the local property. The principle is exceedingly mischievous. It not only encourages absenteeism, but it encourages persons to allow their properties to lie idle, so that others may work and toil for their benefit, they having to do no work, but receiving the advantage and the good which comes to them. We offered various compromises; but none were accepted, and we are therefore obliged to accept this. The amendment is exceedingly mischievous, because, in addition to the evils I have described, those who may be opposed to the proposed loan, and who wish to avoid the odium of giving effect to their opinions, are encouraged not to take part in local affairs, because their votes, without being given, are recorded against the proposal. It is remarkable also that this has been modified in the case of the Counties Bill, while all attempts at compromise which have been offered in this case have been obstinately refused. I only accept the amendment as the choice of two evils. I hope the time is not far distant when we shall find a more liberal view taken elsewhere of the functions and duties of local government.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I quite agree with all that has been said. We decided in this House which was the proper way to obtain the opinion of the ratepayers respecting loans; and the alteration made in another place will in many cases prevent local bodies from obtaining a loan for necessary works. But it seems to me that the other House has a right to exercise its judgment, provided that it does not invade our privileges; and, however much we deprecate an opinion different from ours, yet, since they have a right to express it and put it upon record in the Bill, we cannot say that that House has gone outside the scope of its duties, and we have no alternative but to drop the Bill or to agree to their views. If it had been a question of privilege, I can say for myself, and, I think, for the other Managers, that we would not have recommended the giving-up of a single iota. I think the time is approaching when we shall have to take a very firm stand, and, if we cannot carry out our measures by appealing to the good sense of the other place—if they will insist upon making such alterations as effectually defeat the objects of our money Bills—we shall have to consider whether we should not send those Bills along with the Appropriation Bill; and, whatever the consequences may be, we shall feel that we have done our duty.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I wish to say that I did not intend to question, and I do not think I did question, the right of the other branch of the Legislature to make the alteration. I spoke in sorrow, not in anger.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I do not know why the honourable gentleman should speak in sorrow, because it is not a question of privilege or no privilege. I cannot regard it as a question of privilege at all. There is no attempt to impose burdens on the people by the act of the other House, and they have not interfered with our privileges in the slightest degree; and, instead of imposing burdens, it is rather in the opposite direction. The difference between the Treasurer and myself is this: He seems to think that to give facilities for borrowing in every direction is a thing that, by all means, we should do; I believe that, as the guardians of the interests of the colony, it is our business to interpose in every possible way every legitimate obstacle we can to this borrowing. People are always fond of borrowing; the difficulty is when they have to repay. As long as we can borrow with facility, we can get plenty of votes throughout the country to enable the local authorities to borrow. I believe it is a good thing that the number of voters has been increased from one-third to one-half. With regard to the dead

people that are talked of, there are very few on our local rolls. We know that there are many dead men on the rolls for the return of members to this Parliament, and many persons who have never had any qualification at all; but that is a feature peculiar to those rolls; but, as regards the rate-roll, I speak from a knowledge of my own district when I say that the number is very small indeed, and the number of absentees in proportion to the people resident is very small; and if a loan cannot be got with a half of those resident and living upon the spot, it is a very dangerous thing indeed to go into the loan, and it would be better postponed. If I thought our privileges were infringed I should be as eager to assert them as any honourable member.

Mr. SMITH.—I was much pleased to hear the remarks of the Treasurer in reference to the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill. There is no doubt that the effect of the amendment will be that in a large portion of the colony it will not be possible to take advantage of the proposals in this Bill. I myself am aware of districts where there are so many absentees that it will be quite impossible to borrow under this Bill at all. It would be better to drop the Bill altogether. It will be simply vexatious to the people in those districts to find that, after going to a great deal of trouble and expense, they are unable to get sufficient votes. The honourable member for Taranaki talks about its being quite easy to get one-half of the ratepayers to vote; but in the district of Woodville so many sections have been sold to people in Wellington and different parts of the colony, and even in the Old Country, that it will be impossible to get one-half. The honourable member for Taranaki said this amendment was good because it would prevent borrowing. But what is the use of passing a Bill enabling local bodies to borrow if, on the other hand, we allow an amendment to be made which will prevent them from carrying out the provisions of the Bill? I apprehend that, if the people cannot get money to make roads and bridges, the district will come to a standstill. I should like to see the Government drop the Bill and bring in another next year, when we can try again, and see if we cannot carry a measure which the people can take advantage of. It will be very vexatious to the people if they find that they cannot take advantage of this Bill because they cannot get enough ratepayers to record their votes. A district may have a thousand ratepayers, and four hundred or five hundred of those may be absent, and yet their votes are to be recorded against the proposal brought forward by those who are living on the land; and yet many of those who are absent might be in favour of it. The provision is most mischievous, and the people will find that, instead of the liberal measure which they expected to get, they have a measure which they cannot work.

Mr. LAKE.—The honourable member for Taranaki has entirely mistaken the point of the question. He was arguing on the assumption that this Bill increased the number of votes necessary to authorize a loan from a third to one-half; but that is not the case at all. There has always been a majority of one-half under this Bill; and the difficulty is that if it is required to get half the ratepayers, including those not resident in the district, it will be impossible to get a majority sufficient to authorize the loan.

Colonel TRIMBLE.—I say that we shall be able to get half of those on the roll who are resident in the district.

Mr. LAKE.—Then I misunderstood what the honourable gentleman said. My experience is that on one or two occasions, when there has been a strong popular feeling, and we have tried to secure three-fifths of those resident, it has nevertheless been impossible to do so. In the case of roads and bridges there is this difficulty: that there may be a road running through one end of the district which is practically a main road, and the people there suffer inconvenience through want of a bridge on it; but the people at the other end of the district, though they may be quite willing that the bridge should be made, do not feel sufficient interest in it to turn up to record their votes. I am sorry that the Managers who had charge of the Counties Bill thought it right to recommend that we should accept the amendments in that Bill. No doubt they did so because there were some valuable alterations in the Bill which it would be a pity to lose; but I think we should have thrown the Bill out, and fallen back on the Act of 1883. With regard to this Bill, I would rather see it thrown out than accept it in its present form.

Major ATKINSON.—I feel rather glad that the Premier has taken the course he has done in this matter, although I regret very much that we are bound to take it. I look at it, however, that we shall be in no worse position in accepting this Bill in making any future amendments than we should be if we rejected it. There is no doubt that there are districts which can take advantage of this Bill as it stands; and, although I am satisfied that there are many districts requiring loans, and which ought to have loans, to make improvements, which will not be able to do so under this Bill, still we should not stand in the way of those districts which can take advantage of it. That is why I support the action of the Premier. As a broad question of policy the whole matter is an entire mistake. I have long held, and hold still, that, if our country is capable of local government, we ought not to throw obstacles in the way of the people doing what they think right. We should leave them free, and they should take the responsibility of local government. If we hedge these matters round as we are doing now, the result is inevitable that there will be a combination of districts to compel this House to recur to the old bad system of providing for roads and bridges direct. There is no help for it. We in the country districts know that roads and bridges must be made; and, if the people have not the proper means of doing it themselves, they will have to

come to this House. Therefore I think the amendment made by the other House is against the prudent course which they think they are adopting. The practical fact is, that we must either reject this Bill or accept the amendments; and I think the course which the Premier recommends is the best under all the circumstances.

Mr. HAMLIN.—I am glad this is not a matter of privilege between the two Chambers, inasmuch as it affords one an opportunity of expressing his mind more freely than he otherwise could. It seems to me that the better course to adopt is to at once throw out the Bill. I only regret that in another place it was not done, and also with regard to another Bill, in order to bring us face to face with our real difficulty. It appears to me that the provisions of this Bill are only intended to foster those districts which are already being fostered under the loan proposals. The country, as I have before now stated, is simply ground down with taxation. So far as the Bill now under consideration is concerned, if the question came to a vote I should certainly record my vote in favour of its being thrown out altogether. In fact, my one desire is to see borrowing cease, and let each district consider its own condition, and provide for its own roads and railways. We have failed to do that yet; but I think this House will, sooner or later, have to consider that the localities which have been specially benefited by the expenditure of loans will have to be compelled to maintain the railways and pay interest on their construction, because there are parts of the country which have not benefited by one brass farthing out of the millions which have been borrowed, but which have been compelled to pay more than their fair share of taxation to make railways for the benefit of individuals who, it has been proved in this House, will not contribute one penny, not one iota, towards lubricating the wheels. That has been undoubtedly proved; yet we are going to perpetuate this sort of thing. We are going to tell certain parts of the colony, "If you desire to have roads and bridges, or anything else, you will have to tax yourselves for them." Well, we are prepared to do that if this House will only relieve us of the heavy taxation we have to bear for these bogus roads and bogus railways in certain other districts.

Mr. GUINNESS.—Where?

Mr. HAMLIN.—Does the honourable member ask, "Where?" I wonder he does not blush as he puts the question. Has he one spark of manliness in his breast? If he had he would never have asked such a question. I should like to say more to the honourable member, but the rules of the House prevent me.

Mr. GUINNESS.—I thought the honourable member was referring to the roads north of Auckland.

Mr. HAMLIN.—You see how a man with a conscience seared with a hot iron turns it off to some other unfortunate individual. He has no conscience whatever, and cares not how the consolidated revenue, and how the loans which the colony has already borrowed, are lavished on certain districts, so long as he is "within cooee" of them. He cares not how oppressive the taxation is on those who have borne the heat and burden of the day, who never in times of peace or war have held back from assisting the colony against the enemy, and who have spent their lives in aiding the progress of the colony. These are the individuals who are to be taxed for the aggrandizement of certain districts. Until we change the whole system of taxation, and the whole basis on which it is founded, it is better that the colony should put its foot down and say no more loans shall be raised. Let us look taxation fairly in the face. Let those districts which have had the spending of the millions of money we have borrowed pay for it, and I shall not complain; but I do protest, and that most solemnly, on behalf of those I represent, against their being called upon year by year to pay ten times more towards the taxation of the country than those districts which have so largely benefited.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member is travelling altogether too far beyond the question before the House.

Mr. HAMLIN.—Sir, the matter is a matter of taxation, and I was endeavouring to explain that the people I represent were being taxed to benefit certain individuals, while the House is only giving us the benefit of taxing ourselves for our local wants. I say we are prepared to pay our local taxation, to make our own roads, to build our own steamers, to construct our own railways, and, if it comes to that, to form a small colony of our own.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member must confine himself to the question of whether this amendment of the Council shall be agreed to or not.

Mr. HAMLIN.—Then, Sir, I certainly do not want it agreed to. I wish to see the Bill killed.

Motion agreed to.

SUPPLY.

Resolutions from the Committee of Supply having been reported,

Sir J. VOGEL moved, That the vote for the Treasury Department be recommitted.

Mr. LARNACH.—I ask that the estimates for the Marine Department be also recommitted.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—Will the Treasurer explain why he wants this recommittal?

Sir J. VOGEL.—The reason is this: In passing the estimates the Treasury Department was unfortunately the first item taken; and a very thin Committee, in a fit of economy, knocked off £100 from the first item and £50 from the second. Now, I want the Committee to reconsider these items, because, bringing down as I did the Treasury estimates, showing a considerable reduction on last and previous years, and making the strong recommendation I did with regard to the officers in question, I wish the action then taken to be reconsidered, and in Committee I shall be prepared to go fully into the question if necessary.

Mr. HATCH.—When discussing one item in the Treasury estimates I was given to understand that the Treasurer said the extra cost of the Exhibition here last year had been caused by the Exhibition having been open six nights a week instead of three. I think that was ungenerous on the part of the Treasurer, inasmuch as the Exhibition must have been a complete failure after the first month had not the Committee which took it in hand at his request worked with considerable energy to provide entertainment for visitors to enable it to be kept open. This is a young colony, and it would be impossible to get up an Exhibition that would "draw" to pay by the exhibits alone for more than two or three weeks, and the place would have been totally deserted after the first month unless entertainments at night had been furnished. I regret that the matter was not discussed before, owing to the thinness of the House at the time. The real cause of the loss on the Exhibition was that sufficient care had not been taken with regard to many of the items of expenditure and free entries, which might have been reduced if due consideration had been given to the way in which the Exhibition ought to have been conducted. Even in the matter of gas-lighting there were blunders. I must give the Wellington Gas Company this credit: that, although the Exhibition was an exceedingly large consumer of gas, not one farthing——

Sir J. VOGEL.—As a point of order, I must submit that the honourable gentleman is out of order, as the vote in which Exhibition expenses were included is not before the House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman is clearly out of order.

Major ATKINSON.—I wish to say that it was impossible for me to be in the House when this vote was under consideration; but, had I been present, I should have been glad to support this item; and I should be glad to support an increase of salary to these gentlemen. I know the value of these officers to the public. Not only are they two of our best officers, but no men have done more to promote economy in this department than these gentlemen. The expenses of the department have always been kept down to the very lowest point, and I am sure it would not be economy, nor would it be justice, if we did not recognize the services of these two officers.

Mr. BRYCE.—Now is, perhaps, the proper time to point a moral. At one time during this session an attempt was made to reduce the estimates by £75,000, the motion having been made by the honourable member for Akaroa. That motion was defeated by the aid of a number of members who professed to suppose that large reductions could be made in Committee upon the estimates. I took occasion at the time to point out that experience had taught us how utterly useless it was to attempt to reduce the estimates as they were passing through Committee. I venture to think that this session has added a new experience to the experience we had gained upon this subject; and members on this side of the House admitted the difficulty, and abstained from moving reductions, and did not, in fact, even care to vote for them. But the honourable member for the Buller, in the enthusiasm of youth, assumed the *rôle* of leader of the Opposition, and announced himself at the time as determined to make some reductions as the estimates passed through Committee. He assumed to himself that duty, and really announced that he was going to perform it. How utterly he failed must now be apparent. It was not his fault. Circumstances were against him. The thing is perfectly hopeless. No one except the Government themselves can reduce the estimates without doing injustice.

Mr. O'CONOR.—The honourable gentleman has done me the honour to allude to me, and I should like to say that I do not feel any disappointment in the matter. Seeing that the estimates are taken up at such hours in the morning as they are taken at, no person who values his health can stop here to debate them, and even when they are brought on some of the most important items are taken in a very hurried manner. However, I intend not to give up one particular branch in which I think that there should be reformation. It is very well known that I asked for a Committee of the House to consider one particular branch of the estimates. The Committee brought up a valuable report, which I hope we shall yet give effect to. Certainly we should be competent to deal with expenditure that comes within our own knowledge. I agree that it is not easy to decide upon reductions, but I think that at any rate we might very well say that there shall be no rises. That is where I blame honourable members. Some gentlemen profess to be desirous of making reductions, but when it comes to the vote they cannot be relied upon. That is the reason why it is difficult to effect economy.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I wish to say, in reply, that it is only under a strong sense of duty that I am asking the House to reconsider this vote; for it increases the difficulty of the Minister administering a department when he is continually under the impression that he is asking larger services from officers than he has a right to ask. The particular officers whose claims are now under consideration have enormous and important responsibility, and, as compared with other officers, are not well paid. It would be only doing justice to increase these salaries. The Treasury is constantly having increasing duties thrown upon it, and yet since I have taken charge the expenditure has been reduced.

Motion for the recommittal of the item agreed to.

Mr. LARNACH.—I move, That the vote, "Marine and harbours, miscellaneous services, £11,318," be recommitted, in order that the items struck out, "'Hinemoa,' £6,500," and "New boiler for steamship 'Hinemoa,' £3,500," struck out previously, may be reinserted. I may say that the new boiler for this steamer was ordered some time ago, and I think honourable members will admit that the colony cannot

do without a steamer of such a class as the "Hinemoa."

Mr. KERR.—I should like to say a few words on this subject. The reason why this vote was struck out is well known to honourable members. When the vote came on a number of honourable members were at the Governor's to dinner; and it should be a lesson to Ministers not to be at these dinners on nights when the estimates come on. I suppose that those members who did not go to the dinner were angry, and that therefore they voted against these items. Next time the Governor gives a dinner I hope Ministers will not go to it.

Mr. FULTON.—Perhaps it would be to the interest of the colony if we had such dinners more frequently, if it would result in the estimates being reduced.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I beg to move the recommittal of Class I., Legislative, £17,390. I do so because honourable members have told me that this class was passed in such a hurried way that no person in the House was able even to question it. If honourable members had an opportunity of expressing their opinions on this expenditure it would be a reflection upon them for their disgraceful carelessness.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I cannot permit the honourable member to cast reflections upon honourable members of the House who were then in their place, and who certainly ought not to be censured by one who avows he was absent.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I do not wish to cast reflections upon honourable members; but I presume that in asking for a recommittal of this class I may, at any rate, point out the reasons why I ask for it. My reasons are these: It is well known to honourable members that this item was put and passed before any person could rise in his seat to speak upon it.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I can appeal to honourable members who informed me, and who were in the House and saw what took place at the time. I believe that that was the case. I say that it is not creditable to this House that such a large sum should be passed without a single word being said upon it in the way of criticism.

Mr. CONOLLY.—I do not think that the honourable member's remarks ought to go entirely without contradiction. He withdrew the observation about what was done being a disgrace to the House; but his other remarks seemed to imply that the Chairman of Committees and members of the House present were very negligent in respect to the manner in which this vote was passed. Now, I happened to be in the House at the time, but the honourable member for the Buller was not. He speaks upon hearsay evidence, I speak from what I saw at the time, and I can only say this: that there were a considerable number of members in the House at the time—it was not a full House, but I should say there were forty or fifty members present—and that the Chairman of Committees put the vote deliberately and audibly, as he always does, and there was ample time for any member to rise and object. It was expected that some honourable members would oppose the vote; but probably those persons who were expected to object, instead of being in their places in the House, were out in the lobby or somewhere else. The Chairman did his duty, by putting the vote in a very distinct manner, and no objection was raised.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I am by no means unmindful of the great trouble which the Committee, over which, I think, the honourable member for the Buller presided, must have taken in the investigation which they made, and the result which they have given to us of that investigation. As I explained on the Legislative vote, I thought it was not intended to apply the report, or rather the substance of the report, to the votes for this year, since no opportunity has been afforded to the House of considering the report. I should not like to say personally how far, or how much, or how little I agree with the report, because I consider it is too late to apply the recommendations that are made to the votes for this session. There was one vote last night which certainly touched at the very root of the report, and it was passed without a division. But, apart from that, I wish to say this—I am expressing my own view on the subject; and it is the view which I have always taken since I have been in the Government, not only during my present tenure of office, but formerly: that it is not desirable that the Government should attempt to lead the House in questions relating to the expenditure on officers of the Legislature. I think, Sir, that it would not be fair to the great bulk of honourable members, nor would it be desirable, that the Legislative officers should be in any sense supposed to be under the control of the Government, or that the officers of the Legislature should consider that they have anything to hope for or to dread from the Government of the day. It appears to me that this is a matter which rests with the House, and especially with the two Speakers of the Legislature, and that it is not one with which the Government is called upon to interfere more than by the right which is theirs as individual members to register their votes when any question arises. We are in the habit of putting on the Legislative estimates the sums sent in by the two Speakers, and I think that that is a constitutional practice. Certainly I think it would not be desirable to leave to the Government the task of interfering with the votes of the Legislative Department more than the right which they possess as individual members of the two Houses. That, Sir, is my view of the case. Now, as to recommitting the votes, I would ask the honourable member not to press his motion, and for this reason: that, whilst I look upon the report of the Committee as exceedingly suggestive, yet it appears to me that before any action is taken upon it it should be submitted to a thorough and exhaustive consideration and discussion in this House. It is not possible to give that consideration to it

now, and, as it would not be right to act upon the report till honourable members have had an opportunity of considering it, I trust the honourable member will not press his amendment.

Mr. SAMUEL.—I also hope the honourable member for the Buller will not press his amendment. There will be yet another session before the general election, and I am sure he has said enough to prove to his constituents how very anxious he is that we should effect economical reform. Having done that, I hope he will not take up more time, but that we shall proceed with the business. Considering the long experience of the honourable gentleman in the public service, I am sure that he knows how generally in that service the workman is worthy of his hire. I hope that he will not take up further time by pressing his amendment.

Mr. HAMLIN.—I am given to understand that in my absence the honourable member for the Buller has made some kind of reflection upon my conduct as Chairman of Committees in passing the Legislative vote through this House. Now, Sir, if any reflection has been made upon myself——

Mr. SPEAKER.—There has been no allusion to your conduct as Chairman of Committees, as far as I could gather. Your name has not been mentioned.

Mr. HAMLIN.—My name may not have been mentioned, but I am given to understand that it was stated that undue haste was made in passing the vote.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I beg your pardon. The reflection was upon the Committee passing the department with undue haste, as was last alleged. I do not think the honourable member for the Buller said anything about undue haste on the part of the Chairman of Committees.

Mr. HAMLIN.—In that case I have nothing to say. I am very glad to stand corrected by you, Sir, but I certainly was informed that it had been stated that I was in undue haste in passing the Legislative vote. Of course, if such a reflection had been made upon me, it would have been unwarranted. When the vote was called on I stated the object for which the vote was to be taken, and after that I rose and stated the question to the Committee, and then paused, believing that some opposition would be offered to the vote. I certainly was not in any hurry to pass the vote through. Of course I am perfectly satisfied with the explanation you have given, and am sorry I rose. I was out of the House at the time, but was informed that the honourable member for the Buller had made that statement, which was without foundation. I would now recall anything I may have said which might cast any reflection upon the honourable member for the Buller.

Mr. HATCH.—I think the matter may be explained in this way: We had two sets of estimates, and, as the pages were different, I do not think honourable members had the right page, or knew what the vote was. I know it took me a considerable time to find the right page. I was ready to assist the honourable member for the Buller, and others were; but honourable members had no opportunity of doing so, in consequence of their not knowing what the vote was.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—Whenever I have wanted to stop a vote I have stood up and given honourable members plenty of time to find the right pages; and any honourable member could have done that.

Mr. O'Conor's motion negatived.

Mr. HATCH.—I wish to propose, That the item in the Colonial Treasurer's estimates, Class III., "Miscellaneous services, £21,[illegible]" be recommitted, with a view to giving the Colonial Treasurer an opportunity of explaining his remarks in connection with the vote of £500 for the Industrial Exhibition.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I understand the honourable member takes exception to the remark I made that keeping open the Exhibition occasioned extra expenditure. Is that the point?

Mr. HATCH.—I understand that the Colonial Treasurer, in getting this vote passed, stated that the extra expenditure was in consequence of keeping open the Exhibition for six nights instead of three; and I considered that was to some extent a reflection upon the Committee that had taken charge of the Exhibition at his special request, and which Committee worked very hard, and did their best. The keeping-open of the Exhibition for six nights instead of three gave the Wellington people an opportunity of enjoying themselves, which they have not got this year.

Mr. SUTTER.—I hope the honourable gentleman will withdraw the amendment; it is only wasting the time of the House to press it.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I do not think the remarks I made were meant in the sense in which the honourable member appears to have taken them. Though I am speaking only from recollection, I think what I stated was the self-evident fact,—which the honourable member himself cannot deny,—that keeping open an extra number of nights occasioned extra expenditure.

Mr. HATCH.—And brought in more money.

Sir J. VOGEL.—If I recollect rightly, I was explaining how it was that the expenditure was so much larger. I do not think I took up the point whether the receipts would have been larger without the extra nights; but I was pointing out the various things which had occasioned a larger expenditure. I think I was speaking from a report that I had, and that it was mentioned that the cost of gas, the cost of extra building, and various other things consequent upon the success of the Exhibition, had occasioned a larger gross cost. I do not think I was speaking of the net return, and I think I said that the very success of the Exhibition, being so much greater than had been anticipated, had occasioned a larger gross expenditure. That is my recollection of what I said, or meant to say. I have no doubt that the gentlemen, amongst whom was the honourable member, who did me the great kindness of taking charge of and managing the Exhibition during the time it was opened, exercised much judgment and discretion. I would not

for a moment cast any reproach upon those gentlemen who kindly undertook to act in that way: in fact, I think I wrote a letter in which I fully expressed to them my sense of gratitude for their services. I hope this explanation will satisfy the honourable member.

Motion to recommit certain resolutions agreed to, and remainder of resolutions agreed to.

PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS.

On the motion for going into Committee of Supply,

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND said he had a grievance which he wished to air on this occasion; but, as he found the House was inclined to negative his proposal, he would put his motion in an inverse form to what he first intended. He did not wish the House to carry it, but by negativing the motion his purpose would be answered. He begged to move, That, in the opinion of this House, Parliament Buildings ought to be used for other than parliamentary purposes during the session.

Mr. O'CONOR thought steps should be taken to ventilate the chamber properly, and to do something to improve the acoustic properties of the building, so that members in the House could hear what Ministers said.

Motion negatived.

SUPPLY.

Class III.—Colonial Treasurer.

Secretary to the Treasury, Receiver and Paymaster-General (also Secretary to Commissioners of Public Debts Sinking Funds, £50), £700; addition, £100. Assistant Secretary to the Treasury and Accountant, £500; addition, £50.

Mr. SAMUEL knew that these officers were thoroughly efficient, but at the same time he intended to enter his protest against these increases. Was it only in the case of underpaid men and labourers that they were to exercise economy? He was not one of those prone to hero-worship, and he did not believe at all in what was said about the Under-Secretaries being possessed of such extraordinary ability and responsibility. In dealing with these matters members were placed in a somewhat delicate position—himself especially, as he knew intimately most of the Under-Secretaries. He respected them; but that was no reason why he should hesitate to vote against any increase of salary if he did not think it was justified. He would be the first to vote for even a larger increase if the state of the finances justified it.

Mr. HATCH indorsed the remarks of the honourable member for New Plymouth. The decision of the Committee on the previous occasion was given with a view of showing the Government that the House had come to the decision that increases of this description were not necessary. Many officers who had salaries under £200 ought to have increases. The Treasurer said it would be a gross injustice if the Secretary to the Treasury did not get this increase; but he already received £50 a year in addition to his regular salary of £700; and last year, he (Mr. Hatch) believed, that officer received a bonus of £200. The Treasurer, if he remained another year or so in office, would yet be obliged to reduce the whole of those estimates, which were altogether out of proportion to the means of the colony.

Mr. TAYLOR said that on the previous occasion when these increases were proposed he strongly protested against them. He could quite understand that the Treasurer might think that the services of those gentlemen were underpaid; but in comparison with the salaries paid to others he thought they received quite enough. After the House had decided not to grant these increases, he could not understand how it was that the question was brought up again.

Mr. FISHER objected to the revival of questions which had already been decided by the House. The House knew thoroughly well what it was doing when it voted on this question on a previous occasion; and, if it was pretended that it was done in a thin House, he would ask honourable members to look round the House now, and say whether it was not a very thin one. He objected to the principle that one thin House should have the right to review and reverse the decision of another thin House. It was all very well to have so much regard for the highly-paid officers of the Civil Service, but he thought some more consideration should be shown to the low-paid officers who had to do the bulk of the work.

Mr. SUTTER said that if the proposed addition to this officer's salary would place him above the other Under-Secretaries he would vote against it; but he understood that it was simply to place him on an equal footing with the others, and he would therefore vote for the amount.

Sir J. VOGEL said this was not the time to discuss the question between high-paid officers and low-paid officers. He had only to say that this officer worked day and night, and, indeed, his work often extended over seven days in the week. There was an enormous amount of responsibility attaching to the office, and, as compared with the salaries paid to other officers and to persons in private employment, the salary of this officer was very small. The Committee might rely upon it that there would be no unnecessary expense in the department.

Mr. SAMUEL said this officer was paid more than some of the other Under-Secretaries, who had as important duties to perform.

Mr. GUINNESS said it would be very inconsistent to refuse this vote. In his capacity as chairman of several local bodies he had had a great deal to do with the Treasury, and he could bear testimony to the fact that the officers of that department did their duty diligently, well, and expeditiously; and certainly the officers whose salaries it was now proposed to increase deserved the increase.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the sum of £150 be granted."

AYES, 29.

Atkinson	Larnach	Russell
Ballance	Levestam	Steward, W. J.
Brown	Menteath	Tole
Conolly	Mitchelson	Vogel
Dargaville	Montgomery	Walker
Dodson	Newman	Whyte.
Fraser	Parata	
Grace	Pearson	*Tellers.*
Grey	Richardson, E.	Guinness
Hobbs	Rolleston	Sutter.
Lake		

NOES, 16.

Barron	Hislop	Samuel
Bevan	Joyce	Taylor.
B.-Bradshaw	Macarthur	
Bruce	O'Callaghan	*Tellers.*
Cadman	O'Conor	Cowan
Gore	Pyke	Hatch.

PAIR.

For.	*Against.*
Buchanan.	McKenzie,

Majority for, 13.

Vote agreed to.

CLASS VI.—COMMISSIONER OF TRADE AND CUSTOMS.

On the question, That £6,500 be granted for the maintenance of the "Hinemoa," and £3,500 for new boilers,

Mr. PYKE said he did not think it right, fair, or proper for the Government to come down to a thin House to endeavour to reverse decisions that had previously been properly come to after full consideration. Of course they were subject to these tricks in politics; but it was not right. The House had decided against these items, and now advantage was taken of the thinness of the House to try to get what the House had previously decided reversed by the votes of a few who had been kept to vote for these particular items; others having gone away, not knowing that the subject would be brought up again.

Mr. BRUCE said the decision had previously been come to in an exceptionally thin House.

Mr. LEVESTAM said, as the House was much thinner on the previous occasion than now, the Government were quite justified in the circumstances. His own opinion was that the colony did not require the boat; but if this vote were not passed what was to be done with her? She could not be sold, and must be maintained.

Mr. SAMUEL said the Committee had just decided, by a majority of nearly two to one, to reinstate a vote, and no doubt it would be exactly the same in this case. Honourable members had no idea of the value of the services rendered by the "Hinemoa," and it was better to keep her efficient than to allow her to become useless. It was absolutely necessary the Government should have such a boat, if only for emergencies—such as searching for the Great Barrier murderers the other day. But for having her a Union boat would have had to be chartered, at a great expense. The vessel was often carrying large cargoes of railway material—even to overloading, he held. Without the "Hinemoa," if the "Stella" was unable to perform the whole of the lighthouse work it would be necessary to charter a vessel for that service. Then, there must be some qualified person like Captain Fairchild to take soundings and help in the other maritime business of the country, and that gentleman was well employed in the task. It would be impossible to get done for the same money the various services rendered by the "Hinemoa."

Dr. NEWMAN agreed with the honourable member for New Plymouth that Captain Fairchild took valuable soundings—at New Plymouth, for instance. He believed a majority of the people of the colony would be for retaining the "Hinemoa;" but the objection was to her being used for yachting trips, taking one or two members, or, perhaps, one Minister. He believed the honourable member for New Plymouth had himself been a member of a party of two or three in some of these trips. He was glad the maintenance vote was £1,500 less than last year. He thought the cost of this vessel might very largely be reduced. As to her carrying railway material, he hoped soon all railway plant would be made in each Island, and be sent by land to different places.

Mr. LEVESTAM hoped the Minister would reply to the serious charge that the "Hinemoa" was overloaded. A Government could do these things, while private individuals could not. Take the case of the "Luna:" in that case the then Government bought an old condemned boat, and cobbled her up, and kept her running for many years.

Mr. LARNACH would remind honourable members that half the year was already passed, and the new boiler had been ordered and paid for. As showing the use of these boats, the "Stella" was sent hurriedly to the Chatham the other day to search for a missing vessel, and not only found her, but found a smuggling plant by which the colony got not only £[illegible] in fines, but a large quantity of smuggled goods.

Mr. BROWN thought, if members would go yachting more in the "Hinemoa," and so inform themselves of the circumstances of the colony, there would be a very large saving effected in the administration of its affairs. Only thirty-two had voted on the previous occasion when the item was struck out—the smallest division this session, he believed—while forty-five had voted in the division that had just taken place. He merely stated this in reply to what the honourable member for the Dunstan had said, who, with his usual preciseness, had in this case wrongly informed the Committee as to this being a surprise to the House.

Mr. HATCH pointed out that when this vote was before the House previously the item was struck out by 18 to 14; so that it was a very thin House. He supported the item because he thought it could be linked in with the lighthouse work and the mail-service along the West Coast which the honourable member for Wakatipu had brought under notice during

the afternoon. He thought the abuse of the "Hinemoa" was not that members went for trips in her, but that so many residents of Wellington, including Civil servants, made such frequent use of her.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN thought there would be much less dissatisfaction about people travelling in the "Hinemoa" if persons who travelled by her were compelled to pay a fair and reasonable amount. If persons were travelling on public business their travelling expenses might be recovered from the departments in which they were working.

Mr. BRUCE pointed out that the New Zealand coast-line was an exceedingly long one, and casualties might be expected, and it was very advisable to keep two steamers, so that if one was away on lighthouse work the other should be available in case of necessity. That was, at any rate, one of the reasons why the two steamers should be retained.

Mr. O'CONOR looked upon the "Hinemoa" as merely a useless toy, and he had hoped when the vote was struck out that they would hear an announcement that she was to be sold, and that in her place there would be obtained a boat of good carrying-capacity, able to travel over shallow bars. This steamer was useless so far as a large part of the colony was concerned. He hoped that the vessel would be sold.

Mr. FISHER said that on the last occasion when the "Hinemoa" came from Auckland, immediately prior to the opening of Parliament, only one-third of the passengers were members of the House or persons connected with the public service. It seemed to him that the "Hinemoa" should not be sent unless it was really a saving of expense to send her. It was a waste of public money to send her if most of the members came in the ordinary coastal boats.

Mr. GUINNESS said that last year a return was laid on the table which showed that the "Hinemoa" was only employed on 160 days in the year, and that the cost to the colony of maintaining her was no less than £7,619. The colony could not stand so much expense for such small services. The "Stella" was quite sufficient for the lighthouse work, and also for meeting cases of emergency such as shipwreck. This was shown the other day, when the "Stella" was sent down to the Chathams on an errand of that kind, while the "Hinemoa" remained idle in Wellington. He contended that the argument as to the steamer being useful for taking members to and from their homes was of no value, for the fact was that members could be carried much more cheaply by the ordinary coasting-steamers. Arrangements could be made by which one of the steam-shipping companies would, for, say, £150 a week, place a steamer at the service of the Government whenever it was required. That would be much cheaper than the present arrangement. He had shown reasons why the Government should during the recess see if they could not dispose of this boat, and get one that would be able to do more valuable service, and be able to visit the Sounds on the west coast of the Middle Island, and perform a service that would save the colony many thousands of pounds. He moved, That the item be reduced by £1,000, so that the vote might give an indication of the feeling of the House in the direction he had indicated.

Mr. TAYLOR thought that it would not be going in the direction of economy to refuse this vote, but that it would be playing into the hands of monopolists.

Mr. LAKE was in favour of the vessel being retained, in order to keep a check over monopolist companies. He thought, too, that they should remember that the position they held over the Natives of the country was, perhaps, quite as much due to the active exertions of Captain Fairchild as to anything else.

Mr. MACANDREW sympathized very much with what the honourable member for Greymouth had said regarding the "Hinemoa." He thought that they could do a great deal better than by keeping that vessel, and that the £3,500 for boilers would go a long way towards getting a more suitable vessel, and one that could visit all the bar-harbours. He thought that the retention of the "Hinemoa" was a piece of extravagance on the part of the Government.

Mr. BROWN thought that the "Hinemoa" was of great value and service to the colony. It might be possible to get a boat perhaps more suited to the requirements of the colony; but, until such a one was procured, they should not part with the present one, though he thought the boat should be more at the service of members, who would acquire valuable information by becoming more acquainted with the wants of the colony.

Motion to reduce vote by £1,000 negatived.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote be agreed to."

AYES, 34.

Atkinson	Lance	Rolleston
Ballance	Larnach	Samuel
Bruce	Levestam	Stout
Buckland, W. F.	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Conolly	McMillan	Thomson, J. W.
Dodson	Menteath	Turnbull
Fisher	Newman	Vogel
Fraser	O'Callaghan	Walker.
Grace	Peacock	
Hakuene	Reese	*Tellers.*
Hatch	Richardson, E.	Brown
Kerr	Richardson, G.	Lake.

NOES, 14.

Beetham	Fulton	Pyke
Buchanan	Guinness	Wilson.
Cadman	Macandrew	*Tellers.*
Cowan	Montgomery	Barron
Duncan	Moss	Russell.

Majority for, 20.

Vote, £10,000, agreed to.

PUBLIC WORKS FUND.

CLASS III.—RAILWAYS.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON moved, That the item,

"Permanent-way and sleepers, £67,000," be reduced by £21,300.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON moved, That the item, "Rolling-stock, £83,000," be reduced by £15,700.

Major ATKINSON asked if this reduction was in consequence of the Blenheim–Tophouse and Inangahua lines having been struck out of the Loan Bill.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said it was partially on account of that.

Major ATKINSON asked the honourable member to explain how it was that he took money for rolling-stock for those railways, which he said he did not intend to build, but only to survey. He did not think the House understood that rolling-stock was to be purchased.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that item only made up a small portion of the amount. Through an oversight this amount had not been struck off the estimates when they were passing through.

Mr. KERR hoped they would not strike anything off this item of rolling-stock, as it was very much needed. In his district they had not sufficient trucks to send their produce along the railway.

Motion agreed to.

CONSOLIDATED FUND.

CLASS II.—COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Ministers' Secretaries—Services of shorthand writer, £150.

Mr. HATCH asked for an explanation of this item.

Sir R. STOUT explained that this amount was not for Ministers' Secretaries, but for one of the *Hansard* staff who had been unable to go on with his work on that staff through ill-health. It had been suggested to the Government by Mr. Speaker that this gentleman might be employed as shorthand writer to report Commissions and so on during the recess; and therefore the sum had been put down. There would be a saving, as the cost of reporting Commissions was sometimes very heavy.

Mr. TOLE said the Reporting Debates Committee had also passed a resolution recommending that this should be done.

Vote agreed to.

Audit Office — Contingencies (additional), £750, agreed to.

Registrar-General's Department—Additional cost of census, £1,200.

Mr. HATCH said the House had already voted £7,500 for this purpose extra to what had been voted last year, and he thought it showed great want of care on the part of the officer in charge of this department that the expense should be so great.

Sir R. STOUT said that he found that, as the population increased, so did the expense of taking the census increase. As it was, the letters from the enumerators and sub-enumerators in all parts of the colony were innumerable, complaining that they were underpaid.

Mr. WAKEFIELD said there was great waste of money in making up census returns which were of no value to anybody. For instance, in one table he found that there were five members of the House of Representatives. This arose from there being a table of occupations under which five persons had entered themselves as members of the House of Representatives. Such a thing was ridiculous and ought not to be allowed; and yet the same thing was carried through table after table, in all of which one found these five members of the House of Representatives. Then, again, there was a table of household relations, under which there were to be found so many mothers-in-law and sisters-in-law, who were also carried through innumerable tables. And so it went on all through. The fact was, the Registrar-General aimed at too much, and the result was a weighty volume of returns of no use to anybody. No doubt, in England these returns were carried to a very minute extent; but this was for reasons which did not exist in this colony. If he were to read these tables of results to the House he could keep honourable members in fits of laughter for an hour—how one result was brought out in one column and another result in another column from the same return. He was not one who ever condemned a public officer, because he held the Government responsible for their officers; and he might say that this money was not wasted on salaries, for the officers of this department were paid at a lower rate than the officers of the corresponding department in any other colony. The money was wasted in doing perfectly useless work. The reproach against the statistics was that they were brought out some twelve months after those furnished by other colonies.

Mr. BARRON, as an instance of the ridiculous things that appeared in these statistics, might say that under the heading "Sheep" one person had returned "one hydraulic ram."

Mr. BUCHANAN called attention to the circumstance that in some districts the cost of taking the last census had been more than double that of taking it in 1881.

Sir R. STOUT said that was the natural result of the increase of population. The collectors were paid so much per hundred papers collected.

Mr. BUCHANAN could not understand that explanation, because in some districts where the expense was not larger than it was on the previous occasion the population was double what it was. He could only add that if such an arrangement as that referred to by the Premier had been made it was a most absurd arrangement.

Mr. HATCH asked if the whole of the amount was spent.

Sir R. STOUT replied that it was to pay for work still necessary in the offices in connection with the census.

Mr. O'CONOR suggested that in the next census-paper a name should be selected that would not be offensive to any nationality in the example showing how to describe a person

in a state of ignorance. "Bridget Connolly" could surely read and write by this time.

Vote, £1,200, agreed to.

Charitable, £1,856, agreed to.

Lunatic asylums, £750.

Dr. NEWMAN said it was a hardship that leave of absence should not be granted to the medical officers of asylums unless they paid a *locum tenens*, while all the other officers received a month's leave of absence during the year, and had substitutes paid.

Mr. DARGAVILLE regretted exceedingly that some provision had not been made to give a larger salary to the Resident Medical Officer at Auckland than had hitherto been paid. They had lost the services of the medical officer there in consequence of the smallness of the salary; and he hoped the Cabinet would not insist upon such a paltry salary being paid in future, as they were not likely to get a good professional man for that again.

Mr. HATCH thought a large portion of the £750 might be saved, as servants were always willing to do extra work on condition that they in turn received leave of absence. The placing of these sums on the estimates did not show a desire for that rigid economy which he was sure would in a short space of time be forced upon the Government.

Mr. FISHER might ask the Government whether it was their intention to increase the salary of the Medical Superintendent of the Wellington Lunatic Asylum. Under an arrangement with Dr. Grabham the Medical Superintendent was to receive an increased salary, and he (Mr. Fisher) wished to know if there was any intention of acting on that understanding.

Sir R. STOUT replied that the Government had refused increases almost all round the Civil Service; but he agreed with the remarks of the honourable member for Auckland West, as well as with what had been said by the honourable member for Wellington South—that the salaries would have to be increased to keep efficient men at their post. He was afraid that £400 was too small a salary.

Vote, £750, agreed to.

Printing and stationery, £1,470, agreed to.

Stock branch, £710.

Mr. BUCHANAN would like an explanation of the vote for "remission of rent of infected runs."

Sir R. STOUT replied that, in order to get rid of scab, they had been obliged to insist upon certain owners of runs not having their runs depastured, and this sum was for the remission of rents during the time the runs were disused.

Mr. BUCHANAN wished to know if the necessity for the Government taking possession of the runs in question had not been caused directly by the occupants whose rents it was proposed to remit in this way.

Mr. BRUCE thought the honourable member who had spoken should give the Committee the benefit of his knowledge.

Mr. BUCHANAN replied that his knowledge on the subject was this: that in the Kaikoura District, where this amount of money was proposed to be spent, it was notorious that proper efforts were not made by the occupants of the runs to keep their runs clean, and that the whole country-side was kept in a state of terror from the presence of scab on those runs. It was notorious that the Government ought to have taken possession of these runs years before they had done so.

Sir R. STOUT would point out that the Government had no legal power to take possession of these runs without remitting the rents.

Mr. WAKEFIELD asked if the honourable member would state clearly to whom this £710 was to be paid.

Sir R. STOUT replied that it was to be paid to five people whose names he would give if honourable members desired it.

Mr. GUINNESS wanted to know if any agreement had been entered into with those gentlemen, or any petition presented.

Sir R. STOUT said this matter came up last year, and the House voted money to have the sheep killed. If this money were not paid the Government would probably be sued, and have to pay more in law-costs.

Mr. O'CONOR said this was not doing even justice. These runholders were to be voted this money, while he had to try hard to get a small extension of time for Crown tenants on the West Coast. These people would get their runs back after the Government had cleaned them.

Mr. DODSON said these people had been deprived of their runs, and were not allowed to put stock on them for two or three years.

Mr. GUINNESS said these runholders met with misfortune in their business, and the Government were cleaning their land of scab, remitting their rents, and handing back the runs in a clean condition. He never heard a more monstrous proposal.

Mr. TURNBULL said the honourable gentleman was hardly right. Those runs were infected through sheep coming on to them from Government lands. The runholders had been heavily fined.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked if there was any report of a Committee on this subject.

Sir R. STOUT did not think there was any report.

Mr. WAKEFIELD asked if this money would go straight to a large loan company.

Sir R. STOUT had no knowledge of that. The arrangement made with those people was that they were to get twelve months' rent, and 2s. 6d. per head for the sheep killed.

Mr. DODSON said that no loan company had anything to do with these runs. These people had been harassed until they were practically ruined, after their country had been scabbed from the Government country at the back. During the last summer the Government had made considerable efforts to clean that country, and had killed 750 sheep.

Mr. SAMUEL did not think the justice of making this payment was affected by the question whether the money went to a loan company or not. This was a simple act of justice.

Mr. LANCE said the House at the end of 1884 determined to vote £3,000 to stamp scab

Mr. BROWN was sure the members did not understand the circumstances of this case. Sir William Fox was a member of the House when he performed the greater part of the duties referred to, and the whole of his expenses were paid. In 1880 Sir William Fox said that what prevented the improvement of the colony, in addition to the wild talk about the unearned increment and the imposition of the land-tax, was the high rate of wages. He thought the Government should retain the £2,000 it was now proposed to vote to that gentleman, and use it for the employment of labour.

Mr. TAYLOR recognized the justice of the claim, and would vote in this matter with the honourable member for Egmont and with the Government.

Mr. FISHER said that, quite apart from the comparatively recent services rendered by Sir William Fox in connection with the settlement of the West Coast Native difficulty—which services were fully set out in the very able reports on the subject which were submitted to Parliament—it should be remembered that at any time within the last thirty years Sir William Fox had rendered this colony very great public service. Neither should it be forgotten that he was one who had assisted to found the colony, that he had always been a prominent public man, and had never started himself in rendering whatever public service he could to the colonists of New Zealand. Other countries, in the recognition of the services of such men, had never been slow, and they need not go back to the best and grandest days of English political history to search for precedents of this nature. There was the recent case of Sir John Robertson in New South Wales. The Parliament of that colony had voted £10,000 to that eminent public man, whose declining years were not softened by the comforts of affluence. Sir John Robertson had not any specific claim upon the people of New South Wales such as existed in this case; but the Parliament of that colony, recognizing that he was a man who had given to the service of the colony his best abilities for a period extending over a great number of years, was not slow to take means to ease down his declining days. Now, there was a strong case for the colony to do the same thing in regard to Sir William Fox, and he hoped the House would deal with the matter in a high and generous spirit, and with some show of handsomeness and unanimity.

Mr. KERR was willing to vote for the sum if a proper name was given to it. He had known Sir William Fox for forty-odd years, and knew that he had done very great good to the colony ever since he had been in it, and that he had been ready at any time to give his services to the public.

Mr. GRACE would like the Premier to state whether this sum would eventually be charged against Maori lands.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Mr. BROWN asked if it was not the case that during the time Sir William Fox was engaged on the West Coast Commission he received £10 a day for travelling expenses.

Sir R. STOUT replied that that was not the case. Sir William Fox had only received actual travelling expenses, and nothing for his work done.

Mr. HISLOP thought the vote was put upon a false issue altogether. He would vote for the item, not because Sir William Fox had done service in regard to the matter mentioned, but because he had occupied the position of Premier in this colony for a great many years, was at all times ready to give his services to the colony free of charge, and, unfortunately, circumstances had arisen, which had been detailed to the House, which made it a graceful act on the part of the House to pass this vote. This was not the first occasion on which a vote of the sort had been passed. When the late Dr. Featherston died an amount of £3,000 was placed to the credit of his relatives; and it was well that a democratic country should show at times that it could be grateful for services rendered to the country. He hoped the vote would be passed in no carping spirit, and that it would be a free gift to Sir William Fox in recognition of his services to the country.

Mr. SUTTER thought the last speaker had made a most extraordinary statement. Sir William Fox had made money in the colony, and now they were asked to pay him this amount because he had been Premier.

Mr. KERR could say that Sir William Fox had not made his money in the colony, but was a moneyed man when he came into it, and had done a great deal of good in the colony.

Mr. DODSON would vote for the item on the distinct understanding that it was for services rendered in connection with the settlement of the Maori claims on the West Coast. If they were to set the example of rewarding men who had rendered the colony eminent public services they might have other claims. He objected also to having private affairs treated before the House in the way they had been treated during the evening.

Mr. HATCH said the honourable member for Egmont referred to the valuable work done by Sir F. D. Bell also on this Commission. He would suggest that the best thing the Government could do was to bring down a vote finally disposing of this matter.

Mr. SEDDON could quite understand the honourable member for Egmont and his supporters wishing to reward a friend of their own. He could remember that on the completion of the work Sir William Fox's services were described in the House as most patriotic; that he refused any pecuniary reward more than his expenses; and upon the strength of his doing that the House unanimously accorded him a vote of thanks. No doubt they would now vote that gentleman £2,000 for services which, in his (Mr. Seddon's) opinion, were well paid for at the time. If any payment were made to Sir William Fox it would take away from the credit given to him; and he believed this vote was against Sir William Fox's wish.

knew Sir William Fox to be the soul of our, and what he did was for the good the colony. At the commencement of e services Sir William Fox was a mem- of the House, and could not receive this nent without a breach of the Disqualifica- Act. This vote would practically be an ion of the provisions of the Disqualification . He would remind those honourable mem- who voted for this item that they would establishing a bad precedent, which would ainly be acted upon in the cases of other ral Commissions.

ir R. STOUT said that Sir William Fox not even charge travelling allowance; he y got actual travelling expenses, which were vouched for. The expenses of the Commis- n were £371 17s. 7d. for four years.

Mr. BROWN said the voting of this £2,000 ant that four thousand working-people in w Zealand would be reduced in wages by 6d. lay. That was the intention of this vote.

Mr. O'CONOR said this discussion showed at honourable members should have full portunity to consider this matter, and to in- ire into the circumstances under which this aim was made. He did not think, at this riod of the session, they should be asked to te such a large sum of money on the autho- ty of the doubtful statements they had heard at evening. The whole matter should be bmitted to the examination of a Committee. upposing, even, the Government did get the te, the country would not be satisfied that e case had been properly considered, but ould infer that it had been rushed through. e moved, That progress be reported.

Mr. TURNBULL was sorry this matter had ot been brought down in a different shape, so hat it might be discussed in a full House. It ust be remembered that this was not the nly claim on the colony, as there were other ery large claims which had been inquired into. e acknowledged that Sir William Fox had erformed very valuable services to the colony; ut there were others who had also done so.

Mr. W. D. STEWART said no one appre- iated the personal and political character of Sir William Fox more than he did; but it was never intended that he should receive any- thing for those services. It was a mere subter- fuge to say that this sum was for services as West Coast Commissioner: it was meant as a recognition of his public services generally, and it should have been stated so.

Mr. GORE knew nothing about this matter, but he did know that other honourable gentle- men had performed valuable public services without being paid. There was the Fiji Com- mission, for instance. Under the circum- stances, he would vote for the item being struck out.

Mr. GUINNESS would like to know whether by voting for this amount they would establish a precedent for payment of services rendered by Railway and other Commissioners. There had been several of these Commissioners who were members of Parliament while they were acting as Commissioners, and were consequently disqualified from receiving any payment. If Sir William Fox got £2,000 for his services on the West Coast the gentlemen who composed those other Commissions would certainly be equally entitled to receive payment now for services rendered while they were disqualified. He would oppose the vote, as it established a very bad precedent.

Mr. SEDDON said the Premier had promised to save between £30,000 and £40,000 on the estimates during the next year, and if the Committee passed this £2,000 it would mean the dismissal of so many more officers from the Service. Many honourable members had applied during the session for small sums for important works, but had been told that there was no money in the Treasury for them; and yet it was now proposed to give this £2,000 for no reason whatever. This item did not bear its proper title on the estimates. It should appear as "compassionate allowance." That gentleman's services had been paid for by the gratitude of the people and of that House, and, having received his payment in that way, it was hardly right that the House should now be asked to pay him in pounds, shillings, and pence. Then, it was said that Sir William Fox was coming into that House again, and that this money was to be the wherewithal to run the election. These were the rumours in the lobbies. It was also said that gentleman was to be the next Premier. The honourable member for Egmont, to get his next Premier into the House, wanted the House to vote £2,000. He hoped that the time was far distant when New Zealand would have to get its Premier in that way.

Mr. TURNBULL thought that the honour- able member for Kumara had not acted with his usual generosity. There was no doubt that Sir William Fox was a man of distinguished ability and character, who had done the colony some service, and he regretted that the honour- able member for Kumara should have spoken of him as he had done. He thought this mat- ter was easily settled. Instead of giving the honourable gentleman this grant let the Go- vernment call him to the Legislative Council. His distinguished services entitled him to that. He did not like this grant of money, because it would form a very bad precedent.

Mr. MONTGOMERY said his objection to the vote was that it was really an infringement of the Disqualification Act. Under that Act it was provided that no person being a member of the House could receive payment for services rendered, except those allowed by law, so long as he was a member of the House or for twelve months afterwards. It was now proposed to give Sir William Fox money which he could not lawfully have received owing to his having been a member of Parliament. The House had always jealously guarded the payment of public money to members of the House, and it was not right that the provisions of the law should be evaded as was proposed in this case. He regarded Sir William Fox as an eminent colonist of many years' standing, and should be glad to vote him money if necessary

on that account; but he could not vote to reward him for services rendered while he was a member of that House. It was utterly opposed to the spirit of the Disqualification Act.

The Committee divided on the question, "That progress be reported."

AYES, 13.

Barron	Hatch	Stewart, W. D.
Brown	Macandrew	
Cowan	Parata	*Tellers.*
Gore	Richardson, G.	O'Conor
Guinness	Seddon	Turnbull.

NOES, 46.

Atkinson	Hirst, H.	Rolleston
Ballance	Hislop	Russell
Beetham	Hobbs	Samuel
B.-Bradshaw	Joyce	Stout
Bruce	Kerr	Taylor
Buchanan	Lake	Thomson, J. W.
Buckland, J. C.	Lance	Tole
Cadman	Larnach	Vogel
Conolly	Macarthur	Wakefield
Duncan	Mackenzie, M.	Walker
Fergus	McMillan	Whyte
Fisher	Menteath	Wilson.
Fraser	Mitchelson	
Fulton	O'Callaghan	*Tellers.*
Grace	Pearson	Buckland, W.F.
Hakuene	Richardson, E.	Reid.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
McKenzie, J.	Reese
Moss.	Dodson.

Majority against, 33.

Motion negatived.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the vote, "Refund of Native Land Court fees charged on succession duties, £11," be struck out. He did so because he considered it desirable to change the subject.

Sir R. STOUT said it seemed to him there was no chance of getting the item through except by sitting on Sunday morning, and he would therefore move to report the resolutions to the House, and ask leave to sit again.

Mr. HISLOP wished to know if progress was to be reported whenever a few members chose to make themselves obstructive.

Sir R. STOUT replied that if they did not do this they would have to go on sitting on Sunday morning.

Mr. HISLOP thought that the liberties of the House were a great deal more sacred than keeping the Sunday holy. The exhibition they had had was such an exhibition as they ought not to encourage; and, if the Government were going to carry on the business of the colony, they ought on such occasions to be firmer than they seemed inclined to be towards their obstructive supporters. He protested against the action of the Government in giving way. It would be better to sit right through the Sunday than to waive the privileges of the House.

Sir R. STOUT said that, of course, every day was holy alike to him, but he thought they should, on occasions like this, respect the feelings of other people.

Major ATKINSON agreed with the view the Premier had taken. He was not in the habit of giving way to unreasonable opposition, and had this been an ordinary occasion he would have been prepared, to support the Government, to sit as many hours as might be necessary, because he did not admit that the minority had any right at all to take the course that had been taken. It seemed, however, to be the least violence to the fitness of things to give way rather than to have an unseemly struggle during Sunday. The Premier had, he thought, adopted the right course. It was an unfortunate thing that the rules of the House enabled a minority to act unreasonably against a majority. It was very unfortunate that the rules of the House should be prostituted in the way they were occasionally; but he considered it was better for them to submit on the present occasion.

Mr. SEDDON said he was not unreasonable, and had not offered opposition to the vote without taking the opinion of some twenty or thirty members on it. In the present circumstances of the colony he did not think it right that the sum should be voted; but if he was detaining honourable members who had made arrangements for leaving he would withdraw his opposition and simply vote against the item.

Mr. TURNBULL had great pleasure in hearing the sentiment that had fallen from the Premier, and thought the debate had not been lost time, for it had gained an expression of sentiment from the Premier that would raise him very much in the esteem of the country. If it was the wish of the House he (Mr. Turnbull) would withdraw his opposition; but he would warn the House that they were opening the door to something that would cost the country a great deal of money.

Mr. O'CONOR wished to deny the imputation that had been cast upon him of "stonewalling." He had not had the least intention of doing anything of the kind. He had come to the conclusion that if the item went to the vote at once he must vote against it; and in so doing he might do a great injustice. Under the circumstances it would surely be wise to postpone the matter, so as to allow honourable members an opportunity of reflecting upon it; for if this vote were passed it should be passed almost unanimously.

Mr. HATCH said his remarks had not been made with a view to being obstructive. He objected to the vote, and would vote against it.

Motion to report progress agreed to.

HARBOURS BILL.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the following report by the Managers of the Free Conference upon the amendments made by the Council in the Harbours Bill be agreed to:—

"In clause 16 it was agreed to insert after 'ferry-boat' the words 'when actually towing a vessel.'

"In respect to clause 23 it was agreed that the rate should remain as fixed by the House of Representatives.

Nelson was £37. If the Government would ask the American Government they could get the ova given to them, and if due care were taken to see that there was no delay at Auckland they should reach their destination in thirty or thirty-five days, and there would be 95 per cent. hatched out. It was the delay at Auckland which generally killed the ova.

Vote, £1,448, agreed to.

CLASS VIII.—MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

Head office, £50.
Public schools, £50.
Native schools, £370.
Deaf-and-dumb Institution, £90.

CLASS IX.—MINISTER OF NATIVE AFFAIRS.

Miscellaneous, £2,726.

Mr. COWAN asked for an explanation of the item, "Services of Hon. Sir William Fox as Commissioner under 'The West Coast Settlement Act, 1880,' £2,000."

Sir R. STOUT explained that the item was put on the estimates in accordance with a promise given in answering a question put by the honourable member for Egmont a day or two previously.

Mr. MONTGOMERY pointed out that Sir William Fox was a member of the House when he was appointed Commissioner, and could not have received salary then. Besides, there were other members of the House who were appointed Commissioners, and who had done a great deal of work, yet they were not paid anything. If this claim were admitted there would be a good many other claims. He did not feel inclined to vote for this item, from what he knew of the circumstances; but he hoped the honourable member for Egmont, or the Government that was in power during the time work was done, would give the House a little more information.

Mr. MOSS would like to know if this vote was retrospective, because there would be a good many other Commissioners who would like to have pay if that were so. There were many who had done a considerable amount of work and had received no pay and scant thanks. He himself had spent a good deal of time in inquiring into the claims of the Ormond military settlers, and all that he had received for labour extending at intervals over three years was a curt letter of thanks from the Under-Secretary. Dr. Wallis had travelled over the colony and done a considerable amount of work in respect to the University Commission; yet he did not get even all his expenses paid. There were a good many other Commissioners who ought to have been paid, if as members of Parliament they had been allowed to charge. There ought to be more information and inquiry before they voted this money.

Major ATKINSON thought it was quite reasonable the Committee should ask for complete information in regard to this item, though he must say he felt somewhat surprised at the remarks that had fallen from the honourable member who had just sat down; because, if he remembered aright, no one was stronger than the honourable member for Parnell in his demands that justice should be done to the Natives. The honourable member for Akaroa was entirely wrong in his statement with regard to Sir William Fox having been a member of Parliament while Commissioner. He was not a member of Parliament, except for a very short time. He ceased to be a member of Parliament in 1881, while the Commission was not finally wound up till the middle of 1884. He ventured to say there was not a single person in the House or in the country who had done more work which would have a permanent value than Sir William Fox had done during the three or four years that he had devoted to the work of this Commission. As honourable members were aware, there was a great difficulty on the West Coast some years ago, and the House had to pass several Acts in order to get the difficulty settled. Some persons thought that Sir William Fox had settled the Native difficulty entirely; but he did not go so far as that, although he was prepared to admit that Sir William Fox's work had contributed greatly to the settlement of it, and had put things in a satisfactory position. When the work was completed Sir William Fox declined to receive any remuneration for it. When the Native Minister of the late Government informed him that the Government proposed to ask the House for a vote of £2,000 for his services, Sir William Fox said he was in a position in which he felt that he might simply accept thanks for his services. He had undertaken the work as a matter of love, and because he had a special interest in it. He therefore declined to allow the Government to ask Parliament for any appropriation. Since then, as he was informed, Sir William Fox had met with considerable losses, and he felt now, as he was getting into old age, that he might well say to the Government, "If you are still willing to recognize my services on the terms previously mentioned, I shall be glad to receive the money." He (Major Atkinson) had therefore felt it to be his duty to ask the Government to put this sum on the estimates in recognition of Sir William Fox's services, and he hoped it would be agreed to with something like unanimity.

Mr. KERR believed that really good work had been done by Sir William Fox, but he would like to know if that gentleman had not been paid for it.

Sir R. STOUT.—No; only very small expenses.

Mr. SAMUEL said that, had it not been for the facts explained by the honourable member for Egmont, he should have voted against the item. He had never had any connection with Sir William Fox, and could not be accused of partiality towards him, and he had great pleasure in bearing testimony to the very great value of the services that gentleman had rendered to the colony in bringing his knowledge, discretion, and experience, gained during many years of public service, to the settlement of a very difficult question.

Mr. BROWN was sure the members did not understand the circumstances of this case. Sir William Fox was a member of the House when he performed the greater part of the duties referred to, and the whole of his expenses were paid. In 1880 Sir William Fox said that what prevented the improvement of the colony, in addition to the wild talk about the unearned increment and the imposition of the land-tax, was the high rate of wages. He thought the Government should retain the £2,000 it was now proposed to vote to that gentleman, and use it for the employment of labour.

Mr. TAYLOR recognized the justice of the claim, and would vote in this matter with the honourable member for Egmont and with the Government.

Mr. FISHER said that, quite apart from the comparatively recent services rendered by Sir William Fox in connection with the settlement of the West Coast Native difficulty—which services were fully set out in the very able reports on the subject which were submitted to Parliament—it should be remembered that at any time within the last thirty years Sir William Fox had rendered this colony very great public service. Neither should it be forgotten that he was one who had assisted to found the colony, that he had always been a prominent public man, and had never stinted himself in rendering whatever public service he could to the colonists of New Zealand. Other countries, in the recognition of the services of such men, had never been slow, and they need not go back to the best and grandest days of English political history to search for precedents of this nature. There was the recent case of Sir John Robertson in New South Wales. The Parliament of that colony had voted £10,000 to that eminent public man, whose declining years were not softened by the comforts of affluence. Sir John Robertson had not any specific claim upon the people of New South Wales such as existed in this case; but the Parliament of that colony, recognizing that he was a man who had given to the service of the colony his best abilities for a period extending over a great number of years, was not slow to take means to ease down his declining days. Now, there was a strong case for the colony to do the same thing in regard to Sir William Fox, and he hoped the House would deal with the matter in a high and generous spirit, and with some show of handsomeness and unanimity.

Mr. KERR was willing to vote for the sum if a proper name was given to it. He had known Sir William Fox for forty-odd years, and knew that he had done very great good to the colony ever since he had been in it, and that he had been ready at any time to give his services to the public.

Mr. GRACE would like the Premier to state whether this sum would eventually be charged against Maori lands.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Mr. BROWN asked if it was not the case that during the time Sir William Fox was engaged on the West Coast Commission he received £10 a day for travelling expenses.

Sir R. STOUT replied that that was not the case. Sir William Fox had only received actual travelling expenses, and nothing for the work done.

Mr. HISLOP thought the vote was put upon a false issue altogether. He would vote for the item, not because Sir William Fox had done service in regard to the matter mentioned, but because he had occupied the position of Premier in this colony for a great many years, was at all times ready to give his services to the colony free of charge, and, unfortunately, circumstances had arisen, which had been detailed to the House, which made it a graceful act on the part of the House to pass this vote. This was not the first occasion on which a vote of the sort had been passed. When the late Dr. Featherston died an amount of £3,000 was placed to the credit of his relatives; and it was well that a democratic country should show at times that it could be grateful for services rendered to the country. He hoped the vote would be passed in no carping spirit, and that it would be a free gift to Sir William Fox in recognition of his services to the country.

Mr. SUTTER thought the last speaker had made a most extraordinary statement. Sir William Fox had made money in the colony, and now they were asked to pay him this amount because he had been Premier.

Mr. KERR could say that Sir William Fox had not made his money in the colony, but was a moneyed man when he came into it, and had done a great deal of good in the colony.

Mr. DODSON would vote for the item on the distinct understanding that it was for services rendered in connection with the settlement of the Maori claims on the West Coast. If they were to set the example of rewarding men who had rendered the colony eminent public services they might have other claims. He objected also to having private affairs treated before the House in the way they had been treated during the evening.

Mr. HATCH said the honourable member for Egmont referred to the valuable work done by Sir F. D. Bell also on this Commission. He would suggest that the best thing the Government could do was to bring down a vote finally disposing of this matter.

Mr. SEDDON could quite understand the honourable member for Egmont and his supporters wishing to reward a friend of their own. He could remember that on the completion of the work Sir William Fox's services were described in the House as most patriotic; that he refused any pecuniary reward more than his expenses; and upon the strength of his doing that the House unanimously accorded him a vote of thanks. No doubt they would now vote that gentleman £2,000 for services which, in his (Mr. Seddon's) opinion, were well paid for at the time. If any payment were made to Sir William Fox it would take away from the credit given to him; and he believed this vote was against Sir William Fox's wish.

[illegible]

[illegible] was covered by [illegible] years under the [illegible] thought it advisable [illegible] not the slightest [illegible]

He moved, That [illegible] amendment.

[illegible] enter his protest [illegible] All the railways [illegible] in the same way, [illegible] should not have au- [illegible] for the full dis- [illegible] improper proceeding [illegible] wished to enter his [illegible]

[illegible] said it was only fair [illegible] was [illegible] in [illegible] was no partiality.

[illegible] five minutes [illegible]

[illegible] Third Reading— [illegible] Bill— [illegible] Special Power [illegible]

[illegible] the Bill be laid [illegible] some clauses which [illegible] but there is a [illegible] the Council may [illegible] great deal in the Bill which is necessary in order to carry out engagements between the Crown and the parties in question. I ask your ruling, Sir, whether this is not the proper course to take. It is my own impression that it is; but I have been unable to find any authority for that. I should say that the Bill was merely laid aside for that day.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—My honourable friend is wrong in saying that the Bill was laid aside on the second reading. The Bill was read a second time, and was then referred to the Waste Lands Committee, and then it came down to us, and on the motion that we should go into Committee on the Bill it was laid aside.

The Hon. Mr. [illegible]—That is so.

The Hon. the [illegible]—I have a paper before me which shows that that is so. I may say that [illegible] impropriety in the procedure [illegible] I think it is quite com- [illegible] resolve that the Bill [illegible] on any other motion [illegible] to the other ques- [illegible] Colonial Secretary, [illegible] for any member of [illegible] that it proceed in any [illegible] tied its hands [illegible] that the cour- [illegible] myself so- [illegible]; and I d

see that the House of Representatives is in any way barred from proceeding to search the Journals of the Council. I may further say that there is a method of proceeding usually adopted that is calculated to produce ultimately amicable compromises between the two Houses, rather than by dealing absolutely with a Bill so as to prevent any further compromise.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—If in order, I will move, That the committal of the Bill be made an order of the day for this day.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—Sir, the course that the Council adopted on a recent occasion with respect to this Bill had an avowed object, as I understand it, and that was that, on the Bill being laid aside, the usual parliamentary course should be followed in regard to it: that the Government should take the Bill and remodel it altogether, leaving out the very numerous objectionable clauses which were found to be in the Bill, and, having so far taken the sense of the Council, reintroduce it in this or another place in the form in which it would be possible for this Council, in the discharge of its duty to the public, to accept it. I need not go again into the history of the Bill or into an examination of its details, as that has been already done with great clearness by my honourable friend Sir Frederick Whitaker: all that need be said about it now is that, after leaving out all the provisions of the Bill which are not indispensably necessary for the immediate purpose of carrying out the engagements between the Government and the country, the rest may be allowed to go.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I propose, That this debate be adjourned till half-past two o'clock. We shall then have time to consider what is the proper course to pursue.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS. — I trust the Council will not agree to that. In the other branch of the Legislature they expect to finish their business to-day, and I do not think it will be advisable to stop the proceedings till half-past two. I would not, however, object to a delay till after the Bill on the Order Paper has been disposed of.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I think the question really to be decided by this Council is, whether they are prepared to go into Committee at all on this Bill. I hold, myself, that the Bill is of such a nature that, if we once go into Committee, it might result in a number of these clauses going through which ought not to go through. The Government are wise in their generation: they simply pick out those bits which are urgently necessary for them to get through, and they sacrifice the others in order to get the Bill passed. I am prepared to record my vote the same way as I recorded it the other night, and I think the Council will do well to adopt the same course.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN. — I support the motion for the adjournment. It is not for us to inquire as to what the state of business in another place may be. Our duty is to discharge the functions which belong to us in this Council, without reference to the consequences of delay, and I hope the Council will not shrink from that duty. We ought not to be told what is the state of business in another place.

The Hon. Mr. LAHMANN.—The strangest part in these proceedings appears to me to be the fact that we are expected to detect the objectionable points in this Bill without any information before us. That can only be ascertained on our going into Committee. Then we might strike out nine-tenths of this Bill; and this would be a guide to the Government to bring in another Bill. How can the Government know the opinion of the majority of the Council as to what clauses should be passed, or otherwise, without going into Committee?

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY.—If the Council will permit me to suggest, this matter might be compromised by adjournment until the other Bill on the Order Paper is disposed of. I would ask my honourable friend to alter his motion to one for adjourning till twelve o'clock.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—I think that is rather unreasonable. At present there may be two Bills to receive from the House to consider and pass, and we shall not get these till this evening; and therefore, it seems to me, we shall not be causing any delay by adjourning this matter till half-past two. On the contrary, we shall have more time to consider it properly. By that time we shall be able to see whether there is any arrangement which can be come to. It seems to me that that is the reasonable course we ought to pursue, and we shall not suffer a moment's delay by taking it.

The Hon. Mr. SHEPHARD.—The Hon. Mr. Lahmann seems to lose sight of the fact that, if this Council rejects certain portions of this Bill, it will not be competent for it to consider those portions embodied in another Bill sent up from the other branch of the Legislature. Undoubtedly, if there are portions objectionable to the Council, or which appear so on the imperfect information now before it, the laying-aside of the Bill is the course best calculated to enable the Government to select the portions necessary to be passed. I say "imperfect information before the Council," for this reason: We have not yet before us the Bill reported from the Waste Lands Committee. That might materially aid the Council in coming to an intelligent decision on the question; but without that it is quite clear we cannot judge of what has been the result of the investigations of the Committee; and we ought to have had the Bill in that form on Saturday night, and certainly we should so have it to-day, before we can decide what we can do with it. We ought to see what were the recommendations of that Committee. The Hon. Dr. Pollen, as Chairman of that Committee, has told us that great care and a large amount of time have been spent in going through the Bill; and it is possible—I do not say it is certain—that if we saw the Bill as reported from the Waste Lands Committee our objections to it might entirely cease, or, at any rate, be so much reduced that we should proceed with the Bill, possibly not making any further important

nendment in it. Obviously, the sooner this uestion is settled the better. If the Hon. Sir rederick Whitaker will accept the suggestion f the Hon. the Colonial Secretary to adjourn his matter till twelve o'clock, or even to half-ast twelve, there will be ample time to decide hat is the best course to be taken; but, just ow, I can see that we are not in that position; nd I would ask the members of the Government to endeavour to place the Bill, as reported, n the hands of the Council. Then we shall e better able to judge of what to do.

The Hon. Mr. DIGNAN.—If there is any necessity to adjourn the debate I think the djournment should be till half-past two 'clock. That is not too long, by any means, f the Waste Lands Committee took three days o enable them to come to a conclusion.

Debate adjourned till half-past two.

NEW PLYMOUTH RECREATION RESERVE BILL.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said, in moving the second reading of the New Plymouth Recreation Reserve Bill he might explain that on Saturday night a question was raised by the Hon. Mr. Reeves as to whether it was competent to move the motion. He did not know whether his honourable friend desired to discuss this question now, but if he did he would be glad to give him an opportunity of doing so.

The Hon. Mr. ACLAND.—We have not the Bill before us.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said, then he would move the second reading of the Bill. His honourable friend Sir Frederick Whitaker moved the second reading of the Bill on a former occasion, and knew more about it than he (Mr. Buckley) did. He might say, however, that an understanding had been arrived at between the parties, and he proposed to introduce an amendment into the present Bill which would have the effect of setting the matter at rest.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—What is the compromise?

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY said it was a clause to the effect that any surplus revenue that might remain over after improving the land shall be applied as the General Assembly may enact.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES said the honourable gentleman had stated that an agreement had been come to between the parties, and that the clause which he proposed to introduce into this Bill would set the matter at rest for ever. As for the understanding, he might say, as Chairman of the Committee to which the Bill had been referred, that he had had a good deal of conversation with the parties who were opposed to one another—Major Atkinson, who had brought the matter into the other House, and certain representatives of the Town Board of New Plymouth—and he was not aware, nor could he learn, that any arrangement had been come to between the parties; nor, from the nature of the amendment which it was now proposed to introduce into the Bill, could he believe for one instant that such an arrangement had been come to—for the simple reason that the amendment meant nothing at all. The whole question turned upon the allocation of any surplus revenue, supposing there should be any surplus revenue after all proper care had been taken to keep the reserve in order. The Town Board claimed these revenues. The other side wished them to be allocated to a Board of Trustees for the purposes of the reserve, and nothing else. The Local Bills Committee gave a great deal of time to this little Bill, and took a great deal of evidence, and they came to the unanimous conclusion that the surplus revenues belonged by right to the Town Board, and reported accordingly. He did not think it required any great amount of argument to see that the amendment now proposed by the Hon. the Colonial Secretary left the matter between the disputants exactly where it was before—that the question was not settled at all. He would not oppose the second reading of the Bill, but when it went into Committee he would propose an amendment in accordance with the report of the Committee.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE said, as the Chairman of the Local Bills Committee, to which this Bill had been referred, was willing to allow this measure to go to a second reading, he did not feel justified in opposing the measure, but he thought it was a somewhat dangerous course to pursue. The Bill distinctly set forth the principle, which was in entire antagonism to the principle recommended for adoption by the Select Committee. He hoped the Hon. Mr. Reeves was satisfied, and would be able to alter the Bill in Committee; otherwise he would be accepting a grave responsibility in allowing the second reading to pass. However, as the honourable gentleman had been in a position to acquire more accurate information than he (Dr. Grace) could in reference to this matter, he would reluctantly follow him in the course he proposed, and vote for the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. BARNICOAT said feeling ran very high in New Plymouth in reference to this subject, and therefore he was very glad when he heard that the matter was likely to be settled. It was very desirable that a settlement should be made, and that a clause should be brought under the consideration of the Council which would probably be the means of settling the matter. If anything was left for settlement by another power he would vote against the passing of the Bill. There appeared to be a very strong feeling indeed between the two parties: one party—including especially those representing the Jockey Club—claiming, in the interests of recreation, the management of the reserve; on the other hand, there could be no doubt that the Borough of New Plymouth was entitled to the revenue of the reserve for the benefit of the streets of New Plymouth. Therefore the Committee recommended that the Bill be altered so far as to vest the management of the reserve in the Borough of New Plymouth, but taking what the Committee considered to be sufficient care in preserving the unquestionable rights of what might be termed the "recreation party." Unless the matter was definitely settled by the

Council it would be better to go no further, but let the Bill drop.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY ought to have explained that he proposed to accept all the amendments recommended by the Committee.

The Hon. Mr. SWANSON said that, owing to the way in which this Bill passed through the other branch of the Legislature, very few members of the House of Representatives knew anything about the measure. The Bill, however, had received a considerable amount of attention in the Council; and one thing was made very clear by the Provincial Acts of Taranaki — namely, that not only could the borough use any revenue from this reserve, but they could borrow money on it for the improvement of the streets.

The Hon. Captain KENNY said, as a member of the Committee which examined this Bill, he wished to say a few words. It appeared to him that the amendment proposed by the Hon. the Colonial Secretary left the matter just where it was before. It was no settlement of the vexed question, which, though not of so much importance to the colony, was one that had exercised the minds of the people of New Plymouth and the surrounding district for a great number of years. As the Chairman of the Committee had already explained, a great deal of care and attention had been devoted by the Committee in hearing evidence and thoroughly investigating the original title under which the land was given to New Plymouth. He felt quite sure that every member of the Committee exercised a most judicial spirit in examining this question, and, if they had a bias at all, it was in favour of the policy of devoting this land to purposes of recreation, and to the general benefit not only of the Town of New Plymouth, but of the surrounding districts. But it was found that the Borough of New Plymouth had a vested interest and a claim which it was impossible not to recognize, and after due consideration it appeared to the Committee that the only way to meet the equities of the case was to recommend legislation in the direction prescribed by the original dedication of the land—that was to say, that the land was to be a source of revenue to the borough, subject to its use for certain public purposes. It was quite true that it might be argued that the Borough Council would not permit a sufficient amount of the revenue accruing from this land to be used for the purpose of maintaining it as a recreation-ground, and that they might be tempted to devote a larger portion than would be just to the lightening of local taxation. There was no doubt that that objection could be raised; but he thought they ought not to assume that there would be such a spirit in the Borough Council, and that they would so far break faith in regard to the trust imposed upon them; nor did he think that, as citizens of New Plymouth, and as representing the interests of New Plymouth and the surrounding districts, they would be so short-sighted, for the sake of slightly lightening the taxation, as not to carry out in an equitable spirit the trust imposed on them. Moreover, he could not see how it was possible for Parliament to legislate in a direction differing from the original terms of the reserve; and under these circumstances, however much he might regret that considerable disappointment would result to the country settlers of New Plymouth, it appeared to him that, unless some compromise could be thought of—unless, for instance, the borough could in some way be reimbursed for the loss of revenue—the Council had no other course open but the one recommended by the Committee.

Bill read a second time.

IN COMMITTEE.

The Hon. Mr. BUCKLEY proposed new clause 7 to provide that the surplus revenue should be allocated as the Assembly might enact.

The Hon. Mr. REEVES proposed, as an amendment, to omit all the words of the clause, with a view to inserting the following: "Subject to the payment of charges necessary for the maintenance and improvement of the reserves, all moneys accruing from the reserves from time to time shall form part of the Borough Fund."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 7.

Buckley	Miller	Robinson
Holmes	Reynolds	Whitaker.
McLean		

NOES, 11.

Acland	Johnson, G. R.	Reeves
Barnicoat	Kenny	Swanson
Bathgate	Lahmann	Wilson.
Grace	Peacock	

Majority against, 4.

Words omitted.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 12.

Acland	Johnson, G. R.	Reeves
Barnicoat	Kenny	Shrimski
Bathgate	Lahmann	Swanson
Grace	Peacock	Wilson.

NOES, 8.

Buckley	McLean	Robinson
Fraser	Miller	Whitaker.
Holmes	Reynolds	

Majority for, 4.

Words inserted.

Bill reported.

SPECIAL POWERS AND CONTRACTS BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Sir F. WHITAKER.—As the mover of the adjournment of the debate, it devolves upon me to state my reasons for the course I am about to take. When the Bill was under discussion I stated that I had many objections to it; but I also stated that I

No. 28.

NEW ZEALAND.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

SESSION 1886.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

16th August to 18th August.

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WELLINGTON:
BY AUTHORITY: GEORGE DIDSBURY, GOVERNMENT PRINTER.

1886.

Price 2d.

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Motion agreed to, and Bill committed.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 15.—West Coast reserves: amended rovisions as to grant of new leases on sur- ender.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the lause be struck out,

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be a clause of the Bill."

AYES, 7.

Barnicoat	Lahmann	Taiaroa
Buckley	Martin	Wigley.
Kenny		

NOES, 17.

Chamberlin	Johnson, G. R.	Robinson
Dignan	Mantell	Shephard
Fraser	McLean	Swanson
Grace	Miller	Whitaker
Hart	Pollen	Wilson.
Holmes	Reeves	

Majority against, 10.

Clause struck out.

Clause 18.—Apportionment of Hospital and Lunatic Asylum reserves at Nelson and Wellington.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the first paragraph be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 14.

Barnicoat	Lahmann	Shrimski
Buckley	Martin	Taiaroa
Grace	Peacock	Walker
Johnson, G. R.	Reynolds	Wigley.
Kenny	Shephard	

NOES, 14.

Chamberlin	Mantell	Robinson
Dignan	McLean	Swanson
Fraser	Miller	Whitaker
Hart	Pollen	Wilson.
Holmes	Reeves	

The CHAIRMAN gave his casting-vote with the "Ayes."

Words retained.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be a clause of the Bill."

AYES, 11.

Barnicoat	Martin	Taiaroa
Buckley	Reynolds	Walker
Kenny	Shephard	Wigley.
Lahmann	Shrimski	

NOES, 18.

Acland	Holmes	Pollen
Chamberlin	Johnson, G. R.	Reeves
Dignan	Mantell	Robinson
Fraser	McLean	Swanson
Grace	Miller	Whitaker
Hart	Peacock	Wilson.

Majority against, 7.

Clause struck out.

First Schedule.

Paragraph 18.—Thermal Springs leases.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the paragraph be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the schedule."

AYES, 8.

Barnicoat	Holmes	Shrimski
Buckley	Lahmann	Walker.
Hart	Martin	

NOES, 18.

Acland	McLean	Robinson
Chamberlin	Miller	Shephard
Dignan	Peacock	Swanson
Fraser	Pollen	Taiaroa
Johnson, G. R.	Reeves	Whitaker
Kenny	Reynolds	Wilson.

Majority against, 10.

Paragraph struck out.

Paragraph 21.—Recreation-ground, cemetery, and rifle-range, Onehunga.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the paragraph be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the schedule."

AYES, 6.

Buckley	Hart	Martin
Dignan	Lahmann	Walker.

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The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be a clause of the Bill."

AYES, 7.

Barnicoat	Lahmann	Taiaroa
Buckley	Martin	Wigley.
Kenny		

NOES, 17.

Chamberlin	Johnson, G. R.	Robinson
Dignan	Mantell	Shephard
Fraser	McLean	Swanson
Grace	Miller	Whitaker
Hart	Pollen	Wilson.
Holmes	Reeves	

Majority against, 10.

Clause struck out.

Clause 18.—Apportionment of Hospital and Lunatic Asylum reserves at Nelson and Wellington.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the first paragraph be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 14.

Barnicoat	Lahmann	Shrimski
Buckley	Martin	Taiaroa
Grace	Peacock	Walker
Johnson, G. R.	Reynolds	Wigley.
Kenny	Shephard	

NOES, 14.

Chamberlin	Mantell	Robinson
Dignan	McLean	Swanson
Fraser	Miller	Whitaker
Hart	Pollen	Wilson.
Holmes	Reeves	

The CHAIRMAN gave his casting-vote with the "Ayes."

Words retained.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be a clause of the Bill."

AYES, 11.

Barnicoat	Martin	Taiaroa
Buckley	Reynolds	Walker
Kenny	Shephard	Wigley.
Lahmann	Shrimski	

NOES, 18.

Acland	Holmes	Pollen
Chamberlin	Johnson, G. R.	Reeves
Dignan	Mantell	Robinson
Fraser	McLean	Swanson
Grace	Miller	Whitaker
Hart	Peacock	Wilson.

Majority against, 7.

Clause struck out.

First Schedule.

Paragraph 18.—Thermal Springs leases.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the paragraph be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the schedule."

AYES, 8.

Barnicoat	Holmes	Shrimski
Buckley	Lahmann	Walker.
Hart	Martin	

NOES, 18.

Acland	McLean	Robinson
Chamberlin	Miller	Shephard
Dignan	Peacock	Swanson
Fraser	Pollen	Taiaroa
Johnson, G. R.	Reeves	Whitaker
Kenny	Reynolds	Wilson.

Majority against, 10.

Paragraph struck out.

Paragraph 21.—Recreation-ground, cemetery, and rifle-range, Onehunga.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the paragraph be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the schedule."

AYES, 6.

Buckley	Hart	Martin
Dignan	Lahmann	Walker.

NOES, 19.

Acland	Miller	Shephard
Barnicoat	Peacock	Shrimski
Chamberlin	Pollen	Swanson
Fraser	Reeves	Taiaroa
Holmes	Reynolds	Whitaker
Johnson, G. R.	Robinson	Wilson.
McLean		

Majority against, 13.

Paragraph struck out.

Paragraph 42.—Land vested in the Fine Arts Society of New Zealand.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN moved, That the paragraph be struck out, with a view of inserting words to provide that the land to be vested should be all that parcel, comprising 15·2 perches, section 4, Block III., Thorndon reclamation.

Paragraph struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 20.

Barnicoat	Johnson, G. R.	Reynolds
Bathgate	Kenny	Robinson
Buckley	Lahmann	Taiaroa
Chamberlin	Mantell	Whitaker
Dignan	McLean	Wigley
Fraser	Pollen	Wilson.
Grace	Reeves	

NOES, 3.

Shephard	Shrimski	Swanson.

Majority for, 17.

Words inserted.

Paragraph as amended agreed to.

New paragraph 71.—New grant may be issued to Wi Tako and his heirs of certain land on Lambton Quay, Wellington.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the proposed paragraph be a paragraph of the schedule."

AYES, 8.

Barnicoat	Lahmann	Reynolds
Buckley	Martin	Taiaroa.
Dignan	McLean	

NOES, 17.

Acland	Kenny	Swanson
Bathgate	Mantell	Walker
Chamberlin	Pollen	Whitaker
Fraser	Reeves	Wigley
Grace	Shephard	Wilson.
Johnson, G. R.	Shrimski	

Majority against, 9.

Paragraph rejected.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

The Council adjourned at twenty-five minutes past nine o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Monday, 16th August, 1886.

W. Moore and Others—Clutha River Floating Flour-Mills—Railway Contracts—Duplication of Auckland Penrose Railway-line—Quartz-testing—Village Settlements—Red Hills Prospecting—Inspector of Machinery—Special Powers and Contracts Bill—Harbours Bill—Owhaoko and Kaimanawa-Oruamatua Reinvestigation of Title Bill—New Plymouth Recreation Reserve Bill—Minister resident in Dunedin—Auckland Land Purchase—Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at eleven o'clock.

PRAYERS.

W. MOORE AND OTHERS.

Mr. REID asked the Government, Whether they will give effect to the recommendation of the Waste Lands Committee on the petition of William Moore and others, which was brought down on the 28th July last?

Mr. BALLANCE said that the Government regarded this as an equitable claim, and would give effect to the report of the Committee.

CLUTHA RIVER FLOATING FLOUR-MILLS.

Mr. PYKE asked the Minister of Lands, Whether the Government are prepared to offer facilities for the placing of floating flour-mills on the Clutha River; and, if so, of what nature, and for what period or term of years?

Mr. BALLANCE said there was no power to grant anything in the way of a monopoly, and whatever might be done in this matter would have to be carefully considered in reference to existing rights. He proposed to give attention to the matter immediately after the session, to see what could be done.

RAILWAY CONTRACTS.

Mr. BRUCE asked the Minister for Public Works if, now that the public works estimates had been passed, he would let the Hunterville contract. There were a number of men in the district who had been waiting for a considerable time in hopes of obtaining employment on this contract.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that there were three or four contracts which were in the same position as this one, and would be let immediately.

Mr. SEDDON asked—(1) if the contract for the Arahura Bridge would be let immediately; (2) whether it was true that the wages of the men employed on the Christchurch-Hokitika Road had been reduced; and, if so, whether they would be restored to their original rate.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON replied that the contract for the bridge was among the three or four that he had said would be let. As to the men's wages, he had to say that immediately on his hearing of the proposal to reduce these men's wages he had given orders that no such step should be taken.

DUPLICATION OF AUCKLAND-PENROSE RAILWAY-LINE.

Mr. PEACOCK asked the Minister for Public Works, whether inquiries were still being made with regard to compensation claims in respect to the western loop-line to run out of Auckland, and whether he expected to have them before him soon

Mr. E. RICHARDSON had no doubt that the claims would be brought before him soon; but he might say at once that, so far as was already known to the department, the claims were so large that it would be quite impossible to take a line by the route which would involve paying such claims. The whole matter was under consideration.

Mr. MOSS hoped that there was no understanding that the "western line" was decided upon.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said there were three proposals under the consideration of the Government. One was that the present line should have another line laid alongside it. Supposing that not to be done, there were two other routes which had been advocated. The whole question was still under the consideration of the Government.

QUARTZ-TESTING.

Major STEWARD asked the Minister of Mines, Whether he will arrange to provide, at some convenient place in the Middle Island, facilities for crushing and testing auriferous quartz?

Mr. LARNACH said he should be glad to take the whole matter into consideration during the recess. He did not know whether such works should be established; but, if so, they should be established in connection with the Geological Department in Wellington and in other parts of the colony.

Mr. HOBBS asked whether a similar arrangement could be made in regard to the North Island.

Mr. LARNACH could only say, as he had indicated in the last reply, that the whole question should receive consideration.

VILLAGE SETTLEMENTS.

Mr. TURNBULL said he had observed by the *Timaru Herald* that Mr. March was to attend at Geraldine on Thursday next to give information in reference to starting a village settlement at that place. He would like to know whether there was any land available at Timaru for a similar purpose, and, if so, whether Mr. March would be instructed to attend there to give information.

Mr. BALLANCE replied that he was not aware that there was any Crown land at Timaru available. If the honourable member, from his local knowledge, was aware that there was any, and would afford him any information on the subject, he would see that Mr. March sent in a report.

RED HILLS PROSPECTING.

Mr. SEDDON asked whether the Minister of Mines would see that the country in the neighbourhood of the Red Hills and in the neighbourhood of Jackson's Bay should be prospected during the recess.

Mr. LARNACH said he had had the matter under consideration, and he had no doubt he would have the country prospected.

INSPECTOR OF MACHINERY.

Mr. SEDDON asked if it was true that Mr. Wilson, of the Marine Department, was to be the successor of Mr. Nancarrow as Inspector of Machinery and Boilers. If so, he thought it would be a bad appointment, because it was necessary that a mechanic should be engaged to do such work.

Mr. LARNACH said this was the first he had heard of the matter.

SPECIAL POWERS AND CONTRACTS BILL.

Dr. NEWMAN asked whether the Premier had any statement to make with reference to the Special Powers and Contracts Bill having been laid aside by the Legislative Council.

Sir R. STOUT said that, so far as he understood the matter, the Bill had been laid aside before its committal. It was down for committal to-day, and he hoped the Council would commit it, as he believed there was no precedent to lay a Bill aside before its committal.

HARBOURS BILL.

A message was received from the Governor amending section 23 of the Harbours Bill by striking out the words "two shillings," and inserting the words "fifteen pence."

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. MACANDREW would like to know what reason there was for the House receding from the position it had taken up.

Sir R. STOUT said the reason was simply that the jump from 6d. to 2s. would involve a heavy charge upon local steamship companies, and it was thought that the limit of 1s. 3d. gave a sufficient increase of taxation.

Mr. SUTTER said he was one of the members of the Conference, and, having a great interest in the Timaru Harbour Board, he thought it would be a wise arrangement to accept the amendment. It was not exactly what he wanted, but he was of opinion that the House would do well to accept it. One clause in the Act was of serious consequence to all Harbour Boards, and that was the clause referring to the steam-tug service. They had been spending money on tugs and employing men in them without any authority, and it was therefore of the greatest consequence to the Boards that the Act should pass.

Mr. MONTGOMERY said the Government were either on their own account asking the House to alter its opinion with regard to the amount that should be put in the Bill—to consider whether it was not wrong in its previous decision—or else they were doing this at the instigation of the other House; and he thought it would be very much better to reject the Bill altogether.

Mr. GUINNESS hoped the House would agree to the amendment. The Bill had been introduced in the Legislative Council to amend the original Harbours Act with the object of authorizing Harbour Boards to establish a tug-service, and when the Bill came down to the House of Representatives several other altera-

tions and amendments were found to be necessary in it. The honourable member for Gladstone got this particular clause, with regard to which the message had been brought down, inserted in the Bill by this House. If it were possible to leave that clause out of the Bill he would support that course; but he understood that was not possible, as the Managers for both Houses had agreed to the clause. He hoped the Bill would be allowed to pass in its present form, because it was absolutely necessary to have some clauses of the Bill, which would validate many illegal acts of certain Harbour Boards in expending their funds in the employment of steam-tugs.

Mr. BRYCE would be willing to agree with the proposed alteration but for one consideration, and that was that practically, if they did agree to it, they were, in effect, allowing the other Chamber to alter a money Bill. That, he believed, was the fact, although the Premier certainly avoided the point in the few remarks he had made. If that were so, rather than establish so dangerous a precedent it would be much better to drop the Bill altogether.

Mr. ROLLESTON agreed with the remarks that had fallen from the last speaker, and would go a little further. The position was this: The other Chamber had interfered with what the House considered to be one of its privileges; and that had been sent back as the reason for disagreeing with the amendment. A Conference took place, and that Conference practically went upon the supposition that there had been no breach of privilege. The House ought not, as he understood it, to discuss the merits of the question when there had been a breach of privilege, as that alone was a sufficient reason to give for disagreement. He was one of those who agreed that 1s. 3d. was a sufficiently large increase; but there was an extraordinary irregularity in this matter, or, at any rate, a novelty in the proceedings that the House ought not to pass by hastily, which was that an alteration was brought in by Governor's message in order to set right a difference between the two Houses. He understood the Conference had agreed in a manner which he thought was not in accordance with what was usual when it had been determined that there had been a breach of privilege on the part of the other House. The result, he believed, was this: that the interference of the Upper House had terminated in an alteration which had been brought in not in accordance with the proper mode of procedure.

Mr. MACANDREW thought there was no necessity whatever for the House to throw out the Bill. Let them refuse to assent to the Governor's message, and then the Bill would stand as it was—"not exceeding two shillings;" and it would be for the local bodies to arrange what the amount should be. The Premier had failed to give any good reason why they should alter the 2s. to 1s. 3d., and he would move, That the House do not agree with the message.

Major ATKINSON was very much surprised at the arguments of his honourable friends, who had entirely misunderstood the position. According to them not only had House to assert its privileges and maintain them, but the Government were not to be convinced by any arguments one way or the other. He differed entirely from the arguments of his honourable friends. He understood that when a question of privilege was involved it was taken up by message to the other House, which was asked to waive its amendments on the assertion of the question of privilege. The other House, upon that, did not wish to waive its amendments, and a Conference was asked for. No doubt it was the business of the Managers appointed by the House to see that its privileges were maintained, and it was their business to do that by argument, the simple statement of the fact having failed in its effect. The Managers of the Conference of both Houses met on the present occasion, and after argument, came to the conclusion that the amendment of the Council should be waived and the amendment of the House accepted. The Conference had no power in any shape or form to make any agreement as to what the Government might do, or as to what His Excellency might do: that was entirely outside the power of the Conference. The Government were perfectly free to make any recommendation they might think fit to make, and of course His Excellency followed that advice or not as he saw fit. The whole thing appeared to him to be very reasonable and proper. He was not one of those who desired that the Government should not meet the views of another place—the privileges of the House having been duly asserted and granted.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Altogether wrong.

Major ATKINSON.—His honourable friend said that was altogether wrong: if so, that was saying at once that the other House had no right to have any influence upon the Government in any way; and he maintained that they had a perfect right, by argument, to affect the question in any way they could. The privileges of the House had been properly asserted, and he thought the Government had acted wisely in taking the course they had adopted.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND said it appeared that they were now doing something which the other Chamber had compelled them to do, because if these alterations were not made the Bill would be thrown out. He would like the Premier to say whether, if they refused to agree to the amendment proposed in the Governor's message, that would kill the Bill, and, if it did, why it did.

Sir R. STOUT would point out that it was the House of Representatives that first offended in this matter. This was not a money Bill, and the House chose to put a money clause into it. He did not say that in so doing the House was not within its power and its rights; but the course was an unusual one. The second Conference upheld the privileges of the House, and stated that the 2s. must remain, no alteration being made in it; and, so far as the Houses were concerned, that must remain. Then the matter was considered by the

Government; and, seeing that this was a jump from 6d. to 2s., they thought they would be sufficiently increasing the taxation upon shipping by making the increase 1s. 3d.; and he would ask the House if that was not fair.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—No.

Sir R. STOUT could not understand the honourable gentleman when he said "No." When there was an increase of taxation upon other things, would the honourable gentleman be found voting for such an increase as that? He hoped the House would affirm the amendment of this Bill.

Amendment agreed to.

OWHAOKO AND KAIMANAWA-ORUAMATUA REINVESTIGATION OF TITLE BILL.

Mr. BALLANCE moved, That the Owhaoko and Kaimanawa-Oruamatua Reinvestigation of Title Bill be considered in Committee.

Mr. BRYCE did not wish to oppose this Bill at all. In fact, he preferred that it should pass. But he would ask the Native Minister if, at this period of the session, he thought it would pass in another place. It was a Bill which was referred to a Select Committee, which took a great deal of evidence. The other House would either have to accept that inquiry, or make a similar one itself before it passed the Bill.

Mr. BALLANCE said the Bill would have been postponed until next session but for the fact that a subdivision of some of this land had already taken place, and Crown grants were about to issue. They had not been issued simply because this question was pending; and therefore it was desirable that the Bill should pass this session. As to what would be done in another place with regard to this Bill, he must confess he was in a state of profound ignorance. He thought, at any rate, it was the duty of the Government to try to have this Bill passed, for the reasons he had given.

Motion agreed to.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—Owhaoko and Kaimanawa blocks of land declared to be Native land, and subject to the jurisdiction of the Native Land Court.

Mr. BRYCE moved, That the words, "and the Kaimanawa-Oruamatua Block, one hundred and fifteen thousand one hundred acres," be struck out, with a view of inserting other words making it optional for the Court to grant a rehearing.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 39.

Ballance	Fraser	Locke
Barron	Gore	Macandrew
B.-Bradshaw	Grace	Mackenzie, M.
Brown	Grey	McKenzie, J.
Buchanan	Guinness	McMillan
Cadman	Hatch	Menteath
Cowan	Kerr	Montgomery
Dodson	Lance	Parata
Duncan	Larnach	Pere
Reese	Te Ao	Walker.
Richardson, E.	Tole	
Ross	Turnbull	*Tellers.*
Smith	Vogel	O'Callaghan
Stout		Seddon.

NOES, 16.

Atkinson	Macarthur	Trimble
Beetham	Moss	Wilson.
Bryce	Newman	
Buckland, J. C.	Richardson, G.	*Tellers.*
Buckland, W. F.	Rolleston	Conolly
Lake	Thomson, J. W.	Pearson.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Bruce	Russell
Levestam	Fulton
O'Conor.	Buckland, J. C.

Majority for, 23.

Words retained.

Bill reported, and read a third time.

NEW PLYMOUTH RECREATION RESERVE BILL.

A message was received from the Legislative Council, stating that they had passed the New Plymouth Recreation Reserve Bill with amendments, in which they asked the concurrence of the House.

Major ATKINSON moved, That the amendments be disagreed with, as the Council had entirely changed the nature of the Bill.

Mr. HOBBS thought the amendments made by the Council were necessary, and would be approved of by the inhabitants of New Plymouth.

Amendments disagreed with.

MINISTER RESIDENT IN DUNEDIN.

On the motion for going into Committee of Supply,

Mr. BRADSHAIGH-BRADSHAW moved, That in the opinion of this House it is desirable that a Minister of the Crown should be resident in Dunedin during the recess.

Mr. MOSS thought it was time the country should know the meaning of this motion on going into Supply. The Government were carrying out a system, every time this motion came on, of putting up one of their supporters to close the mouths of their opponents.

Mr. BRADSHAIGH-BRADSHAW.—I deny it.

Mr. MOSS said this motion was prompted by the Government.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable member must accept the denial of the honourable member for Dunedin Central that the amendment was suggested by the Government.

Mr. MOSS, in deference to Mr. Speaker, would withdraw the expression; but he believed what he had said. On a former occasion a Government supporter moved that the seat of Government should be removed to Christchurch, and another subsequently moved that it should be removed to Nelson, in order to prevent other honourable members from bringing forward their motions. It was a mere trick.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable member

was out of order in applying such a term to an honourable member who denied any complicity with the Government in this matter.

Mr. BRADSHAIGH-BRADSHAW said that no member of the Government prompted him to bring forward the motion: no Government whip did so.

Mr. MOSS would accept the honourable member's statement, as a matter of course.

Sir J. VOGEL asked if the honourable member should not apologize.

Mr. SPEAKER was understood to say that, as the honourable member had intimated his desire to withdraw the words complained of, he deemed that that would be sufficient without requiring him to apologize.

Mr. MOSS would apologize when requested by Mr. Speaker, but would not do so at the request of the Treasurer, who had no right to interrupt him. Was the Treasurer conscience-stricken in the matter? There were few opportunities given to honourable members to bring forward motions which they had at heart. Going into Committee of Supply was one opportunity; but on each occasion a supporter of the Government had got up and moved some absurd and ridiculous motion which was sure to be negatived, thus depriving other members of the opportunity of bringing forward their motions. The motion he had intended to propose, and which had been forestalled——

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable member could not discuss his motion at the present stage of the proceedings.

Mr. MOSS said he believed that on the occasion of going into Committee of Supply an opportunity was given to honourable members to discuss public grievances.

Mr. SPEAKER said that as soon as this amendment was disposed of, and the question came on to be finally put, "That Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair," the honourable member could discuss any public grievance; but he must not refer to any order of the day or notice of motion on the Order Paper, or any item on the present year's estimates.

Mr. MOSS said he would then defer the further consideration of his motion for the present.

Mr. ROSS thought this a motion of an important character, which ought to receive careful consideration. It was well known that when any member of the Ministry visited Dunedin he had to receive a great many deputations on various subjects of public business, and this was in itself evidence of how much work there would be to engage the attention of a resident Minister in Dunedin. Dunedin was the centre of perhaps the most important provincial district in the colony, and in it there had been a greater amount of loan expenditure than in any other provincial district, and therefore there must have been a larger amount of works executed which required looking after. To make that clear, he would give a few figures showing the loan expenditure in the different districts from the 1st January, 1870, to the 31st March, 1886, and other figures, showing the population of, and the revenue contributed from, each district:—

—	Loan Expenditure from Jan. 1, 1870, to March 31, 1886.	Population.	Revenue from April 1, 1881, to March 31, 1886.	Contributed [illegible]
	£		£	£
Auckland ...	3,904,488	130,379	2,760,3[illegible]	7,38[illegible]
Taranaki ...	909,442	17,999	451,9[illegible]	1,2[illegible]
Wellington ...	3,323,661	77,5[illegible]	2,458,79[illegible]	[illegible]
Hawke's Bay ...	1,033,871	24,568	547,610	1,5[illegible]
Nelson	1,179,969	30,2[illegible]	547,06[illegible]	1,5[illegible]
Marlborough ...	416,311	11,113	156,2[illegible]	[illegible]
Canterbury ...	3,872,952	121,400	2,825,8[illegible]	7,35[illegible]
Westland ...	1,134,127	15,931	349,497	[illegible]
Otago	5,974,222	149,154	4,744,229	2,[illegible]

In addition to the above, there had been an expenditure of £2,419,123 for general purposes. He had not been able to ascertain what portion of this had been expended in each provincial district. It should be noted that the figures given as to Taranaki revenue were subject to the fact that 25 per cent. of the land revenue of that district went to the harbour works. He thought these figures showed how important it was that a Minister should reside in Dunedin during the recess.

Mr. F. W. BUCKLAND would like to point out to the last speaker that he had gone on the population basis, but he had omitted to mention that £573,225 had been spent in bringing people out to Otago, and therefore it was no wonder that so much had been spent there, the expenditure being on the population basis. And he supposed it was the contention of members from Otago that, so much having been spent on the population basis, the colony should go on spending on that basis. He did not hold that opinion at all, and he also thought that if a Minister was required to reside in the South Island it should be at Christchurch. But the Government had anticipated this difficulty, and had kept the Minister of Mines travelling about during last recess, mainly in Otago and Dunedin. Members, seeing the large cost that honourable gentleman had put the country to for travelling expenses, desired that he should live there, believing, no doubt, that he would spend as much there instead of spending it all about the country. But the Government had foreseen this too, and so they had appointed another Minister, the Hon. Mr. Reynolds; and probably the honourable member for Dunedin Central was afraid lest that honourable gentleman should be kept here instead of being sent back to live at Dunedin during the recess. He thought, however, the Government might well allow him to live at Dunedin. This gentleman had gone into the Ministry for the express purpose of retrenchment, and so he would be able to start that retrenchment at Dunedin; and, no doubt, what the honourable member for Dunedin Central wished was to have a first-class retrenching Minister among them at Dunedin, to cut down the enormous expense in that district.

Mr. O'CONOR said Ministers were appointed

to govern the country well; and, to enable them to do that, it was necessary that they should travel about and see the country, instead of being all resident in one place and being dependent for information on others—on those under them—information of the truth of which they could not be satisfied unless they went about the country themselves.

Mr. BRYCE asked, if a Minister were resident in Dunedin, how would he take part in Cabinet discussions, and if he did not take part in them how was he to be bound by them?

The House divided on the question, "That the words, 'Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair in order to go into Committee of Supply,' stand part of the question."

AYES, 36.

Atkinson	Hamlin	Richardson, G.
Ballance	Kerr,	Rolleston
Bruce	Lake	Smith
Bryce	Levestam	Steward, W. J.
Buckland, J. C.	Locke	Stout
Buckland, W.F.	McKenzie, J.	Tole
Cadman	McMillan	Trimble
Conolly	Montgomery	Vogel
Cowan	Newman	Walker.
Duncan	Parata	*Tellers.*
Fisher	Reese	Menteath
Fitzherbert	Richardson, E.	O'Conor.
Fulton		

NOES, 17.

Barron	Hirst, H.	Pearson
Beetham	Hobbs	Ross
Fergus	Joyce	Turnbull.
Gore	Larnach	*Tellers.*
Grey	Macandrew	B.-Bradshaw
Hatch	Macarthur	Moss.

Majority for, 19.

Motion agreed to.

AUCKLAND LAND PURCHASE.

On the motion, That Mr. Speaker do now leave the chair,

Mr. MOSS said,—I hope I shall not find it necessary to transgress the rule you have laid down, Sir, that I must not refer to any item on the present year's estimates. It has been rumoured that there was some desperate intention on my part to bring most important matters before the House, and that it was necessary to use every means to frustrate that intention. What I intended to bring forward was a motion affirming the necessity of the House insisting upon a statement being laid on the table, at the earliest possible moment after the next meeting of Parliament, showing the amount of money that has been expended under the votes "Harbour defences," Class IX., and "Purchase of Native lands," Class VI., for last year and this year. As I cannot refer to this year's estimates, it will illustrate my contention if I refer to those of last year. Very large sums of money are placed at the absolute disposal of the Native and Defence Ministers. These sums are spent at the Government's pleasure in the purchase of private and Native lands. No account whatever is laid on the table of the House showing how the money has been spent. As large a sum as a quarter of a million has been spent in this way. Out of the vote given last year there was the one sum of £17,100 for a piece of land the purchase of which has become a public scandal in Auckland. With regard to this quarter of a million no intimation has up to this moment been given to the House on what the money was expended. The Government is also said to have paid the enormous price of £27 per foot for a bit of land for a torpedo-boat shed, but there is not the slightest record of this purchase before the House. So far as the Stark purchase is concerned, the Government have accepted the responsibility, declared that it was a right purchase, and that their officers are not in the least degree to blame. I therefore wish, as an Auckland member, to say that the very great majority of the Auckland people—I venture to say that there are not a dozen dissentients—are very greatly concerned that they should appear before the country as in any way participators in what they consider an enormous scandal. That is the only feeling of the Auckland people, and therefore it is that I hope this House will not for a moment look upon this matter as an Auckland scandal, but that they will free the Auckland people from any blame in the matter. There are not a dozen people in Auckland who would care to defend that transaction, and therefore the entire blame must rest with the Government, who have upheld the purchase, and who have not given this House the slightest chance of discussing the question or expressing an opinion on it. I ask whether it is right and proper that the Government should have such enormous sums placed at their disposal to spend in such a way. Is it right that their virtue should be tried to such an extent? I have been debarred from moving for the production of the returns with regard to these transactions, but I hope that I shall still be afforded an opportunity of doing so, even though it should be by moving as an amendment to the Appropriation Bill a resolution to the effect "that there be laid upon the table within three days after the beginning of the next session a statement of the expenditure and of the liabilities, under the votes for harbour defences and purchase of Native lands, for each of the financial years 1886 and 1887: the statement to show the several amounts paid, the services for which paid, and the persons to whom paid, respectively." If that should be carried, the House will know what has been done with those great sums of money of which the Government has had the uncontrolled expenditure, and it will give the Government a warning to be more careful in the future.

Mr. HOBBS.—The honourable gentleman has jumped my claim. I do not know whether he has forgotten, but I told him that I was going to bring this matter forward, and he advised me not to do it. The motion I intended to move was that there should be a Royal Commission appointed at once, to sit in Auckland and inquire into the purchase of the Stark property, with power to call for papers and

persons. I consider that in that purchase there has been a decided defrauding of the colony.

Sir R. STOUT.—By whom?

Mr. HOBBS.—That is just the point we wish to find out, and that is why I want a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter. Many of the persons who gave evidence before the Committee were interested in the matter, and therefore we cannot consider that it has been gone into as it ought to have been, because some of them had to clear their characters. I am not surprised that there is so strong a feeling in Auckland on the subject, for I have no hesitation in saying that the colony has been defrauded to the extent of £10,000—that £10,000 more was given for the property than ought to have been given. We are well aware that the matter has been investigated by a Committee; but I am not at all satisfied with the result. The House has not had an opportunity of discussing the report of that Committee, and the people will not be satisfied until the whole thing has been investigated by an impartial Commission. I do not wish to cast any reflection upon the Minister for Public Works, but I do say that there has been some collusion in reference to the purchase of this property, and that the colony has been defrauded of £10,000 at the very least.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Who is to prove it?

Mr. HOBBS.—I do not know. I cast the whole responsibility upon the Government, so that they may have inquiries made by a Royal Commission in Auckland. I hope that the Government will feel that it is incumbent on them to institute an inquiry at once.

Mr. GORE.—As one of the Committee who brought up this report, I should like to say that, in my opinion, if the gentleman who spoke last had read the evidence he would not have been so positive as he is. I should like to give my reasons for voting in favour of the report brought up. We had before us the officer who valued the property for the Government, and he gave his evidence that the property was worth the money, and in reply to a question put by the Minister for Public Works he stated that at the time the purchase was being made it was not advisable to take the matter into the Assessment Court, because, if it were taken into Court, he believed that the result would be that the Government would have to pay £17,500 and also expenses. The property-tax valuer valued it at the same amount. These gentlemen were two Government officers; and, if the Government are not to be guided by their officers, by whom are they to be guided? Their evidence was supported by that of Mr. Aitken, a gentleman who I believe has been Chairman of the Auckland Chamber of Commerce, who is held in high repute in Auckland, and who, no doubt, is absolutely trustworthy. He stated that the price was not too much, and he added that if the land were sold in allotments it would realize more than was paid for it. Then there was Mr. Alison, whose evidence was taken on oath. It had been said that he was a partner of Stark's; but I do not think that my honourable gentleman who reads that evidence will come to the conclusion that Mr Alison had anything to do with it. I do not think that honourable gentlemen are prepared to charge Mr. Alison with perjury — which is actually what they are doing when they say that he was connected with the matter. I am free to admit that I was prejudiced against Mr. Alison; but, after his explanation, I think it is perfectly easy to understand why he made an offer of £16,000 for the land. I have come to the conclusion—and his evidence will bear me out—that Mr. Alison, knowing that the Government would eventually have to purchase this land, and being a keen man of business, thought he could make a thousand pounds if he could only get hold of the land. I can quite conceive the probability of such a man trying to get the property for £16,000 in order that he might in turn make a profit out of the Government. The honourable member for the Bay of Islands says that he wishes an impartial tribunal to look into the matter; but I do not know how he is going to get a more impartial tribunal than a Committee of this House. I, for one, have no personal interest in the matter, nor have I any interest in the local differences of opinion which may exist in Auckland; it is not a question I feel very acutely on, one way or the other: and I claim that I, at any rate, was perfectly impartial. As far as the charge of collusion is concerned, I do not think that is proved on the evidence. Whatever honourable members' ideas may be, if they are guided by the evidence—and it is only by the evidence that they should be guided—they cannot but come to the conclusion that no collusion was proved to the Committee. I do not think that any other decision than that arrived at could have been come to by impartial men. And I have to observe that rebutting evidence was all by letter and telegram, and therefore should not have so much weight attached to it as evidence given before the Committee on oath. I do not see any necessity for going any further in the matter. As to Royal Commissions, we have had a good many of them, and we know what the general results of them are. I do not believe that any good would come of appointing a Commission to sit in Auckland.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I also was a member of the Committee, and I took great pains to make myself acquainted with the evidence that was submitted to us; and I agree with what has fallen from the honourable member who has last spoken. But there are one or two circumstances which the honourable gentleman omitted to mention. There was a Mr. Mays who gave evidence, and he stated distinctly that if he had been asked for advice as to what amount might be lent upon that property he would have advised a client to go as far as £10,000; and he further stated that he believed that if the property were cut up and sold by auction—sold at a forced sale—it would still leave a margin of profit. That showed that the property was worth considerably more than

some honourable gentlemen tried to make out; because it must be remembered that no man would advise a client to lend money up to, or nearly up to, the full value of property. Then, there was the Minister for Public Works, who stated on oath that when he was in Auckland he made inquiries from other persons—independent persons, who had nothing to do with the matter—as to the value of the property, and was assured by them that if the Government got the property at from £15,000 to £16,000 they would make a good bargain. I take it that by far the greater portion of the evidence taken before the Committee was in favour of the Government. We had it further stated that if the case were taken into the Compensation Court they would not only have had to pay the price which had been paid, but that they would have been mulcted in the expense as well. I do not see how the Committee could have come to a different conclusion. We had it stated by the honourable member for Marsden, who was a witness, that he was sure that it was a deep-laid conspiracy. If that is so, surely you cannot blame the Government or their officers if they got entrapped in it. But I hold that the Government were quite justified in giving what they did give. Whether it was a fair price or not, is another matter; but with the information they had they were justified in giving what they did. Further inquiry would not result in any of the money being recovered, but would lead to a great deal more money being wasted. In other words, good money would be thrown after bad.

Dr. NEWMAN.—As a member of the Committee who considered this evidence very carefully, and who, in contradistinction to the honourable gentleman who spoke last, and who only attended the Committee, I think, twice——

Mr. LEVESTAM.—I rise in personal explanation. It is quite true that, as the honourable gentleman says, I only attended the Committee meetings twice, because it is quite impossible for a member to attend two or three Committees at once; but I may tell the honourable member this: that I read all the evidence very carefully, and considered it carefully before I came to a decision.

Dr. NEWMAN.—As I have made one statement which the honourable member admits to have been correct, I will make another which he will also admit to be correct. He said that two persons offered £16,000 for the property; but he actually knows so little about it as not to know that only one offer of £16,000 was made.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—That is not what I said at all. I said that the Minister for Public Works told us that when he was in Auckland he made inquiries from independent persons, and was told that the Government would get a good bargain if they could buy the land for £15,000 or £16,000.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I suppose the honourable gentleman will correct me again, but I repeat that the honourable gentleman said that there was an offer of £16,000; and directly afterwards he said that there was another offer of £16,000.

Mr. LEVESTAM.—No.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I do not wish to prolong the discussion, but this is a matter of considerable importance. The honourable gentleman who has just sat down told us that Mr. Oliver Mays told the Committee that the property might be worth £10,000; but he forgot to tell the House that we had evidence, volume after volume, which showed that Mr. Stark offered this property all over the place, through agent after agent, at £100 an acre, whereas he was paid £600 an acre. There can be no question that the price was quite exorbitant, and that £10,000 of public money was given away to a gentleman who has now left the colony, and that for all time the colony will have to pay interest on £10,000, which might just as well have been thrown into the sea. Then there comes in the question of conspiracy; and I hold that the report of the Committee was exceedingly unsatisfactory, because any right-minded man who has gone through the evidence can come to no other conclusion than that there was, somewhere or another—I do not say that the Government or the Minister for Public Works was implicated in it—a conspiracy, by which the colony has been robbed of £10,000. Yet, in spite of the clearest evidence, the Committee brought in this useless verdict. Had I thought that I had the remotest chance of carrying it, I should have moved—I had it written down on paper—that a Commission should be appointed—not a parliamentary Committee—to consist of a Judge of the Supreme Court, or of the District Court, to inquire into this matter; because I hold that if a Commission were to sit on the spot there is a good deal of evidence that might be obtained that we could not get. I see by telegrams in the papers that there is said to be fresh evidence forthcoming, and I have no doubt that there would be. If the Committee had gone to further expense, and had had time, it might have got fresh evidence; but if a Commission were appointed that would sit in Auckland, a large amount of fresh evidence would probably be forthcoming. I am very strongly of opinion—and this, too, I would have moved if I had thought there was any chance of carrying it — that where any property is purchased by the Government over the value of £2,000 the matter should be taken into the Compensation Court, where everything takes place in the light of day. I do not say this as applying to this Government in particular, but to all Governments. If such a course as that were adopted, we should run no risk of such a public outcry as has taken place in this instance. No one, I say, looking at the evidence can doubt that £17,000 was altogether an excessive price to pay; no one can doubt that it has created a grave scandal in Auckland; and no one can doubt that further inquiry should be made to see who it is that has defrauded the colony of £10,000. If the Ministry wish to relieve themselves, or their officers, of odium, they should insist on further inquiry

during the recess; for if they want to buy more land they must take the advice of these officers. Then there is talk about this offer of Mr. Alison. Who is Mr. Alison? Mr. Alison is a gentleman who comes forward and says that he knew nothing of the offer of the property, though he was a partner in land-transactions year in and year out with Mr. Stark. Mr. Alison was mixed up with him in a variety of land sales; Alison and Stark were always together; and yet Alison says he knows nothing whatever about the offer for sale of the property, though it is in evidence that Alison himself offered the property for a very moderate sum of money on one occasion. There is this very fortunate thing in connection with the inquiry: that Stark offered the property on seven different occasions to seven different persons; and there is this remarkable piece of evidence: that the latest offer of these was for £9,000, within a few months of the time when he received £17,000; and when he finds it is to be taken by the Government he arranges a plan, has a photograph taken, and cuts it up into worthless little sections, and says he wants £22,000 for it; and Mr. Alison, a gentleman in connection with him as partner, absolutely says he knew nothing about the transaction. Then, we have this extraordinary statement made by the property-tax valuer: that he did not know of any of the land-sales that were low—he only knew of those that were high; and he did not know, apparently, though he was intimate with the whole history, that this was going to be used as a battery-site. That was an extraordinary piece of evidence, when it was in all the papers what the site was wanted for, and when there were military officers there. This gentleman, who knows the value of every bit of land and all that was going on affecting it, absolutely declares he knew nothing about this. I hope the Government will not allow the matter to rest, but will probe it further, and appoint a Commission during the recess to see that justice is done somehow.

Mr. BARRON.—It does not seem as if any good could be done to the public service by reopening this question in this way. The whole inquiry was very carefully gone into by the Public Accounts Committee, and certain resolutions were agreed to on a division by 6 to 5. The question was, whether the Government were justified in purchasing the property at the price; and the majority, of which I was not one, voted that the Government were justified in purchasing at that price: that is to say—I am quoting from the published report of the Committee's proceedings—in a question affecting Ministers, in an inquiry to ascertain whether the Government were justified in doing a certain thing, two Ministers decided the question by voting that the Government were perfectly justified in doing that thing—that was, in effecting this purchase. The evidence of the Government Land Purchase officer—the person appointed by the Government to make the official valuation under which the purchase was made—shows that that officer had no local experience in Auckland. He had just been removed there, and he says in his evidence that the whole negotiations were very hurried indeed, and had he had more time to enter into the matter, and had he been able to bring to bear such local knowledge as he might have gained by a longer residence in the district, he probably might have given a different valuation. The Minister was undoubtedly advised by his officers. No doubt the purchase was made hurriedly, and it might not be possible for the Minister to give a very long time to it, though he seems to have taken the matter up and to have given personal attention to it. Had the purchase been effected at a much lower price than the Land Purchase officer advised, I presume we should have given the Minister credit for having saved a large amount of public expenditure. But what I rose to point out was that evidently nothing further can be gained from reopening this inquiry. The whole of the evidence is on record, the whole of the proceedings are recorded, the decision and the way in which it was arrived at are recorded, and those in the district, who probably take a much keener interest in the matter than do the members of the House of Representatives generally, have ample means of discovering from the printed evidence whether the purchase was warranted or was not warranted.

Mr. PEACOCK.—There is no doubt whatever that very great indignation and dissatisfaction exist in Auckland over this purchase, and, I think, rightly so. There is a general feeling that the Government paid a most exorbitant price for this property, and that if due care had been taken and deliberation exercised in coming to a decision as to its value they would have had that property at a much less price than they paid for it. Expression has been given to the fact that the majority of the Committee gave their approval to the course pursued by the Government; but I think the other members of the Committee—those in the minority of one—have reason to be dissatisfied with that verdict, and they have reason to feel annoyed that some members of the Committee who paid no attention to the proceedings while the evidence was being taken came in at the last moment, and, with the two members of the Ministry also voting on the other side, succeeded in swamping the voice of those who had given most attention to the subject. Reference has been made by the honourable member for Thorndon to the fact that an honourable member who came in at the last moment and voted for the Government in this matter had not given sufficient attention to the evidence: and I recollect one instance wherein the honourable member referred to thought that an offer of £16,000 had been made by two parties; whereas the offer through Mr. Cochrane was made by Mr. Alison, and there were not two distinct offers. I believe, if the Government had exercised ordinary caution in going into this matter, if they had carried out the suggestion made by Mr. O'Connor, the Under-Secretary for Public Works, and which is in evidence, and had associated with Mr. Brewer, the Land Purchase

agent, some gentlemen of standing and of local knowledge with regard to land-transactions in Auckland, that this blunder would not have occurred. The fact is that the gentleman who conducted these negotiations for the Government had only been about two weeks in Auckland, and, coming from another district, was entirely ignorant of the value of property in Auckland. That was an additional reason why they should have exercised the precaution to which I have referred. We have it distinctly in evidence that in 1884 property in Auckland, which had increased considerably in value, was at its highest—that is, that up to the end of 1884 property was as high as, indeed, higher than, it was in the beginning of 1886, the time the Government made the purchase. And what do we find that this property—the best part of it, ten acres and the house—was worth then? We find that it was offered to three separate individuals in March, May, and December of the year 1884 for the sum of £3,500 in two cases, and five acres and the house in the third instance for the same sum, when the buyer had the option to take another five acres or an additional £500, thus establishing that, in Mr. Stark's mind, the value of that part of the land was £100 per acre. If you take these three distinct offers, all bearing out that fact—the ten acres with the house being valued at £3,500, and taking the house at the value put upon it in the transaction with Mr. Ross—namely, £1,500—that would leave the land, as improved, at £200 per acre; and, applying the same value to the other parts of the estate, the whole value of the property would not come to £8,000. Reference has been made by the honourable member for Nelson to Mr. Mays, and he asserted that that gentleman, in his evidence, stated that £10,000 might have been lent upon the property, and therefore it was worth a great deal more than that sum: but Mr. Mays distinctly spoke of that as the outside value. I will just read two or three questions which he answered, with a view of showing what his opinion was. Question 837 is,—

"Can you give any idea as to the selling-value of this property—twenty-eight acres?—My own opinion at the time that the purchase was made by the Government was that if Mr. Stark got £10,000 for it he would be well paid."

Then, question 839 is, "What do you think it would have sold for if it had been sold publicly?—I do not think it would have made more than £10,000 without reference to the fortification scheme." Then, on that point to which the honourable member for Nelson referred, we find—question 891,—

"You said that the value of the property would have been high at £10,000: then would you advise any one to lend money on mortgage up to its full value?—I was asked to name the extreme amount, and I mentioned that sum: as an ordinary precaution I should lend 25 per cent. less than that."

That disposes of the matter, and shows that Mr. Mays put upon the property its extreme value when he spoke of £10,000. I think the Government ought to have taken this case into the Compensation Court, and they would then have had witnesses with local knowledge to bear upon the question—that, purchasing it as they did, they ought to have acted with greater caution, and should not have concluded the transaction in such a hurried manner. The fact remains that the mass of the people of Auckland are fully convinced that the Government in this matter have been "had," and that the price they have paid is far in excess of that which they ought to have paid, and very much in excess of what they would have paid had they taken the matter into the Compensation Court. Reference has been made to Mr. Alison in this case, and to his connection with Mr. Stark—for, if he was not an actual partner in all Mr. Stark's affairs, he admits to have been a partner in many land-transactions. Well, as showing what value is to be attached to Mr. Alison's evidence, we have it in the document before the House that he states that he conveyed an offer to Mr. Stark of £450 per acre from some gentlemen, who he thought were from New South Wales, and whose names he did not know, and that when he made that offer Mr. Stark laughed at it as being too small; and yet we have it in evidence that within two months of that time he offered the best ten acres of the property, with the house and all improvements, for £4,000. That evidence is not easily reconcilable with the action of Mr. Stark, who was persistently making attempts to sell his property at the rate I have quoted. There is evidence before the House with regard to twenty acres of the property and the house having been in the hands of an agent for sale for £5,000 in 1883; but I have not referred prominently to that, for this reason: that the three offers which are spoken of as having been made in 1884 were made at a time when property in Auckland and its suburbs was at its very highest, and that there was no reason whatever why a sum in excess of that rate should have been paid for the property in the early part of 1886, when the Government made that purchase. I am not sure, myself, that anything good would result from the inquiry asked for; but there might possibly be some further information elicited, and I shall still give it my support.

Mr. BALLANCE.—I do not believe that any good purpose will be served by this debate, and I am not going to make excerpts from the evidence, which, even if given at great length, would fail to convey the full meaning of the evidence. In order that a just conclusion should be arrived at in this matter it seems to me essential that that evidence should be carefully read. It is impossible for any one to do justice to the merits of this question by making a few quotations as honourable members have done; and it is not my intention to do so. I shall, however, refer to one particular piece of evidence which, I think, throws some light upon this matter. It is the evidence of a person thoroughly trustworthy, who has great knowledge of property, and whose opinion is entitled, I consider, to carry great weight.

But before I go into this matter I would like to call attention to two or three points which have been raised in this debate. In the first place it is said that a member who did not attend the Committee was not qualified to give his vote on the question, and reference has been made to the honourable member for Nelson. It is quite true that honourable gentleman did not attend many meetings, because he was on the Insurance Committee, in which he took a great deal of interest; but it is also true, at the same time, that the honourable member devoted much time to mastering this evidence, and he showed during the discussions in the Committee, from beginning to end, that he had the whole thing at his fingers' ends. There was no member of the Committee who seemed to have grasped more thoroughly the question than that honourable member, and therefore he was well qualified to give an intelligent vote on the subject. Great stress was laid on the fact that two Ministers voted on this Committee. What could they do but vote as members of the Committee? I have seen many questions hotly debated—party questions brought before the Public Accounts Committee—in my experience, and I have never, upon any occasion, seen Ministers refrain from attending and voting on the Committee. I remember that during the administration of the honourable member for Egmont we had three Ministers on that Committee. I am under the impression, indeed, that we had four Ministers at one time. I have seen those Ministers come up when some question of party was before the Committee, and give a block-vote. There is therefore nothing extraordinary in two Ministers giving their votes. If any one looks at the division he will see that the two parties in this House take opposite sides on the question. I have seen many votes taken in that way, and therefore I do not attach much weight to the decision of the Committee. But I attach great weight to evidence. I maintain that, after carefully reading the evidence, an impartial mind must come to the conclusion that the Government did the best they could under the circumstances. It is said that this was a hurried affair. I say it was not hurried. The greatest possible care was taken by the Minister for Public Works to obtain the very best evidence in Auckland upon this matter. The evidence of Mr. Brewer as to its having been hurried completely broke down. He entirely withdrew from that position. The evidence was that from the 1st January to the 20th January evidence was being collected with regard to the value of this property by the Minister for Public Works. Another point has been made as to whether some responsible valuer should not have been employed to assist the Land Purchase agent in Auckland. The very gentleman suggested as one of the valuers has given his evidence with regard to this property. What does Mr. Aitken say? I do not think any one in this House will question Mr. Aitken's respectability, or ability to value the property. He says, in reply to a telegram from the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee,—

"Impossible to say what Stark's property would have realized in January if sold as a lot for cash. Last September I sold Mount—11 acres—for £5,000. This land near Stark's, and one-half only available for building lots."

I appeal to any person who knows anything about this property in Auckland to say whether the value of the property surrounding and adjoining Stark's is not a fair standard. In reply, also, to another telegram from the Chairman, Mr. Aitken says,—

"I stated that Stark's property was not divided into 162 allotments, which, if sold at the same rate as land in the district including house, would have realized £15,000. I furnished Mr. Brewer with particulars of land sold in allotments near to Stark's; in nearly every case the price is in excess of that obtained by Stark. Ask Brewer to show you this."

An honourable gentleman says, "If sold in allotments." I say if this case had been taken into the Compensation Court that would be strong evidence of the value of the property—what it would bring in allotments. Surely the value of property is what it will fetch under the most favourable circumstances, and not under the least favourable circumstances. I maintain, therefore, that the evidence indisputably shows that the Government did not pay too much for it; and there is this fact: that the Land Purchase officer stated to the Minister for Public Works that if the thing were brought into the Compensation Court he was prepared to swear that the property was worth £17,500. What would have been the result if the Government had gone into Court with evidence of that kind given by its own officer? It might have had to pay considerably more than £17,500. It has been entirely overlooked that the evidence which seemed to justify the property-tax valuer in placing a value of £15,000 on the property, and justified Mr. Brewer in his estimate, was what the adjoining property had brought in the market. That important consideration has been overlooked by the speakers who have criticised this purchase. Adjoining property, not very favourably situated, sold in the market for prices corresponding with what the Government paid for Stark's property. I have said that there is no use in going over the whole of the evidence. There does not seem to be any censure implied on the Government; but it is implied that the valuers who advised the Government have been guilty of some misconduct or conspiracy. There is absolutely no evidence of conspiracy, no evidence whatever of improper conduct on the part of the officers. They may have made mistakes; they may not have shown an aptitude for appreciating the true value of property; but I maintain that there is absolutely no evidence that they were corrupt in any instance, or that they did not give conscientious advice to the Minister as to the value of the property. The important consideration is this: that, while honourable gentlemen depend upon the value of the property as offered by the owner some

time before the purchase, the evidence that justified the Government in what they did was with respect to the value of the property at the time they purchased. The property had a growing value. First of all the evidence shows —although I admit there were some contradictory statements upon the point—that this property was growing in value from two causes. The first cause was the construction of a tramway past it. The second cause was that nearly all the properties in that part of Auckland which were suitable for villa residences had been already disposed of, and that there was a demand for that kind of property, because the suburbs of Auckland were extending in that direction, and that consequently property of this kind was going up, although other property might be stationary. These important considerations justified the increase in the value between one period and another. With regard to the reference made to the torpedo-shed by the honourable member for Parnell, I would say that the shed is in the Navy Yard, and no land has been taken for it at all. But some land has been taken for a slip to connect with the water. The honourable member said that £27 per foot had been given. There is no foundation whatever for such a statement. The land was taken by Proclamation in the usual way by the Public Works Department. The amount is not yet settled, but I am told that the price put upon the property, even by those who owned it, is not anything like the amount named by the honourable member.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—It is very difficult for any member who has not read the evidence to form a definite opinion, and therefore in the few words I say I must not be understood to express a definite opinion on the merits of the question. But there are certain points on which I think it is well to make a few observations. There can be no doubt whatever in the mind of any reasonable man—and I was surprised to hear the Minister of Lands controvert it—that the country has really given at least £8,000 or £10,000 more than it ought to have given for this land. It will be the general opinion that there has been blundering and plundering. No one for one moment thinks that the word "plundering" has any relation to the action of Ministers in the matter. They have done nothing but attempted to deal fairly with the case. That I believe, myself, with regard to the Minister for Public Works; but I think there has been a blunder, and I think it right to say so. I think we have got into a very bad habit of Ministers going about the country and meeting people at the corners of streets who may have objects which Ministers cannot fathom. Ministers take upon themselves to do business directly which, according to the principles of constitutional government, ought to be done through the departments. What has been done in this case would not have been done if the Minister on whose responsibility it was done had taken the proper course open to him. First of all, I think the matter should not have been dealt with on the spot, but it should have been dealt with by the central department, and there should have been the usual responsible recommendation of the permanent head of the department before the Minister came into the transaction. But if it was thought well that the Minister should go on the spot to deal, there was this course open, which I hope in future cases will be adopted, because its adoption in this case would have saved a great deal of unpleasantness, and the commission of a huge blunder: There are permanent officers of high character and standing in Auckland, who have a perfect knowledge of general business, and if they had been consulted they would have kept the Minister out of a blunder. Take the Commissioner of Crown Lands and the Chief District Surveyor. In a matter involving many thousands of pounds the Minister for Public Works should have said, "I cannot move a step until I have the recommendation of officers of long and high standing in the service." If that had been done this blunder would never have been committed. That is the position. I do not want to say more, but I only point out that in this case a great blunder would have been avoided if the ordinary course followed in the administration of the Government had been pursued. We have before us a large amount of literature in respect to this and other recent purchases by the Government, which lays the Government open to very undesirable reflections. The same remark applies to other matters of purchase—the purchases by the Government Insurance Department, for example. The whole system of individual Ministers going about and dealing not through the departments—dealing without the recommendation of permanent officers—is sure to land them in great trouble: hence we see dealings involving payment to individuals of commissions, and even with members of the House also—dealings with individuals taking an active part in political contentions in the different districts—which leave imputations on the Government which would not be left on them if their dealings were made in the proper and usual way, through the permanent heads of the departments.

Mr. FISHER.—I do not think any useful purpose can be served by prolonging this discussion. I will therefore only say that when in Auckland during the recess I found that the feeling of indignation on this subject was so great that it had become a perfect scandal. I went to look at the property, and after seeing it I did not wonder either at the indignation or at the scandal. I quite agree with those members who say the country has been defrauded of a sum ranging from £8,000 to £10,000 by this purchase.

Major ATKINSON.—To my mind the Government made a very great mistake in the position they have taken up on this question throughout. If they had met the House and the Committee fairly, and said at once, "It is possible we have made a blunder, and it must be inquired into," the thing would have borne a very different aspect before the House. But the honourable gentlemen never met the Com-

mittee in that way. On the contrary, they came to the Committee steadily and voted, and hunted up every one of their supporters to come and vote, whether it was convenient for them to attend or not: and this has, to my mind, raised great doubt in the country about the matter. I attended the Committee very carefully, and the impression left on my mind is perfectly clear. It is that the weight of evidence showed without question that the Government paid £5,000 to £7,000 too much. I can arrive at no other conclusion whatever. I say all the disinterested evidence bore out that opinion; and, further, it is perfectly clear that every impartial person in Auckland takes the same view. The whole of the impartial members of the Committee——

Sir R. STOUT.—Oh!

Major ATKINSON.—The honourable member must know, supposing that the Committee was divided into two sides, that on one side were the supporters of the Government and on the other Opposition and independent members.

Sir R. STOUT.—Who are they?

Major ATKINSON.—That the Treasurer must tell the honourable gentleman. He selected them. There are certainly independent members who do not belong to the Opposition.

Sir R. STOUT.—I do not know to whom you refer.

Major ATKINSON.—I am sorry for the honourable gentleman. As Premier he ought to have a better knowledge of the House. However, this fact remains: that it required every Government supporter that could be got, including two Ministers themselves, to equally divide the Committee.

Sir R. STOUT.—All the Government members voted one way, and the Opposition members another—entirely a party question.

Major ATKINSON.—That is what I complain of. That is the position the Government took up at once.

Sir R. STOUT.—That is the position the Opposition took up.

Major ATKINSON.—No; not at all. I myself could have changed the report entirely if I had assumed that position. I say I did not take that position, nor did any one who sat with me. I will be judged by the Government supporters themselves, and I do not think one of them will say that I did not take up an impartial position on the Committee from beginning to end. I say that till the Government took up the position I have referred to there was nothing like party feeling on the Committee in the matter. But it is right that the House and the country should know that after the whole of the evidence was taken the Committee of fourteen members were equally divided, and the view that some of the strongest Government supporters took was that the proceeding was not satisfactory. There was no motion proposed to condemn the Government, but merely to express the fact, which I say is patent from the evidence. All the Committee desired to do was to say that too much money had been paid for the property. How any fair-minded man can doubt that, I confess I am utterly and completely unable [illegible] seeing that the whole of the [illegible] dence went clearly in that direction. [illegible] fence Minister tells us now that [illegible] was gradually increasing in value [illegible] honourable gentleman read the [illegible] did he hear the evidence; and, if [illegible] say so still?

Mr. BALLANCE.—Yes.

Major ATKINSON.—Then I say [illegible] able gentleman is quite incompetent [illegible] Take Mr. Alison's evidence. He was [illegible] he would have made his offer of [illegible] December, when the property was [illegible] the Government, and he replied, "[illegible] perty had fallen. I would not have [illegible] my offer till then."

Mr. BALLANCE.—He said a great [illegible] more than that.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes, a great deal [illegible] —all in that direction. When I tried [illegible] from him what was the money-value [illegible] property at that time he did not know [illegible] about it at all, and we had to try a system [illegible] Dutch auction, and put it to him. "Would [illegible] have given £16,000 then?—No. [illegible] No. £14,000?—No. £13,000?—No. [illegible] No. Well, perhaps I might have said [illegible] speculative purposes." He positively [illegible] to state what he thought the value of the property was at that time; and when asked if [illegible] offer was then open he said, No; he would [illegible] then give so much, because property [illegible] much fallen. There is not a title of [illegible] to show that property was [illegible] Of the contrary, every witness asked [illegible] property had fallen, and was [illegible] Property-tax Commissioner [illegible] And what was the offer of £16,000? Honourable gentlemen have been led to believe it was a cash offer. But it was an offer of £2,000 [illegible] and £14,000 to remain for five years [illegible] per cent. Now, what is the cash value of that?

Mr. BALLANCE.—For speculative purposes and he expected to make £6,000 out of it.

Major ATKINSON.—No doubt people [illegible] go into land-speculations expecting to make £6,000 out of them, but, instead of making £6,000, they come out losing £6,000. He did not keep his offer open, but, on the contrary, he told us himself he would not have made that offer when the Government bought the land. The Defence Minister says a tramway is going to improve the value of the land; but he must know quite well that the property-tax valuer told us he allowed for the increase to be given by the tramway when last valuing it. The whole of the evidence shows that Mr. Stark was hawking the property about to sell it at [illegible] to £8,000 to £9,000, even after the time His Excellency had delivered his lecture on defence, and it was known the place was going to be a battery-site. The offer was not confined to one, but was made to a number of persons, and was placed in the hands of agents; but no one came forward to buy the property.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Part of it was offered for £5,000.

Major ATKINSON.—I remember no such

evidence as that. The evidence was that the house and part of the land was offered for £3,000, and five acres of the land for £500 more; and on that basis the value of the whole property was estimated at between £8,000 and £9,000. The honourable member for Parnell hands me this telegram which he has just received from Auckland: "*Re* Stark: Obtained a thousand signatures one day, asking House to appoint Commission. Will you move it before House prorogues?" The Premier laughs. I suppose——

Sir R. STOUT.—Whom is it from?

Major ATKINSON.—Mr. Goldie, who is not unknown in Auckland or in this House; and I do not think any one of us is disposed to laugh at that. It seems to me that this discussion was necessary, and I think it has been profitable. I do not agree with those honourable members who think the Government is going to get out of the difficulty without further inquiry. I myself think good will come of further inquiry, because the impression was clear on my mind, after reading the evidence, that there had been a conspiracy somewhere.

Sir R. STOUT.—By whom?

Major ATKINSON.—There is not sufficient evidence as to that, and therefore I do not like to make any insinuations.

Sir R. STOUT.—You make insinuations against the Government or their officers.

Major ATKINSON.—No; I acquit the Government themselves. I do not believe for a moment that they were more than precipitate. I think it was unfortunate the Minister for Public Works closed in the way he did; but I admit at once, from the evidence, as far as I can judge, the honourable gentleman thought at the time he was acting in the best interests of the public service. But I do say most distinctly that the impression on my mind was, and is at the present time, that there was a conspiracy to defraud the Government of a very large sum of money; and I say that, in the interest of the public, it should be probed to the bottom—and it must be probed to the bottom, and I do not believe the people of Auckland or the House will consent to this matter resting where it does. I am not going to blame the Government officers. I think the Land Purchase officer was in a position of very great difficulty, and I confess I was favourably impressed with his evidence in this respect: that he firmly held to his position; that he never retreated from it as the Native Minister tells us; and he gave evidence which, although it was only in accordance with the best of his memory, he must have known—for he was told so by the Committee—did not support the evidence of the chief of his department. It required a great deal of moral courage to do that, particularly when he was only speaking from memory; and that rather impressed me with the evidence he gave. It is quite clear to me that sufficient care was not exercised in the matter. I do not wish to censure any one, but I wish to place on record my opinion that further inquiry is necessary. I was very sorry to see the position which the Native Minister took up, for it must be clear to every member of this House, and, indeed, to any one who looks into the matter, that the Government have been defrauded to the extent of £5,000 or £6,000 in this purchase.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I think the House has drifted into a rather unfortunate position with regard to this matter, perhaps through having ignored the rules of the House. The Chairman of this Committee is not a young member of the House, and the honourable member for Caversham is certainly a veteran; and I say that, if they entertained the opinions which they have expressed on this occasion, when the report of the Committee came up they should have at once taken action and called for a further inquiry into the matter. I say it was cowardly neglect on their part.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member must withdraw that expression.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I withdraw it at once, Sir, and will say that they neglected their duty in not giving expression to their opinions, and at once asking for a further investigation, when that report was brought up.

Mr. MOSS.—The honourable gentleman is an old Chairman of Committees himself, and he must see the impropriety of the Chairman of a Committee moving as he suggests. When the Chairman of a Committee lays a report on the table he is only acting for the Committee, and if he wants to take personal action he must do it at some future time. I called the attention of the Government to the matter.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I will admit that the honourable gentleman in his capacity of Chairman of the Committee could not have taken action then; but I should like to ask, what about the honourable member for Caversham, who stands up here as the great purist of the House, and as the man who, above all others, would not be a party to anything that could savour of corruption? He certainly should have taken action in the matter. It appears that this property was not bought out of the ordinary course: that all the means at the disposal of the department were put into requisition by the Government; that valuers were called upon to give their opinion, and that upon that opinion the Government acted. I do not defend the action of the purchasers, because I think they did very wrong, and I think that if I had been at the head of the department they would have met with summary dismissal. I have no doubt that those officers have been grossly misled; but I believe that every proper step was taken by the Ministry with regard to the purchase of the property. I was very much surprised to hear the objection raised by the honourable member for Egmont; for he, of all persons, ought to be the last to blame the actions of any Government. The honourable gentleman must surely remember a most important Committee, which sat for, I think, twenty days, making most diligent inquiry; the Native Minister and the Minister of Lands of that honourable gentleman's Government were on that Committee, and they were absent during three or four days of the inquiry, and

then only came up at the last to express their opinion and to record their vote. It is all very well to say that the members of the Government voted on one side and the members of the Opposition on the other in this case; but, if any mistake was committed, it had to be rectified by the House. No question can be finally dealt with by a Committee. A Committee takes evidence, brings down its report, and then the House sanctions it or not, as it thinks best. I cannot see what good will result from carrying out this proposition. You cannot get the money back, and you cannot institute a charge of conspiracy against anybody.

Mr. MOSS.—Why not?

Mr. TURNBULL.—Because the Government officers valued the property; and if you are to bring a charge of conspiracy against anybody it must be against those Government officers. No Court in the world would hold that there has been a conspiracy, although there is no doubt that there has been an error of judgment. Of course, holding a Royal Commission might allay public feeling in Auckland; but I do not see that that Commission could come to any other conclusion than that which has been expressed by most members of this House—that a great deal too much was given for the property. It is a great pity that discussion on this most important question has been delayed till so late a period; and I am very much surprised that when the report was laid on the table those honourable members who feel so strongly upon the matter did not get up then and express their opinion, but left it till so many members of the Committee are absent. If a resolution on the subject could be put to the House now, I doubt very much whether I should vote for it, much as I disapprove of the purchase.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—With regard to what has been said as to members of the Committee not having brought this matter forward, I think the Chairman of the Committee asked if an opportunity would not be given for discussing it. I do not wish to go into the evidence now, beyond saying that very conflicting evidence was taken. There is not a member of that Committee who wishes to impugn the good faith of the Government; nor can we expect, when a report of a Committee is under consideration, that the members of the Government on that Committee will vote against the action taken by the Government. Therefore it is not the finding of the Committee, but the evidence taken by it, that this House and the country have to consider. The impression made on my mind by that evidence is that the Minister was hasty in coming to a conclusion with respect to the purchase of this land, and that the country has paid for it £7,000 in excess of its market-value. There are also many circumstances connected with the purchase of this land which make me come to the conclusion that there was something which might be called "conspiracy" to defraud the Government and obtain a higher price for the land than it was worth.

Sir R. STOUT.—By whom?

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—As the honourable gentleman asks me, I may say that I am think favourably of the offer made, and some of the evidence was of much value; a matter of great importance that a property should not be established that Ministers give an amount far in excess of what people in the neighbourhood think the value of the property, and far in excess of the amount men who have gone into the question without any political bias, but with a desire to come to a judgment as impartially as if they were a jury, declare to be its value. I say the question should not rest where it is, and that a Commission should be appointed to inquire into it. Evidence should be taken on oath, and it should be ascertained whether the Government have or have not given too much for the property. If it is proved that there has been an attempt to get more out of the Government than should have been paid, those persons who have been parties to a conspiracy should be punished; and, if we cannot have legal proof, then they will have to live under the opprobrium which public opinion will cast upon them. Therefore I think that the Government, for the sake of the country, and as we do not impugn the honesty of their action, should appoint this Commission, so that the mind of the people may be satisfied as to what has been done.

Mr. SUTTER.—I think the honourable member for Geraldine puts this matter far better than any one else has done when he says that it is in consequence of the Government going about the country and interfering with these matters that such heavy prices are asked for anything they want to purchase. It was just the same with the insurance-buildings purchases. All these things should go through the proper department. There is no doubt, from reading the evidence, that the whole thing has been got up to hoodwink the Government. However, the matter has now been fully discussed, and I do not see what good can come from keeping the discussion up.

Mr. BEETHAM.—I should not speak but for the decided acknowledgment by both the Premier and the Minister of Defence that the report brought up by the Stark Purchase Committee was a party report. It is, of course, well known that the Government appoints a majority of their own supporters on all Committees; and it is a most unsatisfactory thing for the public that in a case like this the report, instead of being a report based on the evidence taken by the Committee, is simply a report from the Government side of the House, merely indorsing the views of the Government. I say, then, that if the Government have any regard for their position they should not hesitate to appoint a Commission such as suggested by the honourable member for Parnell. There is no doubt from the telegram which has been read this afternoon that there is a very strong feeling in Auckland on the matter—a feeling that a great injustice has been done, and that the public interest has

suffered; and I think the Government should take their own position into consideration, and appoint an independent Commission to inquire into this matter.

Mr. FULTON.—I am sorry that the honourable member for Timaru should have said that this was an unsuitable occasion to bring up such a matter as this.

Mr. TURNBULL.—I said an untimely one, owing to the shortness of time and the absence of many honourable members.

Mr. FULTON.—From time immemorial it has been admitted that there is no time more suitable for bringing up grievances than on the motion to go into Committee of Supply—that is, grievances are to be discussed first, and Supply afterwards. The discussion has evoked this: that the Minister for Public Works is not to blame in the matter at all; but I am sorry that the Defence Minister should have made the matter his own by standing up and defending it.

Mr. WILSON.—I would like to ask whether the Premier will appoint a Commission.

Sir R. STOUT.—Does the honourable member really expect me to answer a question like that offhand?

Mr. HATCH.—I think the House will admit that there are a good many Governments which have made a great many mistakes; and perhaps this is one that may be classed with a few which we have heard of before. These mistakes are not all to be put down to the present Government. I think that in future the services of the gentlemen who valued this property might be dispensed with. It seems that the proper people in Auckland have not got the money.

Sir G. GREY.—I think I heard the Premier say that he had not made up his mind whether a Commission should be appointed.

Sir R. STOUT.—I said I had not even considered the matter.

Sir G. GREY.—So that I understand that is to be done yet, and that there is a chance that a Commission will be appointed. I cannot help thinking that, where so large a proportion of the population of the district think that some wrong has been done, an inquiry should be made into the matter. I think it would be justice and good policy that that opportunity should be afforded of investigating the question as to whether a conspiracy against the Government has been carried out or not.

Motion negatived.

SUPPLY.

Class IX.—Minister of Native Affairs.

Miscellaneous, £2,726.

Mr. TURNBULL said he would like to put his opinions on record with reference to the sum of £2,000 proposed to be granted to Sir William Fox. The Premier stated frequently that such-and-such a thing was contrary to the spirit of democracy. He quite agreed with the honourable gentleman; but if there was anything more than another contrary to the spirit of democracy it was a payment in this manner. What a man did for the State the State paid him for. That was why members were paid in that House. The State did not allow—and very wisely—any accumulation of obligations. There was a peculiarity about this case. Sir William Fox undertook this Commission when he was a member of the House, and he was performing those duties for some time while he was a member of the House. Sir William Fox knew that if he accepted payment he would be placing himself under the Disqualification Act. The House would be doing wrong if it allowed the Disqualification Act to be overridden, as was now being attempted. He quite admitted the great services of Sir William Fox and his ability to do the work; but there were other men equally able to perform the duty, and if they had been engaged the country would have known what it would have to pay for the work. This money had been allowed to run on for years, and now the House was asked to vote it. It was one of the most unfair things that had ever come before the House, and if they voted the money it would be a very dangerous precedent indeed. Why had this matter stood over for so long? If the claim had been made at once the House, no doubt, would have valued his services at what they were worth and paid him for them; but the gentleman in question had declined to accept payment. He (Mr. Turnbull) would do all he could to get this vote struck out.

Mr. GORE suggested that the Government should withdraw this item until next session. Honourable members like himself had not been able to make themselves acquainted with the case. He might therefore in his vote be doing harm to Sir William Fox, who perhaps was justly entitled to the money; but, if the item was put, he would certainly vote in favour of the taxpayer.

Sir J. VOGEL would like to explain briefly the circumstances under which it seemed to him this vote came before honourable members. At the conclusion of the work on the West Coast the honourable member for Egmont said to Sir William Fox that the Government, appreciating the work he had done, considered that he was entitled to payment for it, and proposed to put £2,000 on the estimates. Sir William Fox did not see fit to take advantage of the offer then; but circumstances had changed with him—at any rate, he had intimated to the Government that the payment would now be acceptable to him. The Government said that if the honourable member for Egmont recommended the payment they would have no hesitation in bringing it before the House. He did not think it came before the House in the way of a gratuity, or as a compassionate allowance, as some honourable members had said. It seemed to him to come before the House simply in the light of payment for work and labour well performed; and the payment was an exceedingly moderate one. There was no difference between the case of the Government and the case of an individual. The Government, as represented by the honourable mem-

ber for Egmont, then Premier, recognized that Sir William Fox had done valuable work and should be paid for it. Sir William Fox did not then desire payment for it, but now he did wish for payment. Would it be right for the Government to work payment? There was no reason to refuse to pass the vote.

Mr. BRYCE said he was absent when this matter was discussed the other night, and he now spoke for the purpose of accepting personal responsibility in connection with the matter. When Sir William Fox was first appointed to do the work it was in conjunction with the present Agent-General. When Sir Dillon Bell was appointed Agent-General, Sir William Fox continued to work, and carried it on for three years; and, although he had not always agreed with Sir William Fox, he must say that the work had been done remarkably well, and that the colony was greatly indebted to him. So strongly was he of that opinion that when the labours of the Commission were closed, and a final report was made, he himself in Cabinet—he hoped he was not divulging Cabinet secrets—proposed that an offer should be made to Sir William Fox to place a sum of £2,000 on the estimates in recognition of his services, the Government undertaking to do their best to carry it. But Sir William Fox declined the offer, and the Government, as a Government, had then done with it. But last session, during Major Atkinson's absence, Sir Robert Stout had told him that he had reason to suppose that Sir William Fox would now find the money acceptable, and, indeed, had expressed himself to that effect. He told the Premier that he still recognized the valuable services that had been rendered to the colony by Sir William Fox, and that the amount that it had been proposed to put upon the estimates was really due to him, and that whenever Sir William Fox was ready to receive the money the colony should be ready to pay it. On those grounds he was now prepared to vote for the item.

Mr. SEDDON demurred to the statement made by the Colonial Treasurer that the money had been offered to Sir William Fox by the Atkinson Government. All that they had done was to offer to place the sum upon the estimates; but they knew that they could not do so, and that, under pain of the penalties provided in the Disqualification Act, Sir William Fox could not have taken the money, unless special legislation was passed enabling him so to do.

Major ATKINSON said that they could and would have placed it on the estimates.

Mr. SEDDON said the money could not have been taken, because it would have related to services which dated back to the time when Sir William Fox was a member of the House. It could only have been accepted after special legislation had been passed to enable him to take it. It seemed to be lost sight of that the expenses of the Commission were very large, and that really for a part of the time Sir William Fox only went to New Plymouth when he wanted a holiday, and he then went and had his expenses paid by the Government. It was solely to vary the monotony of existence at Rangitikei. It was very doubtful whether the Government could have carried the vote even if they had put it upon the estimates, because the Opposition of that day had considered the matter, and had decided that they would not agree to the vote.

Major ATKINSON said that the honourable gentleman was referring to last year.

Mr. SEDDON replied that it was before last year that he was speaking of. Last year he and others declined to sign a "round robin" that was got up and taken round by the honourable member for Marsden in favour of the sum being put on the estimates. He believed that, as Sir William Fox was engaged in party struggles which led to the passing of the Acts under which he worked, he should not have been appointed to the office of Commissioner, and he was sure that a Native Land Court Judge or some of the officers of the Government could have done the work as efficiently as Sir William Fox, and at much less expense.

Mr. O'CONOR.—And in one quarter of the time.

Mr. SEDDON had no doubt that a Government officer would have done the work in six or twelve months. If Sir William Fox were given this money, then there would be a claim next year from Sir Dillon Bell. He believed that the men who really deserved credit for the work that had been done were Major Parris and Colonel Roberts, and it was they who should be rewarded. To give all the credit and the reward to Sir William Fox was unfair to those officers. The Colonial Treasurer had said that was this a debt; but it was nothing of the kind: and money once refused could not be claimed. He remembered that certain honourable gentlemen had left their honorarium in the Treasury, and had subsequently applied for it; but they were refused it. If there was anything in this claim it should have been brought before the House before now. The proper course was for the Government to have asked the honourable member for Egmont to move a motion on the subject, and in that way to have ascertained the opinion of the majority of the House, and then to have accepted the direction of the House. In that way the matter would have been discussed fairly upon its merits; but, the item being placed on the estimates, the Government were bound to support it, and the Government supporters were bound to support the Government. Many of the Government supporters who had paired and gone away could not defend it; and it should go to the country that it was the Opposition and the leader of the Opposition who were responsible for the vote about to be taken. How could they defend voting for this amount when the unemployed in Christchurch, Dunedin, and Auckland were cut down to the paltry sum of 4s. a day? When that was the case, to propose to give a wealthy person the sum of £2,000 was altogether indefensible. Then, there were many deserving officers in the public service who, according to rules laid

down, were entitled to increases, which increases had not been given because the Ministry of the day said that in the present financial position of the country economy must be studied, and dared not ask the House to vote the increases; and there were underpaid servants in the Telegraph and Postal Departments: yet they were going to vote a lump sum of £2,000 as a bonus to one individual. That sum would go a long way towards increasing the salaries of underpaid officers. When they met their constituents they would have to say why they had voted for this item, and would have to say if, as the true representatives of the people, they had done their best to prevent this £2,000 from being taken from the taxpayers of the colony. It was said that the vote was to be given in view of the altered circumstances of Sir William Fox; but, dealing with matters that were public, he could say that it was not long since Sir William Fox sold an estate for £15,000, and it was not likely a poor man could do that. It was also known that he had purchased property in Wellington for a considerable sum, and that in order to get an American lecturer here he had given £200; so that he could not be a person stricken with poverty, to whom a compassionate allowance should be granted. He wished the Government to tell the House that this was not a party vote, so as to leave its supporters free to vote as they liked.

Sir R. STOUT replied that he had said that was so before.

Mr. SEDDON wished to know how votes of those who had paired would be recorded.

Sir R. STOUT said that that would be for the whips to arrange.

Mr. SEDDON thought it should be arranged so that it should be known that the Government and their supporters were not responsible for this vote. The services referred to in the item had been performed without hope of reward, and, when they passed the resolution recognizing Sir William Fox's services as having been rendered without pay, that was payment for the services. If this motion were carried he hoped they would table a resolution to rescind the motion arrived at previously, giving credit to Sir William Fox for patriotic services; for if this vote were passed, and Sir William Fox accepted the money, then there was no patriotism about it, and it was simply a question of payment for services rendered.

Colonel TRIMBLE said that if the honourable gentleman who had just spoken was not ashamed of the speech he had made he (Colonel Trimble) was very confident that a majority of the House were ashamed of it. With regard to the facts of the case the honourable gentleman had shown absolute ignorance: he knew nothing of the work done, nor as to the relative work done by the two Commissioners. In order to show this, and how rash that honourable gentleman had been in making his statements, he would ask him to make a note of a few dates. First of all, the Joint Commission was dated the 20th January, 1880. Sir William Fox was not at that time a member of the House. That Commission consisted of Messrs. Fox and Bell; and they brought up a joint report on the 5th August, 1880, about seven months after the issue of the Commission. That was the whole of the work that Sir Dillon Bell was connected with. There was no one more willing than he, or the gentlemen on his side of the House, to acknowledge the very great services rendered by Sir Dillon Bell at that time. No two men in the colony were so well fitted to do the work as those two men, and that was recognized by the House and the whole country. The first report submitted to the House by the Joint Commission was adopted by the country as a whole. That was the end of Sir Dillon Bell's connection with it. Then a second Commission was appointed to carry out the recommendations of the original report, and it was considered that no one could so well carry out that work as the remaining Commissioner, Sir Dillon Bell having in the meantime been sent Home as Agent-General. The new Commission was dated the 23rd December, 1880, there being only one Commissioner; and the final report was dated the 3rd June, 1884: so that, while Sir Dillon Bell served with Sir William Fox for seven months in 1880, Sir William Fox served alone for three and a half years, so that his services stretched over four years. With regard to the most outrageous expressions in reference to personal expenditure, he would point out that if a Minister travelled he got two guineas a day for travelling allowance besides his actual expenses. If a high officer or low officer of the Government travelled on public service, he got travelling allowance and also actual expenses upon scale. But what was the case in regard to Sir William Fox? He had neither two guineas a day nor one shilling a day travelling allowance. With regard to the actual expenditure for which he was reimbursed, Sir William Fox never entered an hotel all the time, but lodged in the most inexpensive private establishments; and if the amount came to £300 it was for four years. In regard to the services rendered by Sir William Fox, he could say, as representing a large constituency on that coast, that there was no man in New Zealand to whom that part of the colony was so much obliged. There was no doubt that he had left behind him a work which had established peace and would insure peace for generations to come. The result of his work had been the settlement of four thousand people on the land, and the Natives on the coast were now going on with their cultivations in peace and quietness, where formerly they did nothing at all.

Mr. FULTON wished to say a word or two with regard to the question being a Government or party one. While he was supporting the Government on this question the gentleman who was paired with him, and who was a Government supporter, would vote against the item. He would like to refer to another matter which was somewhat pressing. He hoped the Government would take into consideration the

position of the widow and orphans of the late Mr. Brandon.

Sir R. STOUT said the Cabinet would take the matter referred to by the honourable member for the Taieri into consideration. No doubt the Cabinet would be as liberal in this case as in the case of other officers.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member for Taranaki said he (Mr. Seddon) ought to be ashamed of himself. He considered that it was the duty of an honourable member to consider the interests and wishes of his constituents, and he would not take as his guide the honourable member for Taranaki. If there was any member who should feel ashamed of himself for having delayed the House it was that honourable member. The honourable member said he was going to correct him; but it appeared that the honourable member had not made himself acquainted with the facts at all. The total sum received as expenses by Sir William Fox amounted to more than £300, and the whole of the expenses of the Commission, besides surveys, was £13,000. Besides that, at the time the appointment was made in 1881 Sir William Fox was a member of the House.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND understood the honourable member for Kumara to say something about faithful followers, and that if a large sum was to be voted it should be by special legislation. It did not require that. It only required a convenient Committee. He had heard a great deal about public officers, and he interjected "Publichouses." The whole of this opposition from the honourable member was because not long ago Sir William Fox gave £150 or £200 to a temperance society.

Mr. HATCH would vote against this, because he thought a sufficient case had not been made out showing that the gentleman really required it. The case mentioned by the honourable member for the Taieri showed that there would be many more claims like this. He was told that Sir William Fox was worth a great deal, and that the family of the deceased gentleman mentioned by the honourable member for the Taieri were very well-to-do. An unfortunate man was killed at Invercargill the other day, and the public there subscribed £400 for his family; and, if the gentleman who had just died left his family without means, this was a case for the people of Wellington to consider. The matter ought not to be brought before the House.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the item, 'Services of Hon. Sir William Fox as Commissioner under "The West Coast Settlement Act, 1880," £2,000,' be struck out."

AYES, 17.

Barron	McKenzie, J.	Sutter
Brown	McMillan	Thomson, J. W.
Buckland, W. F.	Montgomery	Turnbull.
Duncan	O'Conor	*Tellers.*
Gore	Reid	Cowan
Hatch	Smith	Seddon.

NOES, 25.

Atkinson	B.-Bradshaw	Buchanan
Beetham	Bruce	Buckland, J. C.
Conolly	Newman	Vogel
Fisher	Parata	Walker
Hislop	Pearson	Wilson.
Lake	Reese	
Lance	Richardson, E.	*Tellers.*
Larnach	Rolleston	Hobbs
Macarthur	Stout	Trimble.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Cadman	Mitchelson
Guinness	Bryce
Levestam	Fulton
Locke	Taylor
Moss	Menteath
Richardson, G. F.	Joyce.

Majority for, 8.

Item retained.

Vote, £2,726, agreed to.

CLASS X.—MINISTER OF MINES.

Receiver of Gold Revenue, Jackson's Bay, additional, £20, agreed to.

Geological and Meteorological Department, £60, agreed to.

Miscellaneous, £9,761.

Mr. SUTTER drew attention to the first item, "Mount Ida Water-race, contingencies, £500." He thought the Government had nothing to do with this race now, but had handed it over to a local trust. Last year the Minister had said distinctly that no further vote should be asked for this work. He hoped the honourable gentleman would explain.

Mr. LARNACH said this vote had been granted for several years, but he had hoped this year to be able to do without it. He found, however, that it was wanted to keep up the work.

Mr. SUTTER said it was simply so much charity to the people there.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND asked if this was going to complete the work, or if there was to be an indefinite annual drain. He would like to see these water-races handed over to the local bodies.

Mr. LARNACH would be glad to be able to say that this was the last time the vote should appear; but he would do his best to cause the trust to make both ends meet, so that a further vote would not have to be asked for.

Mr. MONTGOMERY understood that the race had been handed over to a trust, and that it had been clearly stated the House would never again be asked for another vote for it.

Mr. ROLLESTON said, as far as he recollected, the race was brought to a certain point, and from that point it was held that no more public expenditure should take place, but that private parties who wished to make races from that point should make them at their own cost. He believed the receipts from the race had been enough to cover the expenses—that was, apart from any additions; and he had understood that it would continue so. He would like to hear some further explanation about it, because he did not think the Government was called upon to carry the race farther. He

believed there had been a proposal to bring another race into this one.

Mr. LARNACH said the race had been extended. It was believed that a vote would not be required; but exceptional repairs had been found necessary, and unless this vote was passed the work could not be kept going.

Mr. ROLLESTON thought this vote was necessary in consequence of the previous determination not to extend the race having been gone back from.

Mr. LARNACH said the honourable gentleman himself had authorized the extension.

Mr. ROLLESTON said he must deny this. He could say absolutely that he did not authorize the extension of the race. The Minister had indicated in a loose way that it had been authorized, and he said, if so, it was unnecessary expenditure.

Mr. LARNACH said he had indicated how it had been authorized in a very precise way.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said the late Government had put £1,000 on the estimates to complete the race. The race was finished now as far as it would ever go—except as to distributing-races. For some years £500 a year had been voted for contingencies on this work; but last year the trust only used £300 of that amount. The departmental report in regard to water-races showed that the trust had made every effort to reduce the expenditure, and last year had reduced it by £261, and they expected to reduce the working expenses by £400 this year. The reason why £500 for contingencies was proposed this year was this: The County Council were now in treaty to relieve the Government of the race altogether; but they naturally demanded that if they took it over it should be in thorough order at the time. He did not anticipate that any further money would be wanted. It was about the most cheaply-worked water-race in the colony, as it was about seventy miles in length, and there were only three men employed on it.

Mr. ROLLESTON had not a single word to say against the trust, which was working very well. At the same time it would be well to hand the race over to the local body. He would not stand in the way of the vote.

Mr. LARNACH said that if the honourable gentleman had been in the House when the general estimates were under discussion he would have heard him (Mr. Larnach) give the same explanation with regard to this water-race as the honourable member for Mount Ida had just given.

Mr. BROWN, in calling attention to the item, "School of Mines, Otago University, £500," said he understood the gentleman in charge of this school was to be utilized by having him brought to Wellington. He was of no use where he was now, and it would be better to save this £500.

Mr. LARNACH said this vote had been promised to the Otago University to enable it to carry on its lectures on mining, and would be continued for two years longer. It was a most extraordinary thing that the honourable member, who was always advocating the establishment of schools of mines, should object to this vote.

Mr. BROWN said this gentleman could never be got to come up country when he was wanted.

Mr. LARNACH said that Professor Ulrich had never, except on one occasion, refused to go up country when asked to do so.

Mr. BROWN must repeat that this honourable gentleman did not go up the country to do work that was required, but only to collect specimens.

Mr. MACANDREW would like to point out that, in terms of his engagement, Professor Ulrich was compelled, during the recess of the University, to go wherever the Government chose to send him. The School of Mines had been a failure solely through the want of pupils; but there were a good many more attending now, and it promised to be a success. The University had expended some £1,200 or £1,400 — he was not certain as to the exact amount, but it was a large sum — last year in getting out appliances for this school. The Professor was engaged by the University under an arrangement with the Government by which the Government were to pay half the expense; and it would be a disgrace to New Zealand, with such variety and abundance of mineral resources, if it could not maintain an efficient and fully-equipped School of Mines such as was provided for in Dunedin now.

Mr. SUTTER moved, That the item of £3,000 for compensation towards cost of opening the Shag Point Coal-mine be struck out.

Dr. NEWMAN asked whether the Government had taken any steps to cancel the extension of the lease of this mine for fifty-five years.

Mr. LARNACH said No; the Government could not do that even if they wished.

Dr. NEWMAN.—Then this is in addition to the extension of the lease?

Mr. LARNACH said the whole matter had been explained when the resolution proposed by the honourable member for Port Chalmers was carried.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote be reduced by £3,000."

AYES, 11.

Atkinson	Fisher	Trimble.
Barron	Lake	*Tellers.*
Beetham	Stout	Newman
Conolly	Thomson, J.W.	Rolleston.

NOES, 31.

Ballance	Kerr	Ross
B.-Bradshaw	Lance	Smith
Brown	Larnach	Steward, W. J.
Bruce	Macarthur	Tole
Buchanan	Mackenzie, M.	Turnbull
Buckland, W.F.	McKenzie, J.	Vogel
Cadman	Menteath	Walker.
Duncan	O'Callaghan	
Hirst, H.	O'Conor	*Tellers.*
Hobbs	Parata	Buckland, J. C.
Hursthouse	Richardson, E.	Macandrew.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Guinness	Bryce
Johnston	Dargaville
Levestam	Fulton
Mitchelson	McMillan
Ormond	Montgomery
Reid	Hatch
Russell	Richardson, G.
Samuel	Hislop
Whyte.	Sutter.

Majority against, 20.

Item retained.

Mr. MACARTHUR said he would like an explanation of the item, "Subsidy of £1 to £2 up to £450 for auriferous-cement-crushing machine, £450." It was a most extraordinary proposition that the House should help to pay for machinery for a private company. He moved, That the item be struck out.

Mr. LARNACH hoped the Committee would not strike out this item. The machine, if successful, would be of great value to a large mining district and to the whole colony. Hitherto it had been impossible to get a machine to deal with this cement.

Mr. MACARTHUR said if the machine was a success it would be a source of great profit to the proprietor. It was not right that the colony should subsidize these private speculations.

Mr. BUCHANAN quite indorsed the remarks of the honourable member for Manawatu. People were making experiments in all parts of the colony in connection with various industries, and these experiments were not subsidized. He hoped the Committee would strike out the item.

Mr. MACARTHUR asked where the machine was going to be set up.

Mr. LARNACH replied that it was to be set up where the blue auriferous cement was—namely, at Tuapeka, one of the richest mining districts in the colony.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND asked if the machine was a local production.

Mr. LARNACH replied that it was.

Dr. NEWMAN asked to whom the money was going.

Mr. LARNACH said the application was made by a number of residents interested in mining in Tuapeka.

Mr. PEACOCK asked if the Government was prepared to give similar encouragement to other parts of the colony with regard to auriferous-cement-crushing.

Mr. LARNACH said, if this machine was a success, that would not be necessary: the same patent would do for other parts of the colony.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked if the machine was at work.

Mr. LARNACH replied that it was not made yet.

Mr. SEDDON said there were cement-crushing machines in existence. If this vote was passed every one who made an improvement in stone-breaking, quartz-crushing, or cement-crushing could with justice make a similar claim.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the vote be reduced by £450."

AYES, 24.

Atkinson	Hislop	Rolleston
Barron	Hobbs	Ross
Beetham	Lake	Sutter
Bruce	Montgomery	Thomson, J. W.
Buckland, J. C.	Newman	Trimble.
Buckland, W. F.	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Conolly	Pearson	Buchanan
Duncan	Richardson, G.	Macarthur.
Fisher		

NOES, 24.

Ballance	Larnach	Richardson, L.
B.-Bradshaw	Mackenzie, M.	Smith
Brown	McKenzie, J.	Tole
Cowan	Menteath	Vogel
Fraser	O'Callaghan	Walker.
Hatch	O'Conor	*Tellers.*
Hursthouse	Parata	Seddon
Kerr	Pyke	Turnbull.
Lance		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Fulton	Levestam
Locke	Guinness
Whyte.	Grace.

The CHAIRMAN gave his casting-vote with the "Ayes."

Item struck out.

Vote, as reduced, £9,311, agreed to.

CLASS XI.—MINISTER OF RAILWAYS.

Working railways, £282, agreed to.

Public buildings, £1,650, agreed to.

CLASS XII.—MINISTER OF DEFENCE.

Volunteers, £250, agreed to.

Miscellaneous, £2,271.

Mr. PEACOCK asked why an experienced officer like Colonel Lyon had been dispensed with. He observed that that officer was down for two years' salary as retiring allowance.

Mr. BALLANCE said that Colonel Lyon's services had been dispensed with owing to the necessity for economy. He had been treated on the most liberal scale as to retiring allowances. He would retain the office of Commander of the District, with an allowance of £50 a year.

Mr. PEACOCK asked if another officer had not been appointed at a large salary in the place of Colonel Lyon.

Mr. BALLANCE said that was not so. An Instructor of Musketry had been appointed, and it was necessary that there should be such an officer.

Mr. CONOLLY drew attention to the item, "Expenses incurred in connection with the purchase of coals for the Imperial Government, £684," and asked for an explanation of it.

Mr. BALLANCE said the Government some time ago had received an application from the Admiral commanding the Australian station to purchase coal for him, to be stored at Auckland. When the account was sent in he objected to pay for the cost of labour and of storage, on the ground that no other colony made such

charge. After looking into the matter the Government had decided to follow the custom of other colonies.

Vote, £2,271, agreed to.

CLASS XIII.—LAND FUND ACCOUNT.

Crown Lands Department, £20.

Miscellaneous services, £913.

Mr. CONOLLY asked for an explanation of the item, "Stamp duty on Rotorua leases, £400."

Mr. BALLANCE said that when the Rotorua leases were sold there was a dispute about who should pay the stamp duty on the leases, and it was decided that the duty should be remitted. There had been a further sale of leases, and the same practice had been followed. It was simply a transfer. The money was transferred from the Lands Department to the Stamp Department.

Mr. ROLLESTON said there was an ambiguity in connection with the conditions of sale as to stamp duty, and, as the purchasers had paid high prices for the leases, it was agreed to waive the point as to stamp duty.

Mr. BRYCE said that was a reason why the stamp duty should not have been exacted in the first instance, but there was no reason why it should have formed a precedent as to the future.

Major ATKINSON thought it would be better to make it clear in future that purchasers would have to pay stamp duty. It would save the necessity for these cross-entries, and no one would be prejudiced so long as it was understood that purchasers would have to pay the stamp duty.

Vote, £913, agreed to.

Expenses, Thermal Springs Act, £13, agreed to.

Survey Department, £181, agreed to.

CLASS XV.—STATE FORESTS ACCOUNT.

State Forests and Agricultural Department, £6,884.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked for an explanation regarding this new department, which was being initiated, he considered, at a very large expense.

Mr. BALLANCE did not consider the expense was very large. He thought it was very moderate for the foundation of the department. A large portion of the vote taken the other day was not for this department at all, and there was a Chief Conservator at £600 a year, a Clerk and Accountant at £250, and two Rangers at £200. There was no doubt the organization of the department would entail a large amount of work. The Conservator was a man of the highest qualifications, and he had to inspect every forest in the colony before its Proclamation. He had a thorough knowledge of the work of forestry: in fact, he (Mr. Ballance) did not think any other person in the whole colony was so well qualified for this work as Professor Kirk. It was impossible for the work of forestry to be carried on and the department organized without the vote asked for. It was absolutely essential if any work was to be done at all. When they considered that these forests were scattered all over the colony, and what an amount of labour was required for planting, fencing, and regulating the sale of timber, honourable members would see that the vote was a moderate one.

Mr. MACANDREW wished to know where the School of Agriculture was located.

Mr. BALLANCE said it was at Whangarei. That was the understanding last session, and it was specially provided for in the Act.

Mr. MACANDREW wished to know if there was any arable land there.

Mr. BALLANCE said there was very little. It was kauri land, and good for forestry purposes, but for nursery purposes other land would have to be acquired.

Mr. MACANDREW was very much disappointed with this, and thought that the School of Agriculture should have been in an agricultural district. It appeared to him a very reckless way of spending money.

Mr. BUCHANAN thought there would be a good deal of difficulty in getting this item passed. He was willing to admit that the gentleman in charge of this department possessed a large amount of scientific information, but the colony was not in a position to pay large sums of money merely from a scientific point of view, and it might be that they were wasting large sums on this department in unprofitable directions. What they wanted in order to get value for the money was information regarding proper descriptions of trees, proper soil, and so forth for planting, and a hundred other things necessary from a practical point of view. There was £1,000 put down for travelling expenses, and surely that did not point towards economy.

Mr. ROLLESTON said it seemed to him that they were going to work in a very extravagant manner to establish this department, without any reference to what had been done before, or to what was being done throughout the country. He understood the Minister of Lands proposed to buy plots of ground to create nurseries; whilst they had these already at work. They had no information before them now of a valuable character, although the department had been in existence some months. The gardens at Christchurch were starved for the sake of this department, as were also those at Dunedin, Wellington, and Auckland. Those gardens which had been nursery-gardens were absolutely set aside in favour of the central institution. They were told that they would get a statement of the trees that could be planted here; but if they would go into the library they would find from the Forest Department of South Australia, which had a very valuable officer at its head, all that information.

Mr. BALLANCE asked if it would apply to New Zealand.

Mr. ROLLESTON thought it would apply to New Zealand admirably. Or, if they read the report of the chief gardener at Christchurch regarding the Eucalypti tribe, they would find all the information there as to what trees

were best for planting in that locality; and he ventured to say that no central department would do as well. He thought the Government should do what the late Government had been doing — utilize the existing institutions and help to make them useful. Any one who had travelled down the main line from Christchurch must see that admirable work had been done by the Forestry Board established in Canterbury; but the Government had set that aside absolutely, and struck at the root of the system that was established. With regard to the Agricultural Department, they were to have valuable reports and information, and agriculture was to be fostered throughout the whole colony. They did not want agriculture to be fostered by a central department. The business of the Government was to do what the late Government had begun doing—to foster the School of Agriculture that had been established out of public funds in an agricultural district, and which was really doing good work. That was now to be starved in favour of a new school of agriculture in a district where agriculture would not flourish at all. He ventured to think that the interests of agriculture were not going to be promoted by such appointments as had been made in this department.

Dr. NEWMAN said if there was a class of vote which he thought the House should encourage it was this, even if the money was not always wisely spent on agriculture and forestry. If any one would look at the books in the library he would find that enormous advantages in India, at the Cape, in France, and all over Europe had followed on the establishment of State forest departments; and, if this department did anything like the same amount of good, then the vote on the estimates would not be anything like too much for it.

Mr. MONTGOMERY wished to know if there were any students in the School of Agriculture, or if any were expected; because the land was said to be inferior, and not fit for agriculture, and he understood that, in point of fact, the Government would have to buy land somewhere else, because the land there was not arable. He asked if the Minister expected any students there.

Mr. BALLANCE said they were now carrying out the recommendations of the Legislature last session. If honourable gentlemen thought this vote was not necessary let them strike it out. He would like to ask the honourable member for Geraldine what had been done in the way of forestry during the last seven or eight years. With the exception of what was done by the Planting Board of Canterbury, there was nothing done. The money spent under the Forest-trees Planting Encouragement Act was absolutely wasted. It was spent on fancy plantations of *Pinus insignis*, *macrocarpa*, and on blue-gum. Blue-gum was an excellent timber for a variety of purposes, but would never make sawing-timber. If they were to have a forest department at all, they could not do it on a more economic scale than was now proposed. The Chief Conservator was a highly-qualified man, not only from a scientific, but from a practical point of view. This department had only just been organized, and a large amount of work had already been done.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the honourable gentleman was quite wrong in supposing that nothing had been done in the past, as hundreds of thousands of trees had been distributed from various gardens, the vote for which had not been stopped. He had himself been opposed to the Forest-trees Planting Encouragement Act; but the House determined that it should be passed, and a good deal of planting had been done, though he did not think it worth the expenditure.

Colonel TRIMBLE thought that the £7,000 on these estimates might as well have been put into the ordinary estimates; but he supposed that was not done because if all the expenses were put together the House would wipe it out. He warned the House, when it was first brought before them, that the department would be a very expensive toy; and that was all that it was. In the report it would be seen that it was contemplated to have a very large and increasing staff in this department. It was said that there was an income already in this department; but that income would be received even if the department did not exist. It would be quite time enough to create such a department when timber was scarce and the population numerous enough to be able to bear the taxation required for maintaining it. The great struggle in New Zealand at the present time was to clear the timber off, not to encourage its growth.

Mr. HOBBS said honourable gentlemen had evidently not read the reports laid on the table. Compared with other votes—for instance, goldfields votes — this was a mere drop in the bucket. There would be a considerable profit from this department in a very short time. In the past the planting of forests had not been carried out as it ought to have been.

Mr. BALLANCE said that if this vote were struck out it would be the greatest injury ever inflicted upon the colony. These estimates had been prepared two months ago, and would have been on the ordinary estimates, only the Chief Conservator was away inspecting forests. They were not kept back at all. If the State was to make provision for the future in this matter of forestry it should be begun at once. It was unreasonable to expect great profits at present; but they would be yearly increasing.

Mr. MACANDREW said it seemed alarming if they were going to pay £9,000 a year to maintain this establishment in order to be taught that blue-gum had no value as a sawing-timber. He could point out a ship built of blue-gum fifty years ago, which was as good as ever. He wished he had a thousand or two thousand acres of blue-gum forest to leave to his children. If it were possible to blot out the Act of last session it would be a very good thing. He quite agreed with the honourable member for Taranaki that they were going too fast altogether.

Mr. BRYCE was very much disposed to agree with the honourable member for Port

Chalmers. The position they were getting into with regard to this new department was truly alarming. It would be very many years before they had any profits whatever resulting from the labours of this department; but the expenditure would be a certainty. It was useless talking about what they derived from this department at present, because that income was not due to the expenditure in contemplation. He agreed that a great deal of the effort of the colony was at present directed towards destroying the forests for purposes of profit. That was inevitable—he had had to do it himself. The Minister of Lands had himself this year made a very exceptional proposal for expenditure in the destruction of forests—to borrow money in London to pay £2 10s. an acre to cut forests down. That was directly against his present proposals. If the House and the country could be polled, the theoretical people who did not understand the subject would be found arrayed on one side, strongly advocating this proposal, while on the other side would be found the practical people, almost to a man, strongly opposed to this proposal as impracticable, and against this large expenditure on experiments. He should be glad to see this new department blotted out altogether.

Mr. ROLLESTON would point out that they had had good little schools of forestry in the domains and botanical gardens, from whence thousands of trees had been distributed every year at little expense. There was not a sixpence on the estimates for them, and it was a perfect disgrace to the colony to let them drop. The Christchurch Gardens were still a credit to the place, and they were getting ten times as valuable work from those gardens now as they were ever likely to get from this department.

Mr. PEACOCK thought the fears he had expressed last year on this subject were beginning to be realized, but he thought, having embarked in this thing, they should go on for a year or two more, when they would be in a better position to judge what the results were likely to be, and those who advocated this departure would have an opportunity of fulfilling the promises they had made.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the discussion had gone to point out what he had said at first—that they wanted practical experience in connection with this department. This was shown by the fact that the blue-gum had been put down among the useless timbers. That fact alone was enough to draw strong attention to this vote. Here was a department set up to conserve forests at a large cost, while another department—the Railways—destroyed large areas of timber by fire every year, as on the Rimutaka. A representation to the department by the Wairarapa West County Council on this subject had been very unsatisfactorily replied to. The railways destroyed large quantities of crops, grass, and timber. In Australia, if similar carelessness were permitted, the loss would be enormous. He moved, That the vote be reduced by £3,500. That would do away with the School-of-Agriculture building, its director, and about half the amounts for the other items. Any practical man wanting the quickest return for his outlay would not go in for agriculture at Whangarei or anywhere in the North of Auckland, but in the great agricultural districts of Otago or Canterbury. The North of Auckland would be the very last place he would go to. It might be argued that a great part of the work of the department would be to promote pomology and the cultivation of tropical fruits; but the finances of the colony were scarcely in a fit state to bear the cost of these experimental matters. Private capital and enterprise well directed would produce much better results than would be attained by this department in that direction.

Mr. LOCKE did not agree that the southern part of the colony was necessarily the best for a school of forestry and fruit-growing. The cold clay-lands north of Auckland had been sold in large areas thirty years ago for 10s. an acre; and they were not worth a penny more now: in fact, for ordinary purposes they were not worth a shilling an acre, for fifty acres would hardly carry a sheep. But the kauri, that most valuable timber, only grew on this cold clay in the North—as the totara grew on shingle or gravel—and after the fern had been burnt off two or three times, short stunted manuka grew up, and among it thousands of young kauri. Thus, on land otherwise actually valueless, enormous wealth might, with care and fostering, be ultimately derived from forests grown on them, besides beautifying the country, and benefiting it enormously, climatically and otherwise. He strongly urged those who took an interest in the subject to devote as much attention as possible to the cultivation of the kauri, the stock of which was lessening so rapidly: and thus worthless land could be made most valuable in time. Too much care and attention could not be devoted to that subject. While urging the greatest care and practicality in expenditure on State forestry, this object of covering the cold worthless clay-lands with kauri would justify a large expenditure from both public and private sources, because there would be a great return in a few generations.

Mr. BUCHANAN quite agreed generally with the honourable member for the East Coast, but contended that the district to the north of Auckland was not a suitable place for agricultural experiments. The best totara grew on the very best land: that was his experience. He moved, That the vote be reduced by £3,500.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND said the quality of land could be told by the timber on it, and totara did not grow on the best, but on fair land. The Minister said if this vote was refused a great wrong would be done to New Zealand. Since when had he commenced to do this great right? It could only be about three weeks; because, if it had been before, he would have put this vote on the general estimates. He had been two years in office, during which he had done this great injustice of keeping it out, and had only just become conscious of the enormity of the wrong. He (Mr. Buckland) said that the vote was put on these estimates

because there was something wrong about it, and it had thus less chance of being discovered. They had passed a mixed-up vote of £9,000 on the general estimates for this department, and here was another mixed-up vote for nearly £7,000 more. These amounts should have been proposed together, and the whole subject should have been discussed at once, instead of on two occasions, if the Minister was so anxious to prevent this great wrong being done to the colony.

Mr. TURNBULL asked whether the £10,000 which the Act gave power to borrow had been raised.

Mr. BALLANCE.—No.

Mr. TURNBULL.—Then that would go towards the expense of this department.

Mr. MOAT was understood to say that he hoped the vote would not be thrown out. The department had been practically at work during the past year, and had done much good with regard to the Agricultural College at Whangarei. Honourable members forgot that the reserve now dedicated to that purpose had originally been a reserve for a high school, and had been diverted especially to establish a school of agriculture; and a better place could not have been found for the establishment of such a school. It was impossible that a person who had been brought up in the cold climate of Canterbury could teach people to grow trees and semi-tropical plants.

Mr. SEDDON would support the vote. Before long New Zealand would find herself in the same position as Victoria if, in the prime of her goldfields, she did not take steps to replace the timber which it was necessary to remove in the working of goldfields. Had Victoria done that, she would have saved thousands of pounds in the working of her goldfields. Already, on the west coast of the Middle Island it cost 25 per cent. more to work the mines through the denudation of the forests there. It was necessary to remove timber in the neighbourhood of mines; but young trees ought to be planted to take their place. A great mistake had also been made by farmers in removing the whole of the timber from their lands. So long as this money was expended in encouraging forestry, establishing schools of agriculture, and distributing plants and seeds, no money would ultimately be more reproductive. There was a great deal of timber very suitable for railway-sleepers and bridge-work which was being killed out year by year, and no steps were taken to replace it. They ought to provide substitutes for the first-class timber of which the forests were now being denuded.

Mr. LAKE would like to know what were the duties of these officers. Were they to look after forests from which the timber had been taken away?—because there were some places now where the people were taking away timber without any right whatever. If put into the hands of the local bodies they would do the work at half the expense.

Mr. BRUCE was surprised at the opposition to this vote. Were honourable members aware that the people of America were becoming seriously alarmed at the denudation of the forests, and becoming alive to the necessity for instituting some means by which to encourage private enterprise in planting trees? Of course we could not conserve all our forests; in many places they had to be burnt or cut down for pastoral purposes. He understood this department was meant to teach the people of the colony what trees were most useful, and also to show that from the climatic point of view forestry should be encouraged. Some of these votes, such as that for fencing, and others, would not be recurrent. He hoped the vote would be carried intact.

Mr. LAKE asked whether all these forestry officers had been appointed.

Mr. BALLANCE said that some had, but not all.

Major ATKINSON said that the difficulty in passing this vote was that there had not been any proper explanation of it, and, as it appeared on the supplementary estimates, it seemed as if it was only an afterthought.

Mr. BALLANCE explained that the reason for that was that the Chief Conservator had been engaged in visiting the different parts of the colony in order to prepare his report; and as soon as he returned these estimates were prepared.

Major ATKINSON pointed out that the honourable gentleman had brought down a considerable amount on the ordinary estimates, which was granted, and no intimation was given that a further sum would be required. He was in favour of the conservation of forests if it could be done for a reasonable amount; but he was not prepared to go to this extent without further information. What did the honourable gentleman mean by "a school of agriculture"? He found from the report of the Chief Conservator that the land at Whangarei was unfitted for agriculture, although it was fitted for certain classes of trees and semi-tropical plants. The school should therefore be called by some other name. In the main estimates £2,000 had been voted for a school of forestry, and he would like an explanation as to the reason for asking for this £1,000 here.

Mr. BALLANCE explained that the £1,000 was required for buildings and other expenses attendant on carrying on for the first year. The honourable gentleman would find a full explanation of the subject in the papers laid on the table.

Major ATKINSON must say that the House should not be asked to vote £2,000 for a school of forestry on one set of estimates and then be asked to vote another £1,000 for school-of-agriculture buildings on the supplementary estimates. He was sure the honourable member for Rodney was not aware how curiously the honourable gentlemen opposite were mixing up these buildings. It was out of all reason. Then, a director of the school was to be appointed. What were his duties?

Mr. BALLANCE said he was to be Manager of the School of Agriculture and Forestry.

Major ATKINSON asked if it was not a fact that they were only going to grow trees there.

He would be obliged to vote against the whole thing if this was going to be made a school of agriculture. If there was to be a school of forestry, and a farm for semi-tropical fruit culture was to be established, he would vote a reasonable sum for that purpose; but he would not be a party to establishing a school of agriculture in that district. He was certain that that district was entirely unfitted for agriculture. He should be glad to vote for the preservation of young kauri-trees. Mr. Campbell-Walker, of India, who visited the colony some years ago, reported that the kauri would replenish itself if the ground were fenced in and properly looked after. He (Major Atkinson) thought great advantage would result to the colony if money were spent in fencing certain forest-lands and protecting the trees from fire. He should, however, require more information before he could commit himself to vote for the establishment of a large and new State department. He would like to call the attention of the House to the fact that this money was to come out of loan. It ought to have been on the public works estimates, and not in these estimates. This vote was added up in the Consolidated Fund, and, as he understood it, the money was to be provided out of loan. He hoped the Government would inform the Committee how much would be necessary in order to make a beginning to fence and properly guard large tracts in the North upon which these young kauri-trees were growing. So far, he should be happy to vote, but he was not prepared to vote £3,000 for buildings and money to support a big school of forestry and fruit-culture.

Mr. BALLANCE said it was intended to have a school of agriculture and forestry combined at Whangarei. The Government was informed that the land was fit for agriculture. They hoped to acquire more land near the present block, and this would be all that was required for a school of forestry and agriculture. The total estimate for buildings was £1,000. He could give the honourable gentleman a list of the purposes for which the money was required in connection with the school, showing fencing, putting in crops, preparing for crops, and preparing for forest purposes. It would take this vote to start the school. With regard to the work done in various parts of the colony, it must not be forgotten that this department had not been completely organized. Most of the work had been done during the last two months. The Inspector had been going over the colony and getting information with regard to the forests of the colony. The Act was only passed last year. The Government could not get this information and organize the department all at once. The vote was a very moderate one. With regard to what the honourable member for Geraldine had said about domains, the Government intended to encourage private enterprise, and call upon the nurserymen to supply trees. With regard to the loan question, there was power to borrow £10,000 from loan; afterwards it would come from the consolidated revenue. The Act provided that the income from this department should be credited to the department; and this would be done in future. If the colony was to have a Forest Department this money must be voted. If honourable members objected to having a school of agriculture and forestry combined, they should say so, and strike out the vote.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked if the Minister could tell the Committee what number of trees were being planted year after year by private enterprise throughout the country. These nurseries were producing now more trees than were wanted.

Mr. MACANDREW said that some time ago the Otago University thought of establishing a school of agriculture. It was estimated to cost £2,500, and it was expected that the school would be self-supporting. He thought that something of the kind would have been better than the proposal indicated here.

Mr. FISHER quite agreed with the honourable member for Rangitikei that forest-conservation ought to be one of the first functions of the State. These estimates, however, showed that, whatever else had been done, a department had been created which for the first year would cost £16,000. He could understand conserving the valuable portion of the native woods of the colony; and as to the rest they did not want a school of forestry to teach the young men of the colony how to grow American pines. He thought that all that was sought to be attained under this vote could be attained at a cost of £3,000 per annum. He objected to the expense of the department which was being created, and therefore he would vote to reduce the amount.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE said he supported the Bill when it was before Parliament last year; but he did not understand that they were to have a school of agriculture established in a very unsuitable place. He was a thorough believer in the conservation of the forests of New Zealand. In Prussia some millions of acres of State forests existed, and they were so managed that they returned to the State a revenue of some hundreds of thousands of pounds. He thought that about 8s. per acre per annum was received by the Prussian Government for the right to hew timber in the State forests there. In many countries in Europe, and also in America, this subject was taking a prominent place in the various Legislatures. He was quite prepared to admit that certain forests in New Zealand ought to be protected in every possible manner; but it appeared to him that the House was being taken by surprise in being asked to vote a sum of money for the establishment of a school of agriculture at Whangarei, and he did not think the colony was in a position to vote money for that purpose until there had been some further inquiry as to the probable usefulness of such an institution. He was only prepared to vote at present for those items on the estimates which provided for the salaries of the Rangers, for he understood that they were doing good work in the direction of protecting the forests which existed in the North of Auckland, and

which otherwise would be destroyed by fire or in other ways wantonly. He moved, That the vote be reduced by £5,455.

Sir G. GREY thought it was worthy of consideration whether the House should not take steps not only to conserve the forests that were still left, but also to replace those that had passed away or were passing away. A great deal of forest-land was private property, and when the forest was cleared off the land became, comparatively speaking, of little value. Now, experiments had been tried in New Zealand, and it was quite clear that the kauri was so slow-growing a tree that it would be difficult to induce private persons to make plantations of it. He fancied that it took a number of hundreds of years before the tree became of any great size; and that consideration would prevent people from entering upon an enterprise so remote—at least, on a large scale. But there were varieties of kauri—seven or eight of them, he believed. Some of these were, ordinarily speaking, quickly-growing trees, and they grew upon the same poor land that the best kind of kauri grew upon. There was a kind of kauri grown in Northern Australia and Borneo which, he supposed, grew at least four or five times as fast as the New Zealand kauri. He believed that in seventy or eighty years trees would have grown to such a size that planks of valuable timber could be cut out of them. Certainly the timber would not be equal to the New Zealand kauri; but it would be of considerable value. The tree also yielded a considerable amount of kauri-gum: in fact, he was told that the export of kauri-gum from Borneo was likely to become very great. Then, there was another tree—the redwood of California—one of the finest timbers in the world, which grew very well indeed upon kauri-land, and grew with considerable rapidity. In fifty or sixty years that would cut very good planks of valuable timber. And it was a tree that did not require to be fenced. It was a great consideration to replace the forests by trees which were independent of fencing for protection, and which could not be permanently injured by sheep or cattle. There were many other trees he could name equally valuable; and it seemed to him that the best way of approaching this subject was to have a small work published, with a description of these trees and of the nature of the experiments made in regard to them, for the education of owners of forest lands in a knowledge of how they could replace their forests at very little cost and with great probability of success. He was afraid that nothing would protect the kauri-forests for any great length of time unless very stringent laws indeed were passed and put in force, because such was the desire to make money that people would cut the trees down. The quantity of trees of that kind left in the hands of the Government was very small. Then he came to the question of an agricultural college. He heard some honourable gentlemen say that it was not necessary; but he believed that it was absolutely necessary to found an agricultural college in the northern part of New Zealand, because unless an institution of this kind were established you would never instruct the people in raising olives, making wine, and in raising many of the semi-tropical products. He believed that arrowroot might be produced here, and become a very valuable export. He therefore hoped that the House would permit so much to remain on the estimates as would provide for the establishment on a small scale of an agricultural college. A large establishment was not necessary. He believed that Whangarei presented a soil and climate very suitable for the establishment of a school of that kind. He was not sure that it was the best locality; but a school there would be of great advantage, and therefore he trusted the House would give a sufficient sum to allow of the school being established.

Mr. Hursthouse's amendment negatived.

The Committee divided on Mr. Buchanan's amendment to reduce the vote by £3,500.

AYES, 22.

Atkinson	Lake	Thomson, J. W.
Beetham	Locke	Trimble
Bryce	Macandrew	Wakefield
Conolly	Macarthur	Wilson.
Dodson	Montgomery	
Duncan	O'Callaghan	*Tellers.*
Fergus	Rolleston	Buchanan
Fisher	Sutter	Richardson, G.

NOES, 33.

Ballance	McMillan	Smith
B.-Bradshaw	Moat	Steward, W. J.
Bruce	Moss	Stewart, W. D.
Buckland, W. F.	Newman	Stout
Cadman	O'Conor	Tole
Cowan	Parata	Turnbull
Fitzherbert	Peacock	Vogel
Fraser	Pyke	Walker.
Grey	Reese	*Tellers.*
Hursthouse	Richardson, E.	Brown
Larnach	Seddon	Hobbs.
McKenzie, J.		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Barron	Lance
Buckland, J. C.	Guinness
Fulton	Levestam
Hislop	Samuel
Whyte.	Grace.

Majority against, 11.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON moved, That the vote be reduced by £2,000.

Amendment negatived.

Vote, £6,884, agreed to.

PUBLIC TRUST ACCOUNT.

Public Trust Office, £145, agreed to.

GOVERNMENT INSURANCE ACCOUNT.

Salaries, £27,852 2s.

Colonel TRIMBLE would like to have it explained how it was that, while the District Agents in Christchurch and Auckland were paid only £450 per annum, the District Manager—

ch, he presumed, was the same office in edin—received £800, and also, he believed, arantee of £200 on commissions.

ir J. VOGEL said the sums put down were salaries received by the officers; but over above that they received commission.

olonel TRIMBLE wished to know why re should be the difference in the salaries.

Sir J. VOGEL said Mr. Driver received 0 a year. The history of that appointment l been so often told that he supposed the use did not wish him to enter into particu-s, which would be found in the evidence en before the Select Committee and in report which was laid before the policy-lders at their last annual meeting. The ard found it necessary to appoint some one Dunedin, the affairs of the Otago District re-iring an appointment of the kind. They nd no one else they thought suitable, and r. Driver received the appointment, and an reement was entered into that the salary ould be at the rate of £800 a year, with a mmission. The Committee was asked to te in accordance with the engagements as ey stood at present. He might say that the unedin District contained nearly one-fourth the whole of the policy-holders when the ppointment was made; and the business as not then progressing satisfactorily. Mr. river's duties were the same as those of the ther agents referred to.

Colonel TRIMBLE would like to know if it as the intention to discharge the officers at he other places, who were not worth the mount the manager at Dunedin received. If he duties were of a similar character they ould warrant a payment of a like salary if fficiently performed, and he thought those laces were as much entitled to good manage-ment as Dunedin.

Mr. MACANDREW wished to know if, be-fore the late Board ceased to exist, the salaries of the department were raised all round to a very large extent—to an extent of 50 per cent. in many cases—and whether it was intended that the salaries should remain as raised by the Board.

Sir J. VOGEL said the salaries had been very largely increased in many cases, and some of them were very high. He was not prepared to take the responsibility of reversing the action of the Board at present, as the Board still existed, and it would be a very invidious duty for him to perform; but the Committee should understand there were a number of highly-paid officers receiving very much larger salaries than they had when the Association was handed over to the Board. Perhaps it would be as well for him to explain the intention of the Government in future as to the carrying-on of this department. It had been said that the attention of a Minister should be entirely given to the Association or to the department, or it could not be worked effectively. The Government were not in a position to allow of the entire attention of a Minister being devoted to the management of the department; but they were of opinion that it would be desirable to interpose between the Commissioner and the Minister who had charge of the department some one who, in the character of an Under-Secretary, would take charge of and bring before the Minister the business, and act in the same way as Under-Secretaries acted in other cases with other departments. Honourable members might have noticed that at the top of the estimates appeared the salaries of an actuarial branch, and the Actuary had the title attached to him of "Actuary and Government Statist." He was not prepared to speak positively upon the subject, but he thought the course they would adopt would be to make the actuarial branch a branch, so to speak, of the Government proper. The Actuary, who was a man of very great ability—he might say of commanding ability—would be in the position of Government Statist and Actuary, and would communicate between the Minister and the Commissioner; so that by that means he believed they would have a larger and more thorough supervision than they had previously had; and the Actuary, being a man who had very great knowledge in matters relating to life insurance, would give a larger amount of assistance to the Minister over the department than he would otherwise receive. At present they were charging the whole of his salary to the Government Insurance Account; but he foresaw that at some future time it might be possible to amalgamate the department of the Registrar-General with this, and save a considerable amount of expense, whilst they might be able to carry out the wish which had often been expressed in the House that the system of statistics should be put on an analogous footing to the system carried out in the Colony of Victoria. He could only sketch out briefly the view he had in mind; and honourable members would understand that he could not fully elaborate it. As to proposing any reductions, he did not feel that it would be right for him to take upon himself any such responsibility, especially as he was still Chairman of the Board, and would remain so until the department was taken over. He would give honourable members particulars, if they wished to know them, of any of the salaries that had been raised since the Association was in charge of the Government.

Mr. PEACOCK asked what were the terms of the engagement of the District Manager at Dunedin. When did the engagement terminate?

Sir J. VOGEL believed there was no special time named. The engagement was that the salary should be £800, and that during the first year he should be paid a commission not less than £200. After that the commission would be whatever he succeeded in obtaining. He believed a month's notice would have to be given of termination of agreement.

Mr. SEDDON, to test the opinion of the Committee, would move a reduction of £1,000. They should reduce the vote by that amount as an intimation to the Government that the House did not agree with the increases made by the Board. In several towns he saw resident agents employed where he thought the

old system of having the work done by Postmasters should be resorted to.

Sir J. VOGEL said he had not had time at present to consider the matter so as to take the responsibility of making the alterations at present; but next year, when he brought down the estimates, he would be prepared to take that responsibility. He did not know what the object was of striking out £1,000, and he thought if it were carried there might be a difficulty in fulfilling the engagements of the department.

Mr. SEDDON said there was no explanation of the fact that the agent at Christchurch got £400, while the Dunedin agent was getting £800; and he thought the positions of those officers might very well be compared. He understood the Commissioner had had his salary increased from £800 to £1,000 since the Association was formed. He thought they could do away with the agencies at Napier, Wanganui, Timaru, Oamaru, and Invercargill.

Sir J. VOGEL said the use of the Post Office was entirely in accordance with his views and intentions, as far as he was able to see. As to the agencies in the towns mentioned by the honourable member for Kumara, they were succeeding very well, and he did not think it would be desirable to make a change, so that he would not like to pledge himself to it at present. He was not himself in favour of so large a use of canvassing as the officers of the department or the Committee recommended; but he would not reduce it unless there was a direct intimation to that effect from Parliament. He could not help thinking that the twenty-five thousand policy-holders throughout the colony ought to be made use of by the department, and if they received a small commission they might add largely to the business.

Mr. HOBBS was quite sure the Committee could not take upon itself the responsibility of reducing these items on the estimates without their being particularized. Some unfortunate secretary or clerk would be made a scapegoat.

Mr. TURNBULL moved, That the first item, "Commissioner, £500," be reduced by £100, which would make his salary equal to what it was before the department was taken over by the Association.

Mr. HATCH supported the motion of the honourable member for Kumara. If they voted for the reduction of separate items it would simply result in a waste of time. He hoped the Government would see the importance of going back to the Post Office to do the work to a great extent. He ventured to think that a great saving would thereby be effected. He was sorry that the honourable member for Kumara did not move a reduction of £2,500.

Mr. O'CALLAGHAN hoped the Committee would allow the estimates to go through, as they were for only six months, and there was no information before the Committee to enable them to reduce particular items. The Treasurer had assured them that when he came down with the estimates next year he would endeavour to make the salaries somewhat the same as before the Association was formed.

Mr. TURNBULL wished to withdraw his motion, because he did not wish to imperil the motion of the honourable member for Kumara. If carried, he hoped the reduction would come all round, and not simply to unfortunate men. He wished to see the salaries placed as nearly as possible as they were before the department was handed over to the Association.

Sir J. VOGEL said that if the Committee pointed to any specific reductions he would, of course, make them in accordance with their recommendation. Speaking generally upon the whole matter, it seemed to him that, as they were taking over the department on very short notice, and as those officers had been led to believe that those salaries would last, a sudden reduction would cause a great deal of dissatisfaction. He should vote against reduction on any item. At the same time, if any reductions were to be made, he should much prefer that the Committee should decide them than that he should be given a mere general direction to reduce the total amount by £1,000, thus throwing on him the onus of making reductions from some and not from others. He would rather take the vote as it stood now, because the officers would consider they were entitled to the salaries agreed to be given them for this year, at any rate. If £1,000 was to be taken off, he should like the items to be specifically stated. As to the Postmasters doing the work, he knew that when this work was taken from them some increases of salaries had been given to compensate for the commission taken away. The whole subject of again putting the work on the Postmasters, and the emoluments they should receive as salary and commission, would require careful consideration, and he could not speak on it now, because he had not sufficiently considered it.

Major ATKINSON hoped the Committee would take the advice of the Treasurer, and pass the vote as it stood, as far as salaries were concerned. They had not sufficient information to enable them to deal with the subject otherwise, as the Committee had dealt only with the general question of the reorganization of the department. It would be unwise, without proper consideration and information, to take from the Treasurer the responsibility of dealing with these matters. These salaries had been increased, and it would be unwise of the Committee to take upon itself suddenly to reduce them. Next year the Treasurer would be responsible for the votes proposed, and would be able, after full consideration, to give reasons for each item. Under an authority given by Parliament, these officers had been given increases of salary, and there was no idea when the salaries were increased that the Act would be repealed, and the officers had naturally been led to expect that the increases would be secure to them for this year at any rate, and no doubt they thought much longer. He hoped the vote would be passed as it stood; and that would leave the Committee free to take such action as it thought fit next year. He would like the item of £4,000 for building at Auckland explained. He did not think they

were prepared to go on with the buildings this year.

Sir J. VOGEL.—That is a separate vote.

Major ATKINSON said, as to handing the agency business back to the post-offices, he knew that in many cases the Postmasters made most efficient agents; but in many cases the Postmasters had too much other work to do the agency work well and as it ought to be done, and of course this was in places where there was the most agency work to do. Where the Postmaster could do the work well, and without inconvenience and to the detriment of his other duties, it was desirable that the Postmaster should be the agent; but in many towns it was absolutely necessary to have independent agents if the work was to be properly carried on.

Mr. O'CONOR thought it would be useless, and a great waste of time, to vote on each particular item, as some members seemed to wish, and he therefore hoped the Government would take the vote on the proposed reduction of the first item by £100 as an instruction to reduce all the salaries to the former amounts. Many honourable members, he believed, wished the Government to be so directed.

Sir J. VOGEL said he would take any direction the Committee chose to give him. He was obliged to the honourable member for Egmont for stating his views as to the post-offices, as they ran in accordance with his own, though he had not had much experience in the matter of late years. He quite agreed that it was only in some places that the agency could be undertaken by the Postmasters. As to taking a vote on the first item as an instruction to reduce all salaries, he would point out that the salary of the Commissioner had been raised from £800 to £1,000; that of the Secretary and Accountant from £500 to £750; that of the Inspector of Canvassers from £400 to £650; and that of the Actuary from £600 to £800. If the whole of these increases were taken off, it would be doing an injustice to some of the old officers, because the business had largely increased, and it would be taking too much off. It was a question whether something should not be taken off; but to return bodily to the old salaries would be doing an injustice. The proposed reduction on the first item would mean a reduction of that officer's salary at the rate of £200 a year from the 1st October next; and that would be a harsh measure. He thought, with the honourable member for Egmont, the salaries should run as they were to the end of the year. He should vote against any reductions; but, if he were directed to reduce all salaries as from the 1st October, he should follow the direction of the Committee, though still thinking it a very harsh measure. They would then be taking the department over in a state of discontent that might be almost amounting to mutiny—all the chief officers would be discontented at the making of the change and the making of such large reductions as this would amount to. He felt that it would be far better that his assurance should be accepted that, if the present salaries were allowed to go on to the 31st March next, the officers would be made to clearly understand that after that date their salaries would be subject to whatever action Parliament might think it desirable to take.

Mr. CONOLLY regretted that he had not that great amount of faith in the Treasurer that would enable him to believe the honourable gentleman would make any reduction in these amounts unless he received a distinct intimation from the House that he must do so. The honourable gentleman was not an economical man—he never had been, and he (Mr. Conolly) did not suppose he ever would be; and if they allowed this vote to pass without any reduction it would be quoted against them next year, and they would be told then that the very items on which reductions might then be proposed were passed the year before without a hostile vote. He agreed to a certain extent that there was an objection to taking the vote salary by salary. He very much preferred that they should carry the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara; and a reduction of £1,000 on the total might be made without affecting a single salary or doing an injustice to any one; because, if the Colonial Treasurer thought it would be an injustice to reduce any salary before the 31st March next, it might be taken off the item for buildings at Auckland, which he did not suppose were going to be erected during the next twelve months. Let the honourable gentleman take a reduction of £1,000 as an indication from the Committee that they thought the expenses were increasing at an enormous rate—a rate very unsatisfactory to the policy-holders and also to the taxpayers. He had been informed that the total expenses last year amounted to £39,000, and that the amounts now proposed were at the rate of £50,000 a year at least. He could not conceive what possible necessity there was for increasing the already very large expenditure by the great amount of £11,000 a year. He certainly hoped that the Committee would not vote item by item, but would carry the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara as an indication to the Treasurer that they believed the total amount was far more than ought to be asked for for the department.

Mr. MONTGOMERY said the motion of the honourable member for Kumara, if carried, would be an indication that the House expected that a reduction should be made, and that the salaries should be reduced all round where it could be done without injury to the service. For instance, there were Managers at Dunedin, Christchurch, and at Auckland, who all had similar duties to perform. The duties at Dunedin were not more severe than those in Christchurch or Auckland, and therefore the salaries ought to be equalized. He would vote for the reduction by £1,000. He would ask what the Treasurer meant to do with the vote of £4,000 for buildings.

Mr. PEACOCK agreed with the honourable member for Lincoln that the salaries and

other arrangements should be left over for six months.

Mr O'CALLAGHAN thought the Treasurer had received sufficient intimation from the Committee as to the reduction of salaries, seeing that every member who had spoken had recommended a reduction. What the Treasurer ought to do was to start from the basis of the salaries before the Association was formed, and increase these as the business increased, and not start from the present basis.

Mr BUCHANAN said the statement that there was not sufficient information to deal with these figures would not hold water when they looked at the inequality in the various salaries. The honourable gentleman himself had given one instance when he had said that the Inspector's salary had been raised from £400 to £[illegible]. The Inspector of Post Offices had only £[illegible], and it was well known what a number of duties were thrust upon that department, and the enormous amount of work the Inspector had to go through; yet he received £150 less than was paid to the Inspector of this branch. He would vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Kumara.

Mr. FISHER did not intend to touch any controverted point; but he would like to call attention to one little item which had excited his curiosity—namely, the £150 to be voted as remuneration for the three official directors. He believed that this payment was to be made in consequence of the statement made by the Treasurer to the Insurance Inquiry Committee that these gentlemen had constantly attended the meetings of the Finance Committee of the Board. Again, reading the evidence taken before that Committee, he came across an amusing interchange of question and answer between the honourable member for Akaroa and the Premier. The honourable member for Akaroa asked whether it was possible for these high officials, after giving their attention to this work night after night, to attend properly to their own duties. The answer to all that was that they did not attend at all. Mr. Gavin certainly did attend, but the other two did not. The proposal really excited his risible faculties. It was a curious thing that this remuneration should be given to these gentlemen, who were really not a copper out of pocket, and that nothing whatever should be given to an elected member who had just spent £150 on his election in order to represent the policy-holders on the Board. He did not ask that any of them should be paid. He only called attention to the fact, to point out the anomaly.

Sir J. VOGEL might explain that this vote was in accordance with a resolution which had been come to over and over again by the Board, and he believed the honourable member himself agreed to pass a measure through to carry out the recommendation.

Mr. FISHER had been asked to do so, but declined.

Sir J. VOGEL said his recollection was different from that of the honourable member; but, at all events, the honourable member supported [illegible] because the [illegible] went up to the Government asking [illegible] advance the money to make the payment [illegible] the solicitor had advised that it could [illegible] made out of the funds of the institution. [illegible] Government replied that they [illegible] to make the advance, but they would [illegible] a measure to enable the payment to be [illegible]. As regarded the payment of the other [illegible] of the Board, he had not been [illegible] them. He had consulted the Solicitor-General on the subject. His own impression [illegible] that the directors were entitled to [illegible] till the end of the year, as the Act said [illegible] they should receive an annual payment [illegible] the Solicitor-General had informed him otherwise, and that he would have to get a [illegible] the purpose. He had only received this [illegible] within the last few hours, and was afraid it was too late to do anything this year. With regard to the proposed expenditure on the Auckland building, he believed the plans and estimates were prepared, and that a very good building could be placed on the new site, from which a very fair revenue would be received, besides giving the department proper offices in Auckland, which it had not at present. He strongly recommended that vote to the House. Coming back to the question of reducing salaries, he might say that he was in this position: that there were some of the increases which he did not approve of, although he accepted the decision of the Board. If the House thrust upon him the responsibility of making these reductions it would place him in a very invidious position. Besides that, he thought that the salaries of these officers should run on for the twelve months. He would then inform the officers of the decision of the House. He would not enter into personal matters. The honourable member for Picton was constantly attacking him personally. Nevertheless the honourable gentleman had probably as high an opinion of his abilities as Treasurer as he had of the abilities of the honourable gentleman as Attorney-General. Each must be left to entertain his own opinion.

Mr. FISHER would ask honourable gentlemen to understand that he had not moved in this matter of paying the official directors, and had only called attention to the anomaly which existed as between them and the other directors.

Major ATKINSON did not wish it to be understood that he had expressed any opinion in favour of a reduction of salaries. He would feel himself free to judge next year whether they should be reduced or not. When he was in office he had great difficulty in retaining good officers, because they were paid very much less than the officers of other institutions, and as soon as good men were trained by the Government Insurance Department the other offices took them away. He warned the House that if this department was to be made a success they must pay salaries something similar to those paid by other offices. With regard to canvassing he wished to say that if

fice left off canvassing it would fail y as a Government insurance office. was no doubt it would get the large nces, which wanted the best security; ie smaller ones would certainly be lost r offices canvassed for them and if this did not. He regretted to hear that the intended to give a greater amount of ission for larger insurances, because he ht in a national office that was a mistake, it would encourage the agents to get the insurances and not the smaller ones; he object of the department should be to he whole population insured if possible. s well known that the agents would work the table which gave the greatest amount mmission. If they gave an agent a small ntage on one table which would bring in more commission than a large one nother table, they would find that all the iess was on the one that brought in the commission, the fact being that the pub- id not understand the matter well them- s, and took the word of the agent for it. ioped there would be no lack of canvassing, that the greater commission, if any, would iven on the smaller amounts insured. He that the officials in insurance offices did like that, because it reduced the averages of policies, and because the smaller policies not return as much for bonuses. Those insured with the Government office should rather to the absolute security than to e bonuses.

Mr. SEDDON said the main point had not n touched at all. He asked whether it was the case that at the recent poll of policy- lers these voted for returning the control of institution to the Government distinctly the understanding that no increase should made in the expenses, but that reductions uld be made. Now the Colonial Treasurer l the salaries should remain as they were, l next year he would see what could be ie. It was not the position of the officers of department that should be considered, but vas rather a question of restoring confidence; l it was necessary that this reduction should made, as an indication that Parliament, ving taken back the control of the institution, s determined that it should be conducted in interests of the colony. That was why he oved for a reduction. He was quite sure, if e Colonial Treasurer told the officers who re reduced that it was the wish of Parlia- ent, they would at once submit.

Mr. Turnbull's amendment withdrawn.

The Committee divided on the question, That the vote be reduced by £1,000."

AYES, 33.

arron	Duncan	Macarthur
-Bradshaw	Fraser	Mackenzie, M.
ryce	Grace	McKenzie, J.
uckland, J. C.	Hatch	Montgomery
uckland, W.F.	Hursthouse	O'Callaghan
onolly	Kerr	O'Conor
owan	Lake	Parata
odson	Macandrew	Pyke
Richardson, G.	Trimble	*Tellers.*
Steward, W. J.	Turnbull	Buchanan
Sutter	Wilson.	Seddon.
Thomson, J. W.		

NOES, 18.

Atkinson	Larnach	Richardson, E.
Ballance	Moss	Tole
Beetham	Newman	Vogel.
Bruce	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Hobbs	Pearson	Moat
Johnston	Reid	Walker.
Lance		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Grace	Whyte
Guinness	Mitchelson
Levestam	Fulton
O'Callaghan	Fergus
Samuel.	Hislop.

Majority for, 15.

Amendment agreed to.

Major ATKINSON would like an explanation from the Colonial Treasurer as to what he understood as the result of the division. He understood that the Treasurer could take this money out of the building vote if he liked. He hoped that there would be no indiscriminate reduction of salaries, as that meant that the best men would quickly leave the department, while the bad men would be only too glad to remain. He knew a great deal about this institution, and had before seen the effects of this sort of thing. He could quite understand other companies liking this; but the efficiency of the office would be perfectly undermined if they reduced the salaries of efficient officers.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the efficiency of the office would be undermined if they appointed unsuitable officers.

Sir J. VOGEL understood that it was not intended that he should make a reduction in all the increases that had been proposed. He took the division as an expression of opinion that the Government should be reminded of the desire of the policy-holders that the Association should be more cheaply conducted. He took it as an indication from the Committee that, although they did not sustain all the increases that had been made, the Government was not to make a reduction in all the items; and he would endeavour to fulfil the wishes of the Committee to the best of his ability.

Mr. MACANDREW understood the division to be an indication of the wish of the Committee that they should go back to the salaries of twelve months ago.

Mr. HOBBS wished to impress on the Treasurer that there would be intense dissatisfaction throughout the country if Mr. Driver's salary was not reduced with the rest.

Mr. MOSS believed that the officers of this department did not receive the same bonus last year as other officers of the Government Service. He presumed the Treasurer would be able to exercise his discretion as to the method of making the reductions, for it was impossible for individual members to know where the reductions should be effected.

Mr. SUTTER did not think the Colonial Treasurer could labour under any difficulty as to the wish of the Committee in regard to the authorized reductions. There were some highly-paid officers who received remuneration far beyond the value of their services. His opinion was that if they were not satisfied with £800 a year they should go where they could get £1,000.

Mr. PEARSON expressed his astonishment at the conduct of some honourable members who had cut down officers' salaries, and yet had voted for the District Railways Bill. He announced his intention to follow the course indicated by the honourable member for Egmont in this matter.

Dr. NEWMAN said if the salaries of the officers in this department were cut down they would lose their best officials, and the policy-holders would ultimately suffer. When the Treasurer was looking into what reductions could be made, he hoped the honourable gentleman would see if he could reduce such items as the agency at Dunedin.

Vote, as reduced, £26,582 2s., agreed to.

UNAUTHORIZED EXPENDITURE.

Chargeable on Consolidated Fund, £70,403 0s. 4d.

Major ATKINSON asked for an explanation of the item, "Refund of the amount received for maintenance of Mrs. Jane Ramsay in Dunedin Asylum from the 18th December, 1866, to the 20th December, 1884, £307 15s. 11d."

Sir J. VOGEL replied that the case was a very pathetic and sad one. There was a family in some part of Otago, and the wife, Mrs. Ramsay, became a lunatic, and was taken to the Dunedin Asylum. The husband was accidentally run over and incapacitated from work, and, besides that, he had an invalid boy. The wife became possessed of some few hundred pounds at Home, and the Public Trustee obtained this money, and paid it over to the Lunatic Asylum for the maintenance of Mrs. Ramsay. The circumstances were represented to the Government, and it appeared that Mrs. Ramsay was very useful in the Asylum, and did a great deal of ordinary work. Under these circumstances the Government consented to refund the money, and to place it in trust for the benefit of her husband and children.

Major ATKINSON asked for an explanation of the item, "Advances to County of Inangahua in respect of subsidy payable under 'The Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Act, 1885,' £1,000; less amount recovered, £365 12s. 6d."

Sir J. VOGEL said that was a temporary advance, and the amount was being paid back again. The advance was made on account of subsidies expected to accrue, and it would be observed that £365 had been recovered, and he believed that only £400 was outstanding against subsidies which were due this year. The amount set down for the Manawatu County was an advance on account of subsidies which were to be payable to the Board. A considerable amount had been repaid already. The work was very important.

Mr. CONOLLY asked for an explanation of the item, "Additional house-allowance to Hon. W. J. M. Larnach for year ending January, 1886, £100." Was that a part of the usual house-allowance to Ministers who do not occupy Ministerial residences?

Sir J. VOGEL said the circumstances of the case were these: The honourable gentleman could not obtain a house for anything like the amount within the allowance. At last he obtained a house, and a considerable amount of repairs had to be effected upon it, and the Government agreed to allow this amount, and to place it before the House.

Major ATKINSON asked for an explanation of the item, "Payment to Kidd and McLachlan on account of compensation to H. Skey for removal of buildings at Dunedin, £265."

Sir R. STOUT explained that this arose out of an old provincial liability, from a promise given by the Superintendent of Otago in 1868.

Major ATKINSON asked for an explanation of the item, "Native-land duty on leases, Rotorua."

Mr. BALLANCE said this was a repayment of Native-land duty payable on the leases in accordance with a mutual arrangement which had been made.

Vote, £70,403 0s. 4d., agreed to.

Chargeable on Public Works Fund, £5,617 17s. 5d., agreed to.

Public Trust Office, £6 11s. 2d.

Sums irrecoverable, £496.

Mr. PEACOCK called attention to the item "For water sold—Mount Ida Water-race Trust, £455 9s. 1d.," and asked for an explanation.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE explained that when the race was first opened water was given on credit; but it was not found to answer well, and water was now only sold for cash: but at the outset these debts were incurred, and the people who owed them were either dead or had left the colony.

Vote, £496, agreed to.

PUBLIC WORKS FUND.

CLASS III.—RAILWAYS.

Legal and other expenses in connection with the purchase of district railways, £800.

Major ATKINSON thought that the company selling or the permanent officers of the Government should have done this work.

Sir R. STOUT said the amount covered not only legal charges, but negotiations in regard to the debentures. All the expenses in regard to the legal work were certified to by the Registrar of the Supreme Court before they were paid.

Vote, £800, agreed to.

CLASS IV.—ROADS.

Main roads, £850, agreed to.

Miscellaneous roads and bridges, £4,850.

Mr. PEACOCK asked for an explanation of the item, "Lyell to Westport Road, £3,000."

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said this road had been in use for a great number of years, and was now in utter disrepair, and as there was a good deal of crib-work all the amount asked

ould be required. The road was almost ed at the present time—in fact, it had stopped for days together—and it was ab- ly necessary to make it fit for traffic.

. PEACOCK asked if there were no local s.

. E. RICHARDSON said it had always looked upon as a main road through un- ed country and in charge of the Govern- , and the County Council had no funds which to keep it in order.

:. BEETHAM said he was not going to against the item, for he recognized that the rnment must know more of these roads private members: he wanted to point hat only £280 in these estimates was voted he Masterton-Woodville Road, which was e inadequate, and it was impossible that road could be kept open by the local bodies. railway-works, too, were breaking up the , and it would be the unpleasant duty of Council in a very short time to bring be- the Government a very considerable claim ss more assistance could be given as a it-in-aid.

Ir. E. RICHARDSON hoped that the claim ld not be a large one.

Ir. G. F. RICHARDSON asked if the Lyell- stport Road did not run through land to be n to the railway company.

Ir. E. RICHARDSON said No; it ran ough a coal-reserve.

Ir. ROLLESTON thought that the road n Lyell to Inangahua did run through part the land; but he must say he did not think t was a reason for opposing this item. He l raised the question on a previous occasion, en the question of granting £5,000 to gold- lds counties was under discussion, whether re were not funds from the Crown and Native ids rates to support these roads; but the mmittee had decided against him. He must with regard to this road that he would t take the responsibility of voting against it. was certainly in a very dangerous condition.

Mr. CONOLLY said that the road from Nel- n to Marlborough, which was equally a main ad with this, had been thrown upon the local dies, and he thought an injustice had been ne to them.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said the worst part of e Nelson-Marlborough Road was better than e best part of this road.

Vote, £4,850, agreed to.

Grants-in-aid, £12,740.

Mr. BEETHAM asked, if the road to which e had referred proved impassable, as he be- eved it would, would it be possible to assist he local body out of this vote, which was to ssist local bodies in providing work for the nemployed?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said the Government ad endeavoured to the best of their power to eal with the question of the unemployed dur- ng the past year, and it was proved that the ulk of the trouble had been in the large towns. As far as possible, relief-works had been put in hand, supplemented by the local authorities wherever they could. He was not in a position to say on what works this amount would be expended; but every endeavour would be made to use the amount only when it was absolutely necessary to find relief-works, which necessity, he believed, would certainly not increase. The Government had put an additional amount on the estimates with the view of being able to meet any contingency that might arise.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked whether there was any provision on the estimates in the shape of roads being formed for the purpose of finding employment for the unemployed, so that the House was in ignorance of the amount to be expended for this purpose.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON could say that that was not the case.

Mr. LAKE desired to be informed whether there was any provision under this system for supplementing local bodies if they would carry out works that would afford employment to the unemployed. If that were done in the country districts there would be considerable relief to the large centres of population.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said they had endeavoured as far as they could to supplement, pound for pound, some districts where their officers informed them it was absolutely necessary such provision should be made, and wherever distress arose in any part of the country that system would be continued. The object of the Government had been as far as possible to keep the men away from the large towns.

Mr. TURNBULL thought it was gratifying to find the amount was so small. He remembered a time when about £75,000 was put on the estimates for this purpose. At the same time, he would point out to the Minister that if it were possible to leave portions of contracts for railways so that they could be let in piece-work, and the unemployed put to work on them, that would be of great advantage to the colony.

Mr. LAKE said that the answer to his question was satisfactory so far as it went; but he did not anticipate distress in the country districts. He wanted to know whether the Government would be inclined to supplement by way of grant-in-aid moneys expended in the country, so that the unemployed might be engaged on certain works, but not for the relief of distress in the locality.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said the Government would be very glad to consider any case that might arise, but he could not say that the Government would deliberately lay itself out to supplement works of the character mentioned. They found it sufficiently difficult to meet the actual emergencies that arose.

Mr. G. F. RICHARDSON wished to know if local bodies simply meant Municipalities, or whether offers had been made to County Councils to undertake works.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that no offers had been made at all—it was only on pressure that this had been done.

Mr. GUINNESS thought the Minister should take into consideration the question of subsidizing County Councils and Road Boards, because with subsidies they would give employment to a large number of men, who, instead of

taking to the cities, would be spread about the country, and a great deal of good would be done in this way.

Vote, £12,740, agreed to.

Roads to open up lands for sale, £5,000.

Mr. ROLLESTON wished for some explanation of the item, "Okaihau to Victoria Valley, £3,000," and to be informed what land the road was supposed to open.

Mr. BALLANCE said there was a great deal of settlement going on in this part of the country, a large quantity of land being opened up as village settlements.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked if these settlers were not supposed to make their own roads.

Mr. BALLANCE.—No.

Mr. PEACOCK asked why the item, "Wairoa Ferry-Dargaville, £300," was placed on the estimates.

Mr. BALLANCE said that road led to a large quantity of land on the other side of the valley which would be immediately available for settlement.

Mr. MOAT said that the land referred to had been open for sale for twenty years. About twenty years ago a few settlers went upon it, but could do nothing, as they were unable to get their produce away. The County Council was now making a road through the block, and the Dargaville Township was prepared to pay an amount equal to that on the estimates for the purpose of making the required means of communication.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked how far the Kaihu Railway was being carried on.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said the work had been pretty well hung up for some months past because the company had not been in a position to give satisfactory security to authorize the Government to complete the guarantee of debentures as authorized by the District Railways Act of last year. The Solicitor-General and the solicitor of the company were arranging means to enable the debentures to be guaranteed. The company had a contract let for the completion of the line for sixteen and a half miles.

Mr. PEACOCK asked if this was intended to be an annual charge.

Mr. BALLANCE said this was a final charge.

Colonel TRIMBLE asked for an explanation with reference to the Waihao-Hakateramea Road. He was told that this was a line which went through private land.

Mr. BALLANCE said the road led to eight housand acres of Crown land, which the ·timate County Council had applied to have ·ed up as small farms. That body under- · to spend pound for pound.

·r. ROLLESTON said his impression did bear out the statement of the honourable ·ntleman. He was not sure that there was en a couple of thousand acres of good agricultural land there.

Mr. BALLANCE said he had an assurance rom the department that there was the quantity that he stated.

Mr. ROLLESTON said he should not oppose the vote; because, owing to the East and West Coast Railway, the Canterbury District had got almost nothing at all. He believed that this road would open up the land of large holders at the bottom of the valley.

Major STEWARD said that this land was reported upon by Mr. McKerrow as suitable for settlement, and the County Council had, by resolution, recommended the Minister to take steps to get this land opened up for small farms, and asked that this subsidy be given.

Mr. TURNBULL thought this was simply localizing the unemployed. It would be better to distribute them about the country. If there were four thousand acres of agricultural land in this district it would have been bought up long ago. This expenditure would simply go to improve private property.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked at whose instance this work was undertaken.

Mr. BALLANCE said it was undertaken at the instance of the County Council.

Major ATKINSON asked if the honourable gentleman would undertake not to spend the money if it proved that there was not so much Crown lands as he had mentioned.

Mr. BALLANCE said he intended to inquire into the matter, as he was surprised to hear from the honourable member for Geraldine that there was so little agricultural land there.

Mr. TURNBULL asked if the honourable gentleman would reserve this land at once for settlement.

Mr. BALLANCE.—Yes, certainly.

Major STEWARD hoped that would be done. The County Council had passed a resolution to that effect, and sent it to the Minister.

Mr. LAKE asked, if it was found there was no land there fit for a village settlement, would the money not be granted?

Mr. BALLANCE said it would not.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the item of £200 for "Grey Valley *viâ* Clarke to Maruia" was in the district of the East and West Coast Railway. That being the case, was it justifiable to vote the money?

Mr. BALLANCE said there was no intention to go on with the road at once.

Vote, £5,000, agreed to.

Roads on goldfields, £7,000.

Mr. MACARTHUR said there was an item of £2,000 for surveying and prospecting river-beds. Could that come under "Roads on goldfields"? If river-beds were worth prospecting, the miners would prospect them themselves, because nothing was easier to prospect. If these river-beds had not been developed before it was because they had been prospected, and there was no gold there. To propose to survey them was a most extraordinary thing.

Mr. ROLLESTON said it should be understood that every one of these headings was properly provided for before on the ordinary estimates. He thought it was £17,000 that had been voted for this very purpose of subsidizing the making of roads and tracks and for minor works, and, he believed, for prospecting. Here they were asked to do again in detail on the supplementary estimates what they had

already done in a lump on the ordinary estimates. There was not a single item on these estimates that was justifiable.

Mr. LARNACH said this item of £3,000 for surveying and testing of river-beds had been put on at the request of a number of members —some fifteen — on both sides of the House, who considered such a work would be desirable. It was well known that the beds of many rivers in the Middle Island were rich in gold. It was proposed to survey to see if the currents of some of them could be turned to enable the gold in portions of the present beds to be got. The beds of the Arore, the Clarence, the Clutha, the Taratara, and others, were known to be very auriferous: in fact, from some of them the miners already got gold by a process known as "blind stabbing."

Mr. CONOLLY said the experience of last year was being repeated. Items struck off the general estimates were put on the supplementary with a number of new ones. Here were ten or a dozen new items that, if proposed at all, should have been on the general estimates. As to prospecting river-beds, he knew less after the honourable gentleman's explanation than before. Was this in connection with the scheme for turning the Clutha—which appeared to him to be a very bad scheme—by which it was said they were to get an unknown quantity of gold?

Mr. LARNACH said none of the items here proposed had been on the estimates before.

Mr. ROLLESTON said there were literally some of the same items on the previous estimates as now before them, as honourable members could see by comparison. There were these pound-for-pound things without end.

Mr. LARNACH said this Collingwood District had been absolutely neglected for the past forty years. No money had been spent on it for many years past, and it was a very large and a very rich mineral district. Possibly some of these items were somewhat similar to those on the previous estimates, but they were for distinct tracks, to open up distinct parts of auriferous country.

Mr. MONTGOMERY said the goldfields districts were not nearly so permanent and valuable a source of wealth as the agricultural districts; yet the goldfields districts were given special subsidies of pound for pound for roadworks, while agricultural districts without roads to get produce away could get nothing. Some £4,000 or £5,000 damage had been caused to roads by floods in his district, some roads being rendered totally impassable, and the people there could not stand the charge of repairing all at once; but the Government, to an application by him for an advance of £4,000, had replied that no money could be granted. This was a very great hardship to his district, which would have been glad even to get pound for pound. He objected to this pound-for-pound system unless it was made general. He did not consider it fair or just; but the Government considered too much the wishes of the people in the goldfields districts, and too little the wishes of the people in the other districts.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked what was the revenue produced by the Akaroa District as compared with that yielded by the goldfields.

Mr. MONTGOMERY said all the revenue got from the goldfields had first to come from the public chest. Little or nothing came back from the goldfields districts to the Treasury beyond what had first gone to them from the Treasury.

Major ATKINSON asked what was the produce of the Akaroa District.

Mr. MONTGOMERY said that last season it produced grass-seed alone worth £50,000.

Mr. PEACOCK moved, That the whole vote be struck out.

Mr. KERR said in some parts of the Collingwood District the land was very good, including tens of thousands of acres of magnificent timber, and gold and coal deposits. If a fourth of the money spent in the Akaroa District had been spent there the return would have been far greater. It had been more neglected than any other part of the colony that he knew of. If there were roads made, there were people now ready to take up the land. There were many, in fact, on the land now earning a living by getting gold, and waiting till the country was opened up, so that they might use the land. Money had often been voted for that district and never spent. There was no richer district, and none that more needed opening up. The Government would have a splendid market for the land there as soon as it was opened up. There was not an acre in the district which was sold under from £1 to £2 an acre.

Mr. MACARTHUR moved, That the item "Surveying and prospecting river-beds, £2,000," be struck out. Miners must have fallen off very considerably if they required assistance in this way. They would only prospect for the sake of getting this money, and not for the sake of getting gold; so that the money would be wholly thrown away. Would the honourable member for Motueka be good enough to explain what the £300 for the bridle-track to Upper Anatoki was meant for, as he understood that was a track with a grade of 1 in 2?

Mr. HURSTHOUSE believed that the County Council wanted this money to improve the track. As for the vote for opening up the Collingwood and Takaka District, he might say that this was to complete the coast-road between Collingwood and Nelson.

Mr. BUCHANAN would remind the Minister for Public Works that he had asked for assistance to bridge a very dangerous river in the Wairarapa District, and he still hoped the honourable gentleman would give the assistance the district wanted.

Mr. BRYCE said the Ministry was not treating the Committee fairly in not telling them that similar votes had already been passed on the ordinary estimates. Surely it was time for the Government to reduce the mode of assisting local bodies as much as possible to a system. Probably the District of Akaroa aided itself to a considerable extent by rates; but, then, this pound-for-pound subsidy was given to counties in which the Crown had to pay rates, so that the principle on which those districts was

treated was, first, to find public funds for their rates, and then subsidize them to the extent of the money that had already been given to them.

Mr. LARNACH said he found this system of paying subsidies when he came into office; but then the rule was to pay £2 for £1, and he had been reducing it to £1 for £1. The votes on these estimates were not for the same works as those that appeared on the general estimates.

Mr. MENTEATH said that no doubt the £2,000 for prospecting in river-beds was an experimental vote in response to a request by a number of gentlemen interested in gold-mining that some steps should be taken to prospect in the beds of the larger rivers. Those who now opposed these votes were really the authors of the policy which rendered them necessary. In the estimates for 1882 he found £100,000 for roads on goldfields, and every year there were appropriations for the same purpose, taken with the consent of those honourable gentlemen. If the system was vicious those honourable gentlemen were responsible for it; and when people were expecting these votes it would be cruel to strike them off suddenly. If there was any responsibility for this vote it rested with those honourable gentlemen who were now opposing it. With reference to the remarks that fell from the honourable member for Akaroa, that honourable gentleman had given an altogether one-sided statement of the case. Take the County of Selwyn, for instance, which under the Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Act of last session received no less a sum than £2,492. In addition to that, each of the Road Boards of the county received a very considerable sum. On turning to the balance-sheet of that county he found to his surprise that the county did not strike a rate. They merely levied their dog-tax and so forth.

Major ATKINSON.—But they own land revenue.

Mr. MENTEATH said the County of Selwyn was an example of the many agricultural counties which were in the position he had indicated. The honourable member for Akaroa had told the Committee that these counties wanted roads, whereas the fact was, they were amply roaded and amply railed. The honourable member for Egmont stated that the County of Selwyn derived its income from the land revenue.

Major ATKINSON only said that generally of these counties.

Mr. MENTEATH said this was certainly not the case with regard to the County of Selwyn, which had not a halfpenny of land revenue. Its principal receipts were the subsidy under the Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Act of last year.

Major ATKINSON.—How could they get that without rates?

Mr. MENTEATH said they got the sum of £2,492.

Major ATKINSON.—On rates?

Mr. MENTEATH said they did not show any rates on their balance-sheet.

Major ATKINSON.—The Road Boards?

Mr. MENTEATH said he simply showed the balance-sheet of the county, on which no rates appeared.

Item, £2,000, struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That £5,000 be granted."

AYES, 24.

Ballance	Kerr	Seddon
B.-Bradshaw	Larnach	Smith
Brown	Menteath	Tole
Bruce	Moat	Turnbull
Buchanan	Moss	Walker.
Buckland, W.F.	O'Conor	*Tellers.*
Fraser	Pearson	Hursthouse
Hatch	Richardson, E.	Steward, W. J.
Hirst, H.		

NOES, 12.

Atkinson	Newman	Wilson.
Bryce	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Lake	Rolleston	Conolly
McMillan	Thomson, J. W.	Trimble.
Montgomery		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Bevan	Johnston
Cadman	Mitchelson
Cowan	Mackenzie, M. J. S.
Fitzherbert	Wakefield
Grace	Whyte
Guinness	Buckland, J. C.
Lance	Barron
Levestam	Fulton
O'Callaghan	Fergus
Pyke	Richardson, G. F.
Samuel	Hislop
Vogel.	Beetham.

Majority for, 12.

Vote as reduced, £5,000, agreed to.

CLASS VIII.—PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Parliament Buildings—New library building, in brick, £2,000.

Mr. O'CONOR pointed out that honourable members had very little time to devote themselves to the contents of the library towards the erection of which this vote was proposed. As for the recess, the Library Committee had determined that only the residents of Wellington should derive benefit from the library. This was quite sufficient to condemn the library under the present management. It appeared outrageous that members of Parliament residing away from Wellington who might be anxious to study subjects in the interests of the country could not have an opportunity of doing so. He wanted to know why these books were kept in the library in that way. There could be no danger in allowing members to take out books during the recess, as they could be insured on their journey to and fro, and it would be therefore a matter of perfect certainty that they would not be lost. If the library was intended to be only for ornament, and not for use, then it would be a pity to waste money in the direction proposed.

Major ATKINSON thought the Committee would be wise to vote the sum asked for, so that they might secure appropriate buildings. Next year, he might say, he would be very glad

assist any honourable member who would press the view of the House in reference to is matter in unmistakable terms—that the oks should be used by honourable members l the year round. He believed they could sily carry such a resolution.

Vote, £2,000, agreed to.

General departmental offices, £2,200.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said that the item, Public buildings, Hamilton, grant-in-aid, ,000," was a subsidy towards the erection of ıblic buildings at Hamilton. The county as going to build offices at a cost of £6,000, ıd the Government would contribute £2,000, ›ing in want of buildings themselves.

Mr. PEACOCK asked for information regard-ıg the item, "Geological room for Museum, 500."

Mr. LARNACH said that Dr. Hector had a reat many valuable geological specimens at resent cooped up in boxes, and he had no room › display them, or to sort them, in order that e might distribute some of the specimens; nd it was necessary that this room should be uilt.

Vote, £2,200, agreed to.

Judicial, £100, agreed to.

Post and Telegraph, £1,050, agreed to.

Lunatic asylums, £2,000, agreed to.

Hospitals and other charitable institutions, 250, agreed to.

CLASS IX.—LIGHTHOUSES, HARBOUR-WORKS, AND HARBOUR-DEFENCES.

Harbour works, Hokitika, £1,500.

Mr. LARNACH said that a large portion of piling-work had already been done, and if this money were not expended a good part of the work would be in danger of being washed away.

Mr. MACARTHUR moved, That the vote be struck out.

Colonel TRIMBLE said that if the port was worth keeping up the trade of the port would be sufficient to pay dues to keep up these works. If the trade was not sufficient the Government ought not to pay money upon the works.

Mr. SEDDON said that if this money were not voted some three or four chains of pile-work would be washed away on the northern wall. It was with the view of protecting that work that the money was wanted.

Mr. BEETHAM complained that the harbour at Castlepoint received no consideration, while money was being spent on these West Coast harbours.

Major ATKINSON said this was the fourth or fifth year since the House had been assured that this would be the very last vote for this work. He himself had placed votes on the estimates on the same understanding. He recommended that even this vote should not be spent until it was shown by the Marine Engineer not only that the vote was absolutely necessary to protect existing works, but that it would be final. A railway was now being made from Greymouth to Hokitika, and that was a good reason why there should be no more expenditure on this harbour.

Mr. SEDDON said it was intended this year to ask for a further endowment, so that the Board might borrow money independent of the Government; but the land had been withdrawn from sale owing to the East and West Coast Railway Proclamation, and the Board could not carry out its intention. In the meantime the harbour-works were being washed away, and there was nothing for it but to ask the Government to give enough to protect the works.

Sir R. STOUT understood that this was to be the last vote asked for, and Hokitika must henceforth understand that the House would vote no more.

Mr. LARNACH said he would try, if possible and desirable, to give effect to the suggestion of the honourable member for Egmont, and if the Marine Engineer said the expenditure would be practically useless the money would not be spent.

Mr. ROLLESTON believed that the harbour was in a worse condition now than it was years ago, notwithstanding all the expenditure.

Colonel TRIMBLE said it was evident the trade of the port was not worth keeping. Out of £55,000 spent the Harbour Board could only pay interest on £10,000, and the colony had to find the rest.

Dr. NEWMAN said there could be nothing more idiotic than the expenditure on these small bar-harbours; but the expenditure and loans authorized were becoming so large that there would soon be a Harbour League formed, and the colony would have to take over the liability. Sir John Coode had said that the colony must be mad to want twenty-seven harbours for a quarter of a million of people; and if his recommendation had been carried out attention would have been confined to making four or five harbours really efficient, and ceasing expenditure on all these small harbours.

Vote, £1,500, agreed to.

CLASS XIII.

Thermal springs, £10,000.

Colonel TRIMBLE asked if the cost of waterworks (£6,000) and improvement of baths (£2,000) would be reimbursed to the colony.

Mr. BALLANCE said, indirectly. It was part of the contract with the lessees that these improvements should be made.

Colonel TRIMBLE asked if there was not a stipulation that they should be paid for out of the proceeds of land.

Mr. BALLANCE said there was not.

Mr. MOSS did not see why 650,000 acres of land should be locked up here from settlement, nor did he see why the Natives who obtained large rents from these lands should not bear some of this expenditure. Why should the Europeans be taxed to improve the property of the Natives?

Mr. BRYCE asked if the Minister was certain that it was in the agreement that the Government should provide this water-supply.

Mr. BALLANCE said it was expressly one of the conditions made with the Government.

Mr. ROLLESTON understood that what was

provided was that the Natives should supply the land and afford every facility for bringing the water in, and it was a bargain on the part of the Government that the supply should be brought in; but it was certainly never contemplated that such a sum as this should be expended for the purpose. He would ask the Minister to consider whether a diggers' race could not be brought in from a stream by Kelly's farm at a cheaper rate.

Mr. BALLANCE replied that they had the best engineering advice on the matter, and were assured that the water, which would have to be brought in in pipes, could not be brought in for a less sum than was contemplated. The contract price was £5,000, and £1,000 was allowed for extras and incidentals. With regard to the agreement, it was expressly provided that the Government should lay water on to the township, and one of the complaints made by those who desired to repudiate their purchases had been that this agreement had not been carried out.

Colonel TRIMBLE said this meant that the people would have to pay £450 interest for fifty years. He understood the Natives received about £3,000 a year rent; and why should the people of the colony be taxed in order to supply their land with water?

Mr. BALLANCE said the policy of the late and present Governments was to make this place a great sanatorium for tourists from all parts of the world, and that was the reason, no doubt, why this agreement had been made.

Mr. BUCHANAN thought the agreement made was binding upon the colony. Having been there, he knew that no water could be supplied to this locality except by some such expenditure as this.

Colonel TRIMBLE thought that the sooner they got rid of this white elephant the better. They were told that there was going to be a profit from the Thermal Springs Act; but they got nothing of the kind, and there was a large expenditure every year.

Vote, £10,000, agreed to.

CLASS III.—RAILWAYS.

Transfer of expenditure on construction of North Island Main Trunk Railway up to 31st March, 1886, hitherto charged on loans raised prior to 31st March, 1886, £60,800, agreed to.

Transfer of expenditure on permanent-way, &c., up to 31st March, 1886, hitherto charged on loans raised prior to 31st March, 1886, £77,000, agreed to.

Contingencies, £15,000, agreed to.

Transfer of expenditure on permanent-way, &c., up to 31st March, 1886, hitherto charged on loans raised prior to 31st March, 1886, £213,000, agreed to.

Permanent-way, sleepers, and rolling-stock, £37,000, agreed to.

Resolutions reported to the House and agreed to.

The House adjourned at five minutes to two o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 17th August, 1886.

Public Works Appropriation Bill—Appropriation Bill.

The Hon. the ACTING-SPEAKER took the chair at half-past ten o'clock.

PRAYERS.

PUBLIC WORKS APPROPRIATION BILL.

The Public Works Appropriation Bill was read a first, a second, and a third time.

APPROPRIATION BILL.

The Appropriation Bill was read a first and a second time.

On the motion for the third reading of the Bill,

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN said,—I have been struck by the extraordinarily large proportionate sums set down under the heading of "Miscellaneous" in the schedule. In Class I. the amount under that heading is no less than £21,288. I hope the Government will explain the principal items that help to make up that large sum, and why so large a sum is put under so indefinite a term instead of being specified. Then, in Class III. there is the same extraordinary proportion between the amount under "Miscellaneous" and the specified amounts. The "Miscellaneous" is £28,000, while all the specified items only total £25,000. In Class VI. there are only three items altogether, and, of these, £12,000 is under "Miscellaneous." It seems an extraordinary thing that the sums should be so large for miscellaneous purposes, and I hope the absence of further specification will be explained.

Bill read a third time.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes past eleven o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 17th August, 1886.

Hon. Mr. Taiaroa—Census Enumerators—Government Life Insurance Association Bill—J. Murton—West Coast Village Settlement—Special Powers and Contracts Bill—Library—Public Works Appropriation Bill—Appropriation Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at twelve o'clock.

PRAYERS.

HON. MR. TAIAROA.

Mr. PARATA asked the Government, Whether they will take into consideration the report of the Native Affairs Committee on the petition of the Hon. Mr. Taiaroa, praying that the sum of £145 15s. be paid to him for expenses incurred by him in the settlement of the reserves at Arahura?

Mr. BALLANCE said that a letter had been

to the Hon. Mr. Taiaroa concerning this er, stating that it would be inquired into. as in the Public Trust Office really, and Public Trustee was making inquiries, in r to deal with the matter.

CENSUS ENUMERATORS.

r. HATCH asked the Government, Whether ensus enumerators in the cases of Waira- East and West, Wairoa (Hawke's Bay), pawa, and Patangata Districts, in the th, and Bruce, Tuapeka, and Clutha Dis- s, in the South, were appointed by the Go- ment or by the Registrar-General; and ther they will explain the greatly-increased of collection of census returns in the dis- ts named? The continual increase in the ous public departments, and this one more icularly, having been brought before public ce in the public prints, had caused him to the question.

Ir. TOLE said the census enumerators were ointed by the Government, and the sub- merators were appointed by the enume- ors. The extra cost was accounted for by increased population and settlement, which urally necessitated an increase in the num- of subenumerators, who had to travel about reat deal.

VERNMENT LIFE INSURANCE ASSO- CIATION BILL.

Mr. W. D. STEWART said that when speak- g on this Bill he referred to the Minister of stice as having had correspondence with r. Shera although a Committee had been ap- inted to communicate with him in connection th the property. It did not come out before e Committee of Inquiry, and he was not rare at the time he spoke, that the honourable ntleman was a member of the subcommittee pointed by the Board. Hence the criticism made as to the honourable gentleman was isdirected, and based upon a wrong view of e facts.

Mr. TOLE thanked the honourable member r his explanation, because he thought he ould not willingly do an injustice.

J. MURTON.

Mr. HAMLIN said that on a previous occa- on he had asked a question with reference to ohn Murton, whose case was reported upon by he Public Petitions Committee in 1884; and he Minister replied that, in terms of the re- ort of the Committee, this man would be em- loyed. From that time up to the present, lthough correspondence had taken place be- ween himself and the Minister, this unfor- unate man had not got employment. He was njured while working on the railway, and the ommittee recommended that he should get ome light employment; but up to the present ime that unfortunate man had not been em- loyed, although the Minister stated in the House that he would be.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said he would look into the matter, as he did not know the cir- cumstances.

WEST COAST VILLAGE SETTLEMENT.

Mr. SEDDON said that at the present time there was a large section of land known as the Big Wanganui Flat, and another large section, specially fitted for village settlements. The County Council would be willing to co-operate with the Minister in opening up the land and settling it. He would ask if the Minister of Lands would correspond with the County Council with that view.

Mr. BALLANCE said his attention had been already called to Big Wanganui Flat as a suitable place for a small-farm settlement, and he would act upon the suggestion made by the honourable member.

SPECIAL POWERS AND CONTRACTS BILL.

On the question, That the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Special Powers and Contracts Bill be agreed to,

Mr. BALLANCE said,—At this late period of the session, although the amendments are, in my opinion, altogether unjustifiable, I do not intend to ask the House to disagree with them, for this reason: There were seventy paragraphs in the schedule, and, of that number, the Council struck out twenty-three, retaining forty-seven, upon a variety of subjects; and I think that the number of matters left in the Bill is sufficient to justify us in asking the House to agree to the amendments. I do so because it is to me clear that if we disagree with the amendments there will be no opportunity whatever of getting the Bill passed this session; and the question presents itself to us in the practical form, Should we accept the forty-seven paragraphs left in the Bill, or should we show a just resentment at what has been done by moving that the House should disagree with the amendments and allow the Bill to lapse? In my opinion we ought to accept what has been done, and leave the other matters—some of which are doubtless very urgent—over for next session. There is nothing to justify the reckless and indiscriminate manner in which the other Chamber proceeded to mutilate this Bill, and to take out of it some of its most useful provisions. I venture to say that before two years are over eleven out of twelve clauses which have been rejected will be enacted by the Legislature. No doubt it may be objected as a matter of form that some of these matters should not have been left in the Bill; but I say we have numerous precedents for such provisions being embodied in the Special Powers and Contracts Bill. One of the most useful provisions of the Bill was that which related to the change of tenure from the pastoral deferred-payment system to that of perpetual leases under the small-runs system. We did not, as was generally supposed and extensively circulated, amend the Land Act at all. It did not affect the existing Act, and only had reference to an Act repealed some years ago. This clause was rejected, I am informed on good authority, on the specific ground that it repealed part of the Land Act. Then, there is another remarkable feature in this case. In

the Waste Lands Committee in another place only three or four clauses altogether were rejected in the Bill after a great deal of evidence had been taken from the heads of departments and others, and every clause was carefully gone through, as was the case in this House and before our Waste Lands Committee; whereas the Chairman of that Committee came down to the Council and moved the rejection of twenty-three paragraphs in the schedule and five clauses in the text of the Bill. I say that conduct of that kind seems to me to require justification. I have said that many of these provisions are of a most useful kind; and it is a very remarkable thing that the portions which have been in Wellington said to be the most virtuous in the whole Bill are from the Council's point of view really the most objectionable of all, and have been struck out. The Bill has been entirely misunderstood. It has been the subject of a great deal of calumny. A cry has been been raised of "Mad dog!" and everybody has thought it his duty to censure the Bill. There never was a more useful measure before the House than this. Among the clauses struck out is clause 15, dealing with the West Coast Settlement reserves. I had intended to introduce a special Bill to deal with this matter; but, as it would be substantially the same, it would not be in order. I went before the Committee of the Legislative Council, and explained this clause, and the Committee seemed perfectly satisfied. The result of striking out the clause will be that a number of lessees of Native reserves will have to remain another year without their titles. I move, That the amendments made by the Council be agreed to.

Dr. NEWMAN.—Is the paragraph dealing with the Wellington Hospital reserves struck out?

Mr. BALLANCE.—Yes.

Mr. BRYCE.—The honourable gentleman has given very instructive information as to what passed in another place; but it appears to me that if we are to enter into the debates of another place, and to discuss their merits, we must have some representative from there to show us their views of the question. Perhaps that would be slightly unconstitutional at present; but it would not be more so than the attempts at legislation made in this Bill, some of which attempts, no doubt, were unconstitutional. I agree that a Bill of this kind may be very useful indeed; but I have warned the House in three consecutive sessions that the abuse of the Bill would lead to its discontinuance. Its use is undeniable if confined to its proper functions—namely, the rectifying of technical defects, or the effecting of minor objects as to the desirability of which all parties can agree—and it is to these objects that the Bill should be confined. It is not, to my mind, a sufficient answer to say that there is precedent for a Bill of this kind. I am quite willing to take my share of the blame for the action of the late Government in regard to this matter. I believe some of their Bills in this respect were objectionable; but I think the objection has been growing stronger and stronger up to the present Bill, which is the most objectionable ever introduced. It really includes a great many local Bills and many amendments of general Acts. There is even an amendment of the Land Act in it. The Bill, as it was brought in, conflicted with the spirit of our Standing Orders and the Royal Instructions, which say that many of the subjects dealt with in this Bill should only be dealt with in separate enactments. I am not here to defend the Council, and I admit that possibly some things may have been struck out of the schedule which it would have been desirable to pass, and it may also be that some things have been retained which it is undesirable to pass—indeed, I am of that opinion; but what I want to point out, without going into the matter at all just now, is this: that when introducing a similar Bill next year the honourable gentleman should confine it to legitimate objects if possible, and not introduce into it local Bills without number, and amendments of the general law. That, at any rate, putting the constitutional question on one side, is a very inconvenient practice. If the honourable gentleman reduces the Bill to its legitimate limits, it will be, as he has called it, a useful measure; but, if he persists in the practice of introducing objectionable matter, I think it that the introduction of such Bills will have to be stopped altogether, and so the Legislature of the country will lose the advantages of such a Bill. I observed from a Press report that a Minister in another place, in order to get the Council to pass the Bill, assured it that this should be the last Bill of the kind introduced.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is not in order to refer to what has been said in the Council.

Mr. BRYCE.—I agree that it is out of order, but I thought I was following an illustrious example. I will say, then, there is reason to believe that it is the intention of the Government that this Bill shall be the last Bill of the kind introduced. I was going to draw an inference from that—namely, that possibly the present Ministry do not expect to be in office very much longer, and they wish to deprive their successors of the convenience of being able to introduce a useful Bill from their point of view. Of course I do not know how that may be; but, although that may be a jocular reference, I am quite serious in thinking that, in introducing future Bills of this kind, the Government should endeavour to confine them to their proper limits.

Major ATKINSON.—The simplicity of honourable gentlemen on this side of the House is quite refreshing. I—being, I suppose, a little older in these matters—should have taken it for granted, if I had seen it stated by a responsible authority in another place that the Government did not intend to do a particular thing, that they were going to do it, and not, as the honourable member for Waitotara takes it, that, a member of the Government having made a statement, the Government are in the least likely to be bound by it: at any rate, I should look out for an opposite course being pursued. Now, I think the course the honourable gentle-

proposes is probably the right one—to t, under the circumstances, what can be but I confess that it is with very great t I see many of the clauses have been k out of this Bill, and it is with some t that I see certain clauses are retained. ıfess, too, that, looking carefully through has been done, I cannot see any guiding ıiple on which the Council have acted. If ı had been, I should have been very glad pport the action of the Council. If there been any intention to reduce the Bill to its nal limits it would have been understand- ; but it is simply a case of one being n and the other left. That is the only ible explanation I can see of the line the ıcil acted on with regard to this Bill. ıy very useful clauses, quite within the e of the Bill, have been thrown out—for ınce, the clause carrying out the recom- ıdation of the Native Affairs Committee ; a special lease should be granted to Mr. erhill. That is clearly within the scope of Bill. It has been shown that this gentle- ı has done most useful service, that he has undoubted claim, and that he has ably sted the Government in every possible way. s action will, no doubt, cause him con- ırable loss, which cannot be made up in any sible way; and such a clause should not 'e been struck out without good reasons ng shown. So with the next clause, autho- ng the granting of title to land bought from ı Katene by McLean. These clauses and ı others should have been dealt with on their rits; but, as far as I can see, they have ; been dealt with on their merits at all. I ı sorry the honourable gentleman is not able bring in a Bill rectifying the question of ı leases on the West Coast. That is a ques- n of settlement, and leaving the defect un- nedied seriously affects both Natives and ıropeans. However, I think it is the wisest urse under the circumstances to accept the ll with the amendments; and I hope that xt year we shall have the Special Powers ıd Contracts Bill brought down earlier if pos- ıle, and that we shall be able to come to ı understanding with another place as to the inciple which is to regulate these Bills.

Mr. HAMLIN.—It appears to me that the nendments have been made at haphazard, ıd not on any rule whatever. It looks as if, hen any one proposed to strike out a clause, was struck out without any inquiry being ıade. It has been said that some clauses ere struck out because they were really local Bills; but there is no reason whatever in that, ecause more than half of what are left are as ıuch local Bills as anything that has been truck out. The greatest inconvenience may e caused by the excision of some of the clauses. 'ake, for instance, that referring to the burial- round at Onehunga. The present burial- round is absolutely full. It was proposed hat, without doing injury to any one, a great lifficulty should be overcome by enabling the Borough Council to use the rents from part of ı recreation reserve to pay interest on money to be borrowed to buy a new burial-ground. I consider it most unjustifiable to reject that clause on the ground that it was a local Bill. The amendments seem to have been made on a "Jump, Jim Crow" principle, and without rhyme or reason. I really think this House should take some notice of the amendments made, for in the case of Onehunga the amendment will cause most serious public inconvenience as to the disposal of the dead, and it is quite likely that other amendments may cause equal inconvenience in other places. If the amendments had been made on a consistent rule I should not have objected in the slightest; but it is nothing of the kind: and if an amendment is moved to disagree with the Council's amendments I shall support it.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—I move, as an amendment, That the amendments in clause 18 of the Bill and sections 22 and 47 of the schedule be disagreed with. The House should take some stand on an important question of this sort, and not simply pass it because it is near the end of the session. An important Bill of this character, involving large interests all over the country, is amply sufficient to warrant the House taking some action. No other reason has been given, I believe, as to why we should accept these amendments than that it is near the prorogation; but I am prepared to stay to do the business of the country for another month or six weeks. It seems to me that the Council's action has been due to want of knowledge of the various subjects of the Bill; and the making of all these amendments in this way—not on any principle whatever—and their being agreed to seems to me to place members in a false position. I hope that the House will agree to my amendment, and that we shall have a Conference, because I think that if fresh light is let into the regions of darkness above they may agree to some of the clauses struck out being replaced.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I hope that the honourable member will not press his amendment, because it is clear that if he does so there will be a great risk of the Bill being lost, and the innocent will be sacrificed to the guilty. The great fault is that the Bill is not brought down sufficiently early in the session: if it could be brought down at an earlier period it should be, though I am aware that there are difficulties in the way, owing to the circumstance that there have to be included in the Bill many matters that are not settled till towards the end of the session. This Bill is one of the things for which we have to thank the Ministry of which the author of these amendments was a member. The Bill was invented in 1877 by Sir Frederick Whitaker, and was first introduced by the Atkinson Government. It is one of the few things for which the colony has to thank that Ministry.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I do not agree with those honourable members who have spoken somewhat in terms of censure with reference to the other branch of the Legislature, for it seems to me that the members of that House have the right to inquire into the provisions of

such a Bill as this, and that they had little time to do so. There is no doubt whatever that this is a Bill which requires to be watched carefully in a variety of ways. It involves a system of legislation which seems to be entirely foreign to the proper methods of legislation in these colonies. Moreover, it is a Bill which I do not understand how the Governor can assent to, because, under his Instructions, if I remember aright, His Excellency cannot assent to a Bill in which there are a number of distinct matters dealt with. I think also that such a Bill is contrary to the Standing Orders. Certainly it is contrary to the spirit of the Standing Orders and of the Governor's Instructions.

Sir R. STOUT.—The Governor has assented to such Bills previously.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—It does not follow he ought to have done so. It seems to me quite improper for a Bill of this kind to deal with general Acts. Who would think of looking in this Bill for an amendment of the Land Act? I must say I sympathize very much with what has been done by the Council, and I think this House should consider seriously before it passes Bills of this kind again. I do not agree with the honourable member for Port Chalmers that this was a happy invention. It seems to have been an evil invention; and it is an invention on which we do not seem to be improving. I do not think it is of any use agreeing to the motion of the honourable member for Motueka. It is too late in the session to have a discussion on the subject, and if any inconvenience is felt we must blame ourselves.

Mr. SMITH.—I am sorry the Government cannot see their way to propose a Conference between the two Houses on this Bill, because there are a good many clauses struck out which ought to have been kept in. The other Chamber seem to have dealt with this Bill in a most extraordinary way. When the Bill came before this House it was very carefully considered by the Waste Lands Committee, and was then considered by a Committee of the whole House, and then was read a third time and passed. Then it was sent to the Legislative Council, and the Waste Lands Committee there considered it very carefully. Many clauses—amongst others, clauses 35 and 36—were passed unanimously by that Committee after evidence had been taken and considered. When the Bill went back to the whole Council it seemed that if one voice was raised in objection to a clause that was quite sufficient to have the clause thrown out. The Bill, having received such careful consideration in the Committee, ought not to have been dealt with so summarily by the Council. If the amendment of the honourable member for Motueka be carried I shall move that the amendments in clauses 35 and 36 be also disagreed with. I should not like to see the Bill lost, because there are many clauses in it which will be of great advantage, and I shall not press my amendment unless the other amendment is carried.

Major ATKINSON.—I am sorry to say I cannot support the amendment: not because I do not think that those clauses ought not to be struck out, but because the end of the session is so close that any attempt to have the matter discussed between the two Houses would result in the Bill being lost; and I do not wish to see other persons served in the same manner in which so many have been.

The House divided on the question, "That the amendments to clause 18 of the Bill and sections 22 and 47 of the schedule be disagreed with."

AYES, 11.

Beetham	Kerr	Smith.
Brown	Menteath	*Tellers.*
Bruce	O'Conor	Grace
Hamlin	Seddon	Hursthouse.

NOES, 34.

Allwright	Lance	Ross
Ballance	Locke	Steward, W. D.
Bryce	Macandrew	Stewart, W. D.
Buchanan	Moat	Stout
Buckland, W. F.	Montgomery	Thomson, J. W.
Fraser	Moss	Tole
Gore	Newman	Vogel
Grey	Parata	Walker.
Hislop	Peacock	
Hobbs	Pyke	*Tellers.*
Johnston	Richardson, E.	Conolly
Lake	Rolleston	Turnbull.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Cadman	Mitchelson
Cowan	Mackenzie, M. J.
Guinness	Buckland, J. C.
Lance	Barron
Levestam	Fulton
O'Callaghan	Fergus
Pearson.	Wilson.

Majority against, 23.

Amendment negatived, and amendments made by the Legislative Council agreed to.

LIBRARY.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the report of the Library Committee be agreed to;—because if it were not agreed to he did not know what would happen during the recess, as nobody would be in charge. The only objection to the adoption of the report was that no rules had been framed to meet the wish of the House that books should be circulated amongst members during the recess. The Committee had, however, met the House half-way by adopting a resolution that any one applying to the Chairman could have any specified book he wished to see. He was a member of the Library Committee himself, and might say that it was simply impossible for the Committee at present to frame rules for lending books to members outside of Wellington. Such rules would have to be exceedingly stringent, because it might very easily happen that as many as two or three thousand volumes would be away from the library at one time. The best thing, therefore, in his opinion, would be to agree to the report; and next year the House would have time to consider the whole matter. The following was the additional part of the report to which he alluded:—

'hat, having considered the reference to regarding the lending of books to mem- of the Legislature living at a distance from ington during the recess, they find that are so many difficulties in the way of g effect to this recommendation that they ot see their way to carry it out at present. They consider that, if a particular work is ired by a member in any special case, an ication to the Chairman may enable such aber to procure it, and that the Chairman uthorized to lend books in such cases."

r. MACANDREW was sorry that the con- ration of the report had been postponed il so many members had left, because it been very fully discussed, and the House almost unanimously agreed in favour of ks being lent to members during the recess. he face of that decision the Library Com- tee had taken up a very peculiar posi- . They had done nothing whatever to and meet the wish of the House. He had n in the habit of taking away books for rs past, and so had many other honour- e members. It was rather hard that they uld be pulled up at once in this way by a olution of the Committee. No harm what- r had resulted, so far as he was aware, from taking-away of books. To put himself in ler he would move, as an amendment, That is House reaffirms its resolution *re* the taking- ay of books from the General Assembly rary by members of the Legislature during e recess, and remits the report back to the mmittee for further consideration; and, so, that it be an instruction to the mem- rs of the Committee who represent this anch of the Legislature to insist that, if the rary is to be available to members residing Wellington, it must be equally so to mem- rs residing in other parts of the colony. He d not see why this splendid library should confined to the use of five or six members siding in Wellington during eight or nine onths of the year; and, notwithstanding hat the Premier had said, he believed the ifficulty might easily have been got over. He hought the members of the Committee repre- enting the House had scarcely done their duty n allowing the matter to go by the board by assing such a resolution as that which had een brought up.

Mr. LOCKE must express his agreement with the remarks of the honourable member for Port Chalmers, although he was afraid it was now too late to take any practical action. Most honourable members had not the time during the session to study the books in the library that they would wish to study, and they were debarred from taking them away during the recess. Any one who understood the value of books would take proper care of them, and would return them in the state in which they were taken away.

Mr. MONTGOMERY did not think honour- able members realized the difficulties there were in the way of carrying out the recom- mendation of the House. Only the Committee could look into the difficulties from a practical point of view, and they saw that those difficul- ties were insurmountable. If every honourable member were allowed to take out five or six or a dozen volumes at a time, there would be many thousands out. That would make it necessary to have very stringent rules, similar to those in force in circulating libraries: books would have to be returned within a certain time, and heavy fines would have to be imposed if they were kept too long; and if the books in charge of any person were injured they would have to be paid for, in which case it would pro- bably be necessary to insist on a deposit before the books were taken out. Then, again, sup- posing Mr. A. took out three, or four, or five volumes, and kept them for a number of months, Mr. B. might want to see them; and what was he to do? And if Mr. B. got them, Mr. C. might want them; so that there was no knowing where the difficulty would end. In fact, all books of value should be kept in the library, for if they were lent all over the coun- try the result would be that there would be a great deal of trouble and loss, not to say heart- burning. One could not have a library like this all over the colony any more than one could a museum. There were certain things which must be in a great centre, and this was one. He therefore hoped that the recom- mendation of the Library Committee would be agreed to.

Mr. KERR sympathized very much with the honourable member for Port Chalmers, and thought it was a great pity that this splendid library should be stuck up in one place; but he must say that the compromise offered by the Premier was a fair one. It was only scientific books which would be wanted out of the library, and any one could get those by giving proper security. It would be well to adopt the sug- gestion of the Committee, and then see what could be done next session.

Major ATKINSON must confess that he agreed with the honourable member for Port Chalmers, and disagreed altogether with the honourable member for Akaroa. It was all very well to conjure up bogeys, and so manage that only some few members, residing in Wel- lington, should have the use of the books. Of course it would be necessary to have proper regulations; but he did not see any difficulty in framing them. He would certainly not rest until the privilege was given to members in all parts of the colony to have the use of the library books. He would suggest that they should express their views to the Recess Com- mittee, and did not know why the House should not instruct them.

Sir R. STOUT said the Committee had met the House half-way by saying that books could be got out.

Major ATKINSON said that was in a special case; and he declined altogether to go to the Committee and beg as a favour that to which he had a perfect right.

Sir R. STOUT asked what books the honour- able gentleman would have taken out.

Major ATKINSON.—All but books of refer- ence.

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Mr. FISHER agreed
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number of books of light literature
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first literature were to be
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members would say they were
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able that they
He was one who
a rule as was suggested
and he strongly objected to it
the country would approve of it.
also pointed out that if this
members would be subjected to a
pressure from students for books
would be that a large number of
be lost or mislaid.

Mr. MENZIES did not understand the argument of the honourable member for Hindon at all. If the consideration of the honorarium was to be taken into account in connection with this matter, then the Minister, who received £1,400 a year, ought to contribute something towards the library. He had had the privilege of getting as many books as he wanted out of the library, and he exercised that privilege, but was not sufficiently "dog in the manger" to say that he thought others should not have the same privilege. In fact, in an illegitimate manner that was done which it was now proposed should be done legitimately. He saw no reason why honourable members residing outside the Wellington District should not have the same privileges as the Wellington members, and for that reason he should vote for the amendment.

Mr. FISHER could not understand what all this fuss was about concerning the borrowing of books. Though he lived in Wellington, during the few years he had been a member of the House he had taken out of the library two books. For his part, he concurred in what Ruskin said about books—that a man should buy and not borrow them. During these days of cheap printing one could buy standard works at ninepence or a shilling each. The reason for sending for a book from a distant part of the

ny, it seemed to him, must be that a person ted to speak or write on a special subject; he thought it probable that in most cases ; before the book reached its destination necessity for sending it would have passed y. As to light literature, he did not care a w whether that was circulated or not, but thought the reference-books should not be t out, because it would be difficult to get m back again, and if they were lost it would t year before some of them could be replaced. m standard literature was so cheap that it s possible for any man to collect a library of ks. He might be pardoned for saying that kept a small reference-library of his own, l so was not under the necessity of borrow- , even from their rich parliamentary library. e cost of keeping a small reference-library s now so little as to render almost any man lependent of borrowing from a reference-rary at all.

Mr. CONOLLY said that if the amendment the honourable member for Port Chalmers re carried there would be no Library Com- ttee at all.

Mr. MACANDREW.—No great loss.

Mr. CONOLLY thought that would be ex- mely undesirable. If this were referred back the Joint Library Committee there was not e slightest chance of that Committee meet- g to reconsider it, as half of the members of e Committee had gone away. It appeared to m that the arrangement which the Commit- e proposed to make was going quite as far as ey should go.

Motion agreed to.

UBLIC WORKS APPROPRIATION BILL.

This Bill was read a first, a second, and a ird time.

APPROPRIATION BILL.

This Bill was read a first and a second time.

On the motion, That the Bill be read a third ime,

Major ATKINSON said,—Before the Bill is ead a third time I propose to address a few emarks to the House. I do not propose to de- ain the House at any great length, although were I to attempt to catalogue the sins of onourable gentlemen opposite I am afraid we hould have to put off the prorogation of Parlia- ment for a day or two. I feel a little sorry hat the Treasurer has not made a speech upon he second reading of the Bill in fulfilment of a pledge which he gave to show us that the Premier does not understand the use of the English language, and that whenever he made a speech he made it in such a way as to require the Treasurer to interpret it for him in order that the public generally might understand it. Now, I understand the object the honourable gentleman has undertaken to-day is to interpret the speech of the Premier at Invercargill, and to show us and the country generally,—and, no doubt, the Premier himself,—that we are all wrong in the interpretation we put upon it. I hope, if the honourable gentleman does that, that the Premier will, if I may venture to suggest it, and if he has sufficiently recovered his health, pluck up sufficient spirit in the face of the honourable gentleman just to say that he is quite capable of saying what he means, and that, when he desires to tell the public he does mean limited borrowing and "tapering off," he says so, and does not require the Treasurer to interpret his speeches for him. I do not know whether the honourable gentleman has sufficiently recovered to take that stand, but I do hope, in his own interest, he will see his way to do it on the present occasion. Now, I must just ask you, Sir, to look at the financial management of the Government. We know our prosperity is based to a great extent on sound finance. We know the honourable gentleman is a great financier, and we know he came two short years ago to put us right in these matters. We were then in a terrible muddle, you will recollect, and the honourable gentleman had only been in office a week or two—no, I am wrong, it was only a few days—when he had found out or got upon the trail of such terrible disclosures that he announced in this House that nothing but physical force would remove him from those benches until he had made a full discovery. Well, the House waited, almost breathless, and——

Sir J. VOGEL.—I wish the honourable gentleman would quote me correctly. That is not correct.

Major ATKINSON.—Will the honourable gentleman give me the correct quotation?

Sir J. VOGEL.—Does the honourable gentleman want to know what I said?

Major ATKINSON.—Yes.

Sir J. VOGEL.—In face of the harassing manœuvres which the honourable gentleman was so well able to carry on, I said that the Government were determined they would announce their financial policy before they left these benches.

Major ATKINSON.—Why, they have not announced it yet. They have kept on the benches, it is true; but I venture to think they will have left the benches long before they announce it, because they do not understand it themselves, as I am going to show. The honourable gentleman's memory is very good, and so is mine; but I venture to say that, notwithstanding the corrections of the honourable gentleman, he has only given us part of what he said he would give. He told us he was going to give us a financial policy. And a wonderful policy it was, as I mean to show. He went on further to say that until he got to the bottom of the finances of the colony—and he has not got to the bottom of them yet—nothing but personal force should take him away from those benches.

Sir J. VOGEL.—That is a misstatement. I said I wanted to look into the honourable gentleman's transactions.

Major ATKINSON.—Well, the honourable gentleman has had time to look into my transactions, and if I had committed any crime he would have found me out before now. [illegible] honourable gentleman having fai'

any of those discoveries, I now come to what he promised to do for us; because, after all, that is the most important. I venture to say that the honourable gentleman was quite unable to make any of the exposures which he talked of making, and I believe that when it comes to be his time to leave the Government benches he will not be able to show so clean a sheet as the late Government were able to show. I fear that will be the case, because we have already had scandals of a rather serious nature; and I venture to think that before the honourable gentleman is finally got rid of we shall have proved against him matters which certainly would not compare with any of the actions on the part of the late Government. Then, what was the honourable gentleman going to do? He told us, "Under a reinstated finance and diminished expenditure the country will, we are convinced, rouse itself from apathy and spring forward in leaps and bounds of progress." That was the very hopeful spirit in which he spoke. The honourable gentleman may laugh, but I have no doubt it is so long ago that the honourable gentleman had forgotten all about saying this. He is, perhaps, astonished that we could think of turning back to two years ago and what he then promised; but, still, I am going to do it. Then he goes on to say, "With common prudence we need have no more financial embarrassment or vexatious taxation"—I am not quoting continuously, but I am quoting the honourable gentleman fairly—and he adds that the finances "are suffering only from mismanagement; that they are elastic and buoyant enough to satisfy the most exacting financier; that oppressive taxation is not required; and that under good government we may safely rely on a progressive improvement in our resources." Now what is the position? I am going to trouble the House with very few figures, but I must just put a few before honourable members. But first I must call attention to the speech made by the Premier at Dunedin. In that speech the Premier told us that he was not fit for his place unless he could reduce the expenditure by from £80,000 to £100,000.

Sir R. STOUT.—And, but for Defence, we should have done it. I spoke in 1884, when we had no knowledge of the war-scare that was to come.

Major ATKINSON.—That is an excuse that will not answer. The honourable gentleman said he would do it; and as a prudent man he ought to have been prepared for what was coming. We had already taken steps to establish a land force in the colony. My honourable friend the member for Waitotara and I always intended to establish that land force, and my honourable friend actually had the Constabulary in training for using the big guns at the time we left office; and we had prepared a scheme of defence, and were about to ask the House to adopt it. We had not entered into it very fully, but were about to do so when we were turned out of office. Well, the Premier undertook to save expenditure by from £80,000 to £100,000 a year, and said that if he did not do so he was not fit for his place; has he done it? The expenditure in consequence of the war-scare will not help the honourable gentleman at all, because the amount in the estimates at present for defence is not so much as it was in 1883–84. The honourable gentleman told us that he was going to abolish the Armed Constabulary. Now, the Armed Constabulary at that time cost £70,000 a year—it may be that it cost £80,000 a year.

Sir R. STOUT.—That is not all I was going to reduce.

Major ATKINSON.—That helps me. Now, I want to know where is the rest. I was going to point out that his promised reduction could not have depended on that item alone, because the cost of the Armed Constabulary was less than the total amount by which the honourable gentleman said he would reduce the expenditure. Now, I have just taken out these figures. If honourable gentlemen will turn to the expenditure for the year 1883–84—that is, the last complete year we were in office—they will see that the total of the expenditure on the twelve classes of the estimates, excluding permanent appropriations, because it is not fair to include them in my argument just now, amounted to £2,009,344. Now, the total last year, when the honourable gentleman must have had full time to make any reductions that he thought to be necessary, was £2,108,404.

Sir R. STOUT.—Does that include subsidies?

Major ATKINSON.—No. That simply includes the twelve classes of the ordinary estimates; and, as "expenses of members" was provided for under Act in both years, that does not require consideration. You will see at once that the expenditure was considerably larger during last year than it was during the last year when we were in office. But the honourable gentleman may fairly say that our railways made a great difference—and it is quite true; and therefore from both years I subtract the railway vote, thus making the comparison quite fair so far as that is concerned. Then we get a total expenditure of £1,381,828, as against a total expenditure for 1883–84 of £1,334,471. There is a difference of £47,000. But it requires still further correction in order to give the honourable gentleman every possible chance of saying that he has fulfilled his obligations. You will find that there is £25,000 for defences put upon loan that year, which must be added to the amount I have already stated. On the other hand he may say that the education vote has increased by natural growth, and that it is hardly fair to charge that upon the honourable gentleman as an increase in the public expenditure. Therefore I deduct £44,826, the additional amount of the education vote. But yet, in spite of every favourable circumstance, the comparison still comes to this: that the expenditure last year was £27,531 more than in the year 1883–84. That is after making every allowance for railways and for education; though I had no right to make any allowance for the education vote, because the honourable gentle-

in had undertaken to give us a better sys-
n of education at a cheaper rate—not the
emier, but the Colonial Treasurer. And the
vernment did come down and propose to
ce 5s. off the capitation allowance; but
e House insisted on its being put back.
ell, that is the result of two years of office,
hough the honourable gentleman pledged
mself to reduce the expenditure by from
0,000 to £100,000: that the expenditure has
en increased on the twelve departments of
overnment by £27,000. I hope the Premier
ill answer that. I hope he will tell us how it
that he could not get his way. It is quite
eless for him to tell us about the Russian-
ar scare, because that is no answer at all.
e pointed out, when the honourable gentle-
an proposed to reduce the Constabulary vote
the very low amount that he fixed on, that
was not sufficient for the requirements of the
untry; and the honourable gentleman soon
und that out. They have professed to make
reduction in the Constabulary vote; but it
a reduction merely in name, because they
ave simply transferred the men to the Per-
anent Force, and the Volunteer expenditure
as been increased. I have said nothing about
he permanent charges, but the honourable
entleman told us that, by the aid of the Act
hich he passed to seize the sinking fund, or,
ather, to make provision for the sinking fund
ut of loan if we would agree to do that, he
ould effect an immense relief. Here is what
e said: "It means this: that, without adding
urther to the annual charges than at present,
ou may borrow seven and a half millions
dditional." But what are the facts? The
ermanent charges last year were £123,000
nore than they were in 1883–84. So that we
ind that, notwithstanding that the honourable
entleman got his Act, notwithstanding that
e effected the inscription, the charges are
eing increased very largely, and that there is
o probability, according to the plan that the
inscription is now going on, of those charges
eing reduced, but that they must go on
largely increasing. The Premier, at Invercargill, very properly told the people, although the Treasurer denies it, that every additional million borrowed means an additional charge of £40,000 a year.

Sir R. STOUT.—That was in Dunedin.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes, that was in Dunedin. I am glad the Premier admits it. The Premier will have to look out very sharp this afternoon whilst the Treasurer is doing his interpretation for him, or he will find himself in still greater difficulties than he is in now. We find an utter failure so far as economy goes, and no statement as to the defence-scare will help the honourable gentleman at all. It may help him to a small amount; but the very utmost he could have reduced the Constabulary vote would have been £30,000 or £40,000. Well, we had the Colonial Treasurer making that statement, and we find that he has not carried out his words. We find that the honourable gentleman has really added to our burdens something like £123,000. That amount may require a little alteration with regard to the interest being carried over. Honourable members know that on operations taking place at particular times of the year sometimes there is as much as £40,000 or £50,000 thrown over from one year to the other. It is very clear that £100,000 more is being paid this year, though the honourable gentleman told us that we should not require any further charge on the public revenues until we had borrowed an additional seven and a half millions; and, of course, we have not borrowed anything like half that sum up to the present time. Then, I suppose that is the effect of the "reinstated finance"—which was in such a state when the honourable gentleman took office that it only required proper management. It was elastic and buoyant enough to satisfy the most exacting financier. And these are the results we have come to: increased expenditure and increased taxation. The honourable gentleman told us he was going to abolish the property-tax, "with its crushing effects upon the progress of the colony"—I am quoting from an official document. Did the honourable gentleman believe that, when he made that statement? and, if he did, does he believe it now? The honourable gentleman is on the horns of a dilemma. He has utterly failed, with all his resources, to provide a sufficient substitute for this tax; or he has come to the belief that this tax is a right tax and does not crush the industries of the colony. I want the honourable gentleman to tell us which it is. I thought that he had come to believe that the tax was a reasonable and right one, and I was rather pleased that he should have arrived at that conclusion, and I should have believed it if it had not been for some remarks which I heard recently. The honourable gentleman has a right to tell the country how it is, if he believes the tax to be crushing the industries of the colony, he continues it. It is not even at the amount it was then. The honourable gentleman has actually increased it since he has taken office—increased this tax which was having a terrible effect on the colony. The honourable gentleman told us at that time that he saw his way to repeal it, and that, if it had not been for some pledge that no local rates should be put on that year, he would have repealed it then. But now that the honourable gentleman has come to know a little of the affairs of the colony, he knows that the thing was impossible; and that tax has practically been the sheet-anchor of the honourable gentleman. Now, the honourable gentleman complains that there is not sufficient elasticity in the Customs; but the honourable gentleman is actually getting more out of the Customs than we got in 1883 and 1884. Although the honourable gentleman undertook to relieve us of taxation, he has asked us more than once to increase the Customs duties. I want to know how the honourable gentleman is going to reconcile those two things. One more reference to this Statement. The honourable gentleman goes on to say, "With common prudence we need have no more financial

any of those discoveries, I now come to what he promised to do for us; because, after all, that is the most important. I venture to say that the honourable gentleman was quite unable to make any of the exposures which he talked of making, and I believe that when it comes to be his time to leave the Government benches he will not be able to show so clean a sheet as the late Government were able to show. I fear that will be the case, because we have already had scandals of a rather serious nature; and I venture to think that before the honourable gentleman is finally got rid of we shall have proved against him matters which certainly would not compare with any of the actions on the part of the late Government. Then, what was the honourable gentleman going to do? He told us, "Under a reinstated finance and diminished expenditure the country will, we are convinced, rouse itself from apathy and spring forward in leaps and bounds of progress." That was the very hopeful spirit in which he spoke. The honourable gentleman may laugh, but I have no doubt it is so long ago that the honourable gentleman had forgotten all about saying this. He is, perhaps, astonished that we could think of turning back to two years ago and what he then promised; but, still, I am going to do it. Then he goes on to say, "With common prudence we need have no more financial embarrassment or vexatious taxation"—I am not quoting continuously, but I am quoting the honourab gentleman fairly—and he adds that the finan "are suffering only from mismanagement; th they are elastic and buoyant enough to sati the most exacting financier; that oppre taxation is not required; and that under government we may safely rely on a pro sive improvement in our resources." what is the position? I am going to tr the House with very few figures, but I just put a few before honourable me But first I must call attention to the made by the Premier at Dunedin. I speech the Premier told us that he w for his place unless he could reduce penditure by from £80,000 to £100,000.

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Major Atkinson

do so he w he done it? of the war gentleman estimates as it was man told Armed C stabular may be

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Bills, and, as I and they are clear portant points, of the struction Act, which he unmeasured terms. The come round to reason Premier, what did he do? make large districts—he was the colony. Some of us at the idea. What was the rea able gentleman very properly pains during the recess colony and make himself acqua local bodies, their doings, and feelings. Then he made in which he told us that he too rted to our principles in this matter. "We must have no revolutionizing gradually grow. I must take the ins as they are. I do not see my way arging them, but I will render their re efficient." The honourable gentleman work, and we have got the Counties Act the Municipal Corporations Act as the re We find that the country is going on exa the same lines that it was in 1883, but the chinery is being improved by past exper I am very glad indeed that the honou gentleman has come round to a right reasonable way of thinking; but I would point out that it was on entirely distinct grounds from those on which the honourable gentlemen took office and pledged themselves to act. I do not object to the honourable gentlemen coming to a reasonable mind; only I do object to them appearing to close their eyes to the facts. I want them to acknowledge their error. At any rate, I want the country to see that the honourable gentlemen have not, in any one respect, so far as I can see, carried out the promises which they pledged themselves to when they took office in this House. Then as regards the future, what hope have we in regard to the finances of the colony? Look at these estimates we have been passing—these Bills that we have now under consideration

, which fortunately fell
le gentleman may laugh,
e wood yet, I can assure
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, I am afraid. I am very
that the contract has been
hope that the company is
, to give effect to it; but I
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whether that company is strong
ry on its work, and I fear, if it
gh to carry on its work, the con-
that it will land us in interminable
And I venture to think that the
gentlemen who have been support-
Treasurer for this object alone—who
this railway whether the colony could
t or not—will find out that they have
their birthright for a mess of pottage.
will find to their cost that they are very
h worse off by following the Treasurer for
phantom of a railway than if they had
mained in their natural parties, and been
ntent to take that work on gradually, as the
te Government were doing it. The late Go-
rnment spent more money in that direction
than the honourable gentlemen have spent by
hundreds of thousands. What are they doing
for Canterbury? The celebrated gentleman
who says they must have the railway or burst
—he is pulling the Canterbury strings. The
Treasurer is simply keeping them all in tow as
a means of support, for it is only that that
keeps him on those benches. He is dangling
this railway before them, and they are fol-
lowing, like silly birds, to their destruction. I
venture to think that when they wake up they
will find that they have bartered the substance
for the shadow of public works. What is the
honourable gentleman doing or what has he
done for Canterbury? He has persuaded
them into this contract, and I only hope that
the people will be satisfied with the contract as
soon as they see it begin to work; but I ven-
ture to tell him and I venture to tell them now
that they would have been infinitely better off,
and the country would have been infinitely
better off, if they had not become the prey
of these designing men, and had not in-
sisted on the work being commenced at once
and pushed on outside the means of the colony.
And I fear, although I deeply regret it, that
the Province of Canterbury and the Provinces
of Nelson and Westland will reap their reward
by having to wait many years to get what they
would have got in a reasonable time if they
had only been content to follow on. What has
been the effect of this? It has been to main-
tain a Government in power in which neither
the country nor this House has confidence.
Nothing but that railway has kept those
honourable gentlemen in office. There is no
doubt about it at all. They know it, and very
skilfully the Treasurer has handled it. But it
is gradually slipping from his grasp; and when
we see this company coming out and beginning
its labours—if it ever does—and [illegible]rely
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has had. There was the cele-

embarrassment or vexatious taxation. We may banish from our minds the philanthropic notion of insurance against pauperism, which might more correctly be termed 'insurance of pauperism.'" And, Sir, the honourable gentleman has banished it by bringing into force the first poor-law that was ever known in this colony. That is the way the honourable gentleman has disposed of the question of pauperism. I venture to say that no Finance Minister New Zealand has ever had has made, one after the other, such a complete series of blunders from beginning to end. Not a single one of the honourable gentleman's predictions has been fulfilled, and position after position which the honourable gentleman took up he has had to abandon, and abandon completely. Then, I would ask, can we have confidence in him in this matter in the future? Now let us look at this local-government matter. Here great reforms were to be made — in fact, we were to have a complete system of local government. According to the honourable gentleman, previous Governments knew nothing about their business in this matter, any more than they did about finance; and the honourable gentleman had been very few months in office when he and the Premier together invented that wonderful Bill that was introduced last session. I think the Treasurer did the financial part and the Premier did the machinery part. The honourable gentleman told us what was going to happen in this way. Some of us ventured to predict what a very pretty Bill it would be when it came out, manufactured by these two honourable gentlemen. The Premier and the Treasurer know really nothing about the local bodies or local government. That seems a bold thing to say; but it is borne out by the action of the honourable gentlemen themselves. They brought down that wonderful Bill, which was to give the local bodies £320,000 a year for twenty-five years. We were to find securities to enable the local bodies to borrow from five to seven millions, to spend it as fast as they could, and come to this House and ask for payment. That Bill was laughed out of the House, and the intended making provision for twenty-five years ended in making provision for subsidies for six months, — and even then the honourable gentleman did not fulfil his promise, for he never paid the six months' subsidy. By a return laid on the table of this House it appears that there is still some £40,000 or £50,000 owing on the first six months' subsidy. The return shows that only £85,000 was paid to the local bodies up to the 30th June. The money may have been paid since the 30th June—I am speaking now of the date of the return. No doubt the honourable gentleman has been rather hard pressed in the Treasury—I can quite understand that; and we see that by the fact that he has now had to ask us for some £200,000 more deficiency bills in order to carry on until the consolidated revenue is replenished. But it does not end here. You might have thought the honourable gentleman would have looked a year ahead, if not twenty-five years. The honourable gentleman has come down this year a[illegible] that unfortunate Act which gave [illegible] six months, and amended it so [illegible] to have half the rates for the [illegible] there any grasp of this subject of [illegible] Does the honourable gentleman [illegible] honourable gentleman was very [illegible] repeal the Roads and Bridges [illegible] and repeal it he did, and a [illegible] thought he had got. And, no [illegible] ing it he had to look at it a little [illegible] very few honourable members [illegible] Bill knew much about it. Why, [illegible] day two honourable gentlemen [illegible] slashing speeches against the [illegible] mitted to me that they had never [illegible] at all. I think that must have [illegible] the Treasurer was in when he re[illegible] but, having repealed the Bill, I [illegible] have come to the conclusion tha[illegible] must be given effect to in spir[illegible] and hence the honourable gentle[illegible] wise in this direction and has [illegible] these local-government Bills, a[illegible] very satisfactory Bills, and the [illegible] the lines, in all important point[illegible] and Bridges Construction Act, [illegible] demned in such unmeasured te[illegible] surer has at last come roun[illegible] views. And the Premier, what [illegible] was going to make large district[illegible] to revolutionize the colony. [illegible] tured to laugh at the idea. Wha[illegible] The honourable gentleman ve[illegible] considerable pains during t[illegible] about the colony and make him [illegible] with the local bodies, their [illegible] ments, and feelings. Then [illegible] speech, in which he told us [illegible] converted to our principles in [illegible] says, "We must have no rev[illegible] must gradually grow. I must [illegible] tions as they are. I do not [illegible] enlarging them, but I will m[illegible] more efficient." 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Major Atkinson

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[illegible] I hope the honourable [illegible] this matter, but [illegible] candidly how he [illegible] means next year [illegible] It is quite clear [illegible] or work in the [illegible] will have to be stopped. [illegible] with regard to this [illegible] a few words in re- [illegible] that the honour- [illegible] There was the cele-

[illegible] I fear, although I deeply regret it, that the Province of Canterbury and the Provinces of Nelson and Westland will reap their reward by having to wait many years to get what they would have got in a reasonable time if they had only been content to follow on. What has been the effect of this? It has been to maintain a Government in power in which [illegible] the country nor this House has [illegible] Nothing but that railway has [illegible] honourable gentlemen in office. [illegible] doubt about it at all. They know [illegible] skilfully the Treasurer has handled [illegible] is gradually slipping from his [illegible] we see this company coming [illegible] its labours—if it ever does [illegible] hope it may—I venture to [illegible] few months afterwards there [illegible]

such a Bill as this, and that they had little time to do so. There is no doubt whatever that this is a Bill which requires to be watched carefully in a variety of ways. It involves a system of legislation which seems to be entirely foreign to the proper methods of legislation in these colonies. Moreover, it is a Bill which I do not understand how the Governor can assent to, because, under his Instructions, if I remember aright, His Excellency cannot assent to a Bill in which there are a number of distinct matters dealt with. I think also that such a Bill is contrary to the Standing Orders. Certainly it is contrary to the spirit of the Standing Orders and of the Governor's Instructions.

Sir R. STOUT.—The Governor has assented to such Bills previously.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—It does not follow he ought to have done so. It seems to me quite improper for a Bill of this kind to deal with general Acts. Who would think of looking in this Bill for an amendment of the Land Act? I must say I sympathize very much with what has been done by the Council, and I think this House should consider seriously before it passes Bills of this kind again. I do not agree with the honourable member for Port Chalmers that this was a happy invention. It seems to have been an evil invention; and it is an invention on which we do not seem to be improving. I do not think it is of any use agreeing to the motion of the honourable member for Motueka. It is too late in the session to have a discussion on the subject, and if any inconvenience is felt we must blame ourselves.

Mr. SMITH.—I am sorry the Government cannot see their way to propose a Conference between the two Houses on this Bill, because there are a good many clauses struck out which ought to have been kept in. The other Chamber seem to have dealt with this Bill in a most extraordinary way. When the Bill came before this House it was very carefully considered by the Waste Lands Committee, and was then considered by a Committee of the whole House, and then was read a third time and passed. Then it was sent to the Legislative Council, and the Waste Lands Committee there considered it very carefully. Many clauses—amongst others, clauses 35 and 36—were passed unanimously by that Committee after evidence had been taken and considered. When the Bill went back to the whole Council it seemed that if one voice was raised in objection to a clause that was quite sufficient to have the clause thrown out. The Bill, having received such careful consideration in the Committee, ought not to have been dealt with so summarily by the Council. If the amendment of the honourable member for Motueka be carried I shall move that the amendments in clauses 35 and 36 be also disagreed with. I should not like to see the Bill lost, because there are many clauses in it which will be of great advantage, and I shall not press my amendment unless the other amendment is carried.

Major ATKINSON.—I am sorry to say I cannot support the amendment: not because I do not think that those clauses ought not to be struck out, but because the end of the session is so close that any attempt to have the matter discussed between the two Houses would result in the Bill being lost; and I do not wish to see other persons served in the same manner in which so many have been.

The House divided on the question. "That the amendments to clause 18 of the Bill and sections 22 and 47 of the schedule be disagreed with."

AYES, 11.

Beetham	Kerr	Smith.
Brown	Menteath	*Tellers.*
Bruce	O'Conor	Grace
Hamlin	Seddon	Hursthouse.

NOES, 34.

Allwright	Lance	Ross
Ballance	Locke	Steward, W. J.
Bryce	Macandrew	Stewart, W. D.
Buchanan	Moat	Stout
Buckland, W. F.	Montgomery	Thomson, J. W
Fraser	Moss	Tole
Gore	Newman	Vogel
Grey	Parata	Walker.
Hislop	Peacock	
Hobbs	Pyke	*Tellers.*
Johnston	Richardson, E.	Conolly
Lake	Rolleston	Turnbull.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Cadman	Mitchelson
Cowan	Mackenzie, M. J. S.
Guinness	Buckland, J. C.
Lance	Barron
Levestam	Fulton
O'Callaghan	Fergus
Pearson.	Wilson.

Majority against, 23.

Amendment negatived, and amendments made by the Legislative Council agreed to.

LIBRARY.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the report of the Library Committee be agreed to;—because if it were not agreed to he did not know what would happen during the recess, as nobody would be in charge. The only objection to the adoption of the report was that no rules had been framed to meet the wish of the House that books should be circulated amongst members during the recess. The Committee had, however, met the House half-way by adopting a resolution that any one applying to the Chairman could have any specified book he wished to see. He was a member of the Library Committee himself, and might say that it was simply impossible for the Committee at present to frame rules for lending books to members outside of Wellington. Such rules would have to be exceedingly stringent, because it might very easily happen that as many as two or three thousand volumes would be away from the library at one time. The best thing, therefore, in his opinion, would be to agree to the report; and next year the House would have time to consider the whole matter. The following was the additional part of the report to which he alluded:—

That, having considered the reference to regarding the lending of books to mem- of the Legislature living at a distance from ington during the recess, they find that e are so many difficulties in the way of g effect to this recommendation that they ot see their way to carry it out at present. They consider that, if a particular work is ired by a member in any special case, an lication to the Chairman may enable such nber to procure it, and that the Chairman uthorized to lend books in such cases."

r. MACANDREW was sorry that the con- ration of the report had been postponed l so many members had left, because it been very fully discussed, and the House almost unanimously agreed in favour of ks being lent to members during the recess. the face of that decision the Library Com- ttee had taken up a very peculiar posi- on. They had done nothing whatever to y and meet the wish of the House. He had een in the habit of taking away books for ears past, and so had many other honour- ble members. It was rather hard that they hould be pulled up at once in this way by a esolution of the Committee. No harm what- ver had resulted, so far as he was aware, from he taking-away of books. To put himself in rder he would move, as an amendment, That his House reaffirms its resolution *re* the taking- way of books from the General Assembly ibrary by members of the Legislature during he recess, and remits the report back to the Committee for further consideration; and, also, that it be an instruction to the mem- bers of the Committee who represent this branch of the Legislature to insist that, if the library is to be available to members residing at Wellington, it must be equally so to mem- bers residing in other parts of the colony. He did not see why this splendid library should be confined to the use of five or six members residing in Wellington during eight or nine months of the year; and, notwithstanding what the Premier had said, he believed the difficulty might easily have been got over. He thought the members of the Committee repre- senting the House had scarcely done their duty in allowing the matter to go by the board by passing such a resolution as that which had been brought up.

Mr. LOCKE must express his agreement with the remarks of the honourable member for Port Chalmers, although he was afraid it was now too late to take any practical action. Most honourable members had not the time during the session to study the books in the library that they would wish to study, and they were debarred from taking them away during the recess. Any one who understood the value of books would take proper care of them, and would return them in the state in which they were taken away.

Mr. MONTGOMERY did not think honour- able members realized the difficulties there were in the way of carrying out the recom- mendation of the House. Only the Committee could look into the difficulties from a practical point of view, and they saw that those difficul- ties were insurmountable. If every honourable member were allowed to take out five or six or a dozen volumes at a time, there would be many thousands out. That would make it necessary to have very stringent rules, similar to those in force in circulating libraries: books would have to be returned within a certain time, and heavy fines would have to be imposed if they were kept too long; and if the books in charge of any person were injured they would have to be paid for, in which case it would pro- bably be necessary to insist on a deposit before the books were taken out. Then, again, sup- posing Mr. A. took out three, or four, or five volumes, and kept them for a number of months, Mr. B. might want to see them; and what was he to do? And if Mr. B. got them, Mr. C. might want them; so that there was no knowing where the difficulty would end. In fact, all books of value should be kept in the library, for if they were lent all over the coun- try the result would be that there would be a great deal of trouble and loss, not to say heart- burning. One could not have a library like this all over the colony any more than one could a museum. There were certain things which must be in a great centre, and this was one. He therefore hoped that the recom- mendation of the Library Committee would be agreed to.

Mr. KERR sympathized very much with the honourable member for Port Chalmers, and thought it was a great pity that this splendid library should be stuck up in one place; but he must say that the compromise offered by the Premier was a fair one. It was only scientific books which would be wanted out of the library, and any one could get those by giving proper security. It would be well to adopt the sug- gestion of the Committee, and then see what could be done next session.

Major ATKINSON must confess that he agreed with the honourable member for Port Chalmers, and disagreed altogether with the honourable member for Akaroa. It was all very well to conjure up bogeys, and so manage that only some few members, residing in Wel- lington, should have the use of the books. Of course it would be necessary to have proper regulations; but he did not see any difficulty in framing them. He would certainly not rest until the privilege was given to members in all parts of the colony to have the use of the library books. He would suggest that they should express their views to the Recess Com- mittee, and did not know why the House should not instruct them.

Sir R. STOUT said the Committee had met the House half-way by saying that books could be got out.

Major ATKINSON said that was in a special case; and he declined altogether to go to the Committee and beg as a favour that to which he had a perfect right.

Sir R. STOUT asked what books the honour- able gentleman would have taken out.

Major ATKINSON.—All but books of refer- ence.

Sir R. STOUT said that class would include books on political economy.

Major ATKINSON replied that that was not the case, for the books of reference were now very few. He did not think that honourable members were so utterly careless as had been represented.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—They are.

Major ATKINSON said that if that was so it would be better to have no library at all. But he did not believe it, and he thought that regulations might be framed that would have the effect of providing for care being taken of the books. If the library was not intended at all as a lending library, but simply for reference, it was of very little use. During the time when honourable members were in Wellington they were so heavily worked that they could only occasionally look into the books. It seemed to him that this was a sort of "dog in the manger" business. If Wellington were a capital city in the sense that many members spent their time in it there would be some reason in maintaining the present system: but to say that they could not devise rules by which members of the House could enjoy the privileges of the library seemed absurd on the face of it.

Mr. MACANDREW said that he had been getting out books for years, and he had known other honourable members to do the same thing.

Dr. NEWMAN, as one of the Wellington members, said that, while the Wellington members had the advantages of the library, it must be remembered that they had a honorarium of £140, while the others got a honorarium of £210; so that honourable members might spend the extra £70 in buying books. His opinion was that the library should be made as useful as possible, and he believed a set of rules could be prepared with a little forethought under which they might very well send books to honourable members; so that members of the House who lived in other parts of the colony would get some advantage from the library during the recess. He believed that it had been the practice of certain members to take books home with them just as they were going away and keep them during the recess. That, of course, was an abuse of the library. He would undertake to bring before the Library Committee, and to discuss with the Librarian during the recess, the question of preparing a series of rules, to be laid before the Joint Library Committee at the beginning of next session, under which, he thought, the library could be made more useful.

Colonel TRIMBLE said there were two classes of books in the library—general and light literature, which was for the most part used; and standard works—works of reference. He ventured to say that the books wanted as a rule from the library were of the light-literature class, which was now the cheapest literature in the world, because everybody could get the best novels for sixpence a volume, and even as low as a penny. There was no reason why the library should get books of that class; and he would venture to say that if once they began to lend these books they would be returned in a very imperfect state. In his early days he had a fair library of books, and might mention that his losses by lending to private friends were of a very annoying kind; and, if they were going to lend books in an indiscriminate manner to about a hundred and fifty people, in a very short time the best books would be imperfect or disappear altogether. They were going on a false principle with regard to novels. They bought immense numbers of these at a frightful price, the cost of binding alone being a very serious item, and at the end of a couple of years they were worth nothing. He thought they should buy novels of the cheapest possible edition, and part with them at the end of twelve months. As to classical novels, such as occasionally appeared when a man like Dickens or Thackeray wrote, these, at the death of the author, should be got in full sets and put into the permanent library.

Mr. BRUCE agreed there had been a great waste of public money in purchasing the large number of books of light literature which were to be found in the library. These books of light literature were to be found throughout the country—there was no reason why members should say they were deprived of them, and as for works of reference, it would be extremely inadvisable that they should leave the building. He was one who would be benefited by such a rule as was suggested being enforced, and he strongly objected to it, and did not think the country would approve of it. He might also point out that if this rule were made members would be subjected to a great deal of pressure from students for books, and the result would be that a large number of books would be lost or injured.

Mr. MENTEATH did not understand the argument of the honourable member for Thorndon at all. If the consideration of the extra honorarium was to be taken into account in connection with this matter, then the Ministers, who received £1,400 a year, ought to contribute something towards the library. He had had the privilege of getting as many books as he wanted out of the library, and he exercised that privilege, but was not sufficiently a "dog in the manger" to say that he thought others should not have the same privilege. In fact, in an illegitimate manner that was done which it was now proposed should be done legitimately. He saw no reason why honourable members residing outside the Wellington District should not have the same privileges as the Wellington members, and for that reason he should vote for the amendment.

Mr. FISHER could not understand what all this fuss was about concerning the borrowing of books. Though he lived in Wellington, during the few years he had been a member of the House he had taken out of the library two books. For his part, he concurred in what Ruskin said about books—that a man should buy and not borrow them. During these days of cheap printing one could buy standard works at ninepence or a shilling each. The reason for sending for a book from a distant part of the

lony, it seemed to him, must be that a person anted to speak or write on a special subject; nd he thought it probable that in most cases ng before the book reached its destination e necessity for sending it would have passed way. As to light literature, he did not care a raw whether that was circulated or not, but e thought the reference-books should not be ent out, because it would be difficult to get hem back again, and if they were lost it would e a year before some of them could be replaced. Even standard literature was so cheap that it ras possible for any man to collect a library of ooks. He might be pardoned for saying that e kept a small reference-library of his own, nd so was not under the necessity of borrowng even from their rich parliamentary library. The cost of keeping a small reference-library was now so little as to render almost any man ndependent of borrowing from a reference-ibrary at all.

Mr. CONOLLY said that if the amendment of the honourable member for Port Chalmers were carried there would be no Library Committee at all.

Mr. MACANDREW.—No great loss.

Mr. CONOLLY thought that would be extremely undesirable. If this were referred back to the Joint Library Committee there was not the slightest chance of that Committee meeting to reconsider it, as half of the members of the Committee had gone away. It appeared to him that the arrangement which the Committee proposed to make was going quite as far as they should go.

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC WORKS APPROPRIATION BILL.

This Bill was read a first, a second, and a third time.

APPROPRIATION BILL.

This Bill was read a first and a second time.

On the motion, That the Bill be read a third time,

Major ATKINSON said,—Before the Bill is read a third time I propose to address a few remarks to the House. I do not propose to detain the House at any great length, although were I to attempt to catalogue the sins of honourable gentlemen opposite I am afraid we should have to put off the prorogation of Parliament for a day or two. I feel a little sorry that the Treasurer has not made a speech upon the second reading of the Bill in fulfilment of a pledge which he gave to show us that the Premier does not understand the use of the English language, and that whenever he made a speech he made it in such a way as to require the Treasurer to interpret it for him in order that the public generally might understand it. Now, I understand the object the honourable gentleman has undertaken to-day is to interpret the speech of the Premier at Invercargill, and to show us and the country generally,—and, no doubt, the Premier himself,—that we are all wrong in the interpretation we put upon it. I hope, if the honourable gentleman does that, that the Premier will, if I may venture to suggest it, and if he has sufficiently recovered his health, pluck up sufficient spirit in the face of the honourable gentleman just to say that he is quite capable of saying what he means, and that, when he desires to tell the public he does mean limited borrowing and "tapering off," he says so, and does not require the Treasurer to interpret his speeches for him. I do not know whether the honourable gentleman has sufficiently recovered to take that stand, but I do hope, in his own interest, he will see his way to do it on the present occasion. Now, I must just ask you, Sir, to look at the financial management of the Government. We know our prosperity is based to a great extent on sound finance. We know the honourable gentleman is a great financier, and we know he came two short years ago to put us right in these matters. We were then in a terrible muddle, you will recollect, and the honourable gentleman had only been in office a week or two—no, I am wrong, it was only a few days—when he had found out or got upon the trail of such terrible disclosures that he announced in this House that nothing but physical force would remove him from those benches until he had made a full discovery. Well, the House waited, almost breathless, and——

Sir J. VOGEL.—I wish the honourable gentleman would quote me correctly. That is not correct.

Major ATKINSON.—Will the honourable gentleman give me the correct quotation?

Sir J. VOGEL.—Does the honourable gentleman want to know what I said?

Major ATKINSON.—Yes.

Sir J. VOGEL.—In face of the harassing manœuvres which the honourable gentleman was so well able to carry on, I said that the Government were determined they would announce their financial policy before they left these benches.

Major ATKINSON.—Why, they have not announced it yet. They have kept on the benches, it is true; but I venture to think they will have left the benches long before they announce it, because they do not understand it themselves, as I am going to show. The honourable gentleman's memory is very good, and so is mine; but I venture to say that, notwithstanding the corrections of the honourable gentleman, he has only given us part of what he said he would give. He told us he was going to give us a financial policy. And a wonderful policy it was, as I mean to show. He went on further to say that until he got to the bottom of the finances of the colony—and he has not got to the bottom of them yet—nothing but personal force should take him away from those benches.

Sir J. VOGEL.—That is a misstatement. I said I wanted to look into the honourable gentleman's transactions.

Major ATKINSON.—Well, the honourable gentleman has had time to look into my transactions, and if I had committed any crime he would have found me out before now. But the honourable gentleman having failed to make

treated was, first, to find public funds for their rates, and then subsidize them to the extent of the money that had already been given to them.

Mr. LARNACH said he found this system of paying subsidies when he came into office; but then the rule was to pay £2 for £1, and he had been reducing it to £1 for £1. The votes on these estimates were not for the same works as those that appeared on the general estimates.

Mr. MENTEATH said that no doubt the £2,000 for prospecting in river-beds was an experimental vote in response to a request by a number of gentlemen interested in gold-mining that some steps should be taken to prospect in the beds of the larger rivers. Those who now opposed these votes were really the authors of the policy which rendered them necessary. In the estimates for 1882 he found £100,000 for roads on goldfields, and every year there were appropriations for the same purpose, taken with the consent of those honourable gentlemen. If the system was vicious those honourable gentlemen were responsible for it; and when people were expecting these votes it would be cruel to strike them off suddenly. If there was any responsibility for this vote it rested with those honourable gentlemen who were now opposing it. With reference to the remarks that fell from the honourable member for Akaroa, that honourable gentleman had given an altogether one-sided statement of the case. Take the County of Selwyn, for instance, which under the Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Act of last session received no less a sum than £2,492. In addition to that, each of the Road Boards of the county received a very considerable sum. On turning to the balance-sheet of that county he found to his surprise that the county did not strike a rate. They merely levied their dog-tax and so forth.

Major ATKINSON. — But they own land revenue.

Mr. MENTEATH said the County of Selwyn was an example of the many agricultural counties which were in the position he had indicated. The honourable member for Akaroa had told the Committee that these counties wanted roads, whereas the fact was, they were amply roaded and amply railed. The honourable member for Egmont stated that the County of Selwyn derived its income from the land revenue.

Major ATKINSON only said that generally of these counties.

Mr. MENTEATH said this was certainly not the case with regard to the County of Selwyn, which had not a halfpenny of land revenue. Its principal receipts were the subsidy under the Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Act of last year.

Major ATKINSON.—How could they get that without rates?

Mr. MENTEATH said they got the sum of £2,492.

Major ATKINSON.—On rates?

Mr. MENTEATH said they did not show any rates on their balance-sheet.

Major ATKINSON.—The Road Boards?

Mr. MENTEATH said he simply showed the balance-sheet of the county, on which no rates appeared.

Item, £2,000, struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That £5,000 be granted."

AYES, 24.

Ballance	Kerr	Seddon
B.-Bradshaw	Larnach	Smith
Brown	Menteath	Tole
Bruce	Moat	Turnbull
Buchanan	Moss	Walker.
Buckland, W.F.	O'Conor	*Tellers.*
Fraser	Pearson	Hursthouse
Hatch	Richardson, E.	Steward, W. J.
Hirst, H.		

NOES, 12.

Atkinson	Newman	Wilson.
Bryce	Peacock	*Tellers.*
Lake	Rolleston	Conolly
McMillan	Thomson, J. W.	Trimble.
Montgomery		

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Bevan	Johnston
Cadman	Mitchelson
Cowan	Mackenzie, M. J. S.
Fitzherbert	Wakefield
Grace	Whyte
Guinness	Buckland, J. C.
Lance	Barron
Levestam	Fulton
O'Callaghan	Fergus
Pyke	Richardson, G. F.
Samuel	Hislop
Vogel.	Beetham.

Majority for, 12.

Vote as reduced, £5,000, agreed to.

CLASS VIII.—PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Parliament Buildings—New library building, in brick, £2,000.

Mr. O'CONOR pointed out that honourable members had very little time to devote themselves to the contents of the library towards the erection of which this vote was proposed. As for the recess, the Library Committee had determined that only the residents of Wellington should derive benefit from the library. This was quite sufficient to condemn the library under the present management. It appeared outrageous that members of Parliament residing away from Wellington who might be anxious to study subjects in the interests of the country could not have an opportunity of doing so. He wanted to know why these books were kept in the library in that way. There could be no danger in allowing members to take out books during the recess, as they could be insured on their journey to and fro, and it would be therefore a matter of perfect certainty that they would not be lost. If the library was intended to be only for ornament, and not for use, then it would be a pity to waste money in the direction proposed.

Major ATKINSON thought the Committee would be wise to vote the sum asked for, so that they might secure appropriate buildings. Next year, he might say, he would be very glad

sist any honourable member who would ess the view of the House in reference to matter in unmistakable terms—that the s should be used by honourable members he year round. He believed they could y carry such a resolution.

ote, £2,000, agreed to.

eneral departmental offices, £2,200.

r. E. RICHARDSON said that the item, ublic buildings, Hamilton, grant-in-aid, 00," was a subsidy towards the erection of lic buildings at Hamilton. The county going to build offices at a cost of £6,000, the Government would contribute £2,000, g in want of buildings themselves.

Ir. PEACOCK asked for information regard- the item, "Geological room for Museum, 0."

Ir. LARNACH said that Dr. Hector had a at many valuable geological specimens at ent cooped up in boxes, and he had no room isplay them, or to sort them, in order that might distribute some of the specimens; l it was necessary that this room should be lt.

Vote, £2,200, agreed to.

udicial, £100, agreed to.

Post and Telegraph, £1,050, agreed to.

Lunatic asylums, £2,000, agreed to.

Hospitals and other charitable institutions, 50, agreed to.

ASS IX.—LIGHTHOUSES, HARBOUR-WORKS, AND HARBOUR-DEFENCES.

Harbour works, Hokitika, £1,500.

Mr. LARNACH said that a large portion of ing-work had already been done, and if this oney were not expended a good part of the rk would be in danger of being washed away.

Mr. MACARTHUR moved, That the vote be ruck out.

Colonel TRIMBLE said that if the port was orth keeping up the trade of the port would sufficient to pay dues to keep up these works. the trade was not sufficient the Government ight not to pay money upon the works.

Mr. SEDDON said that if this money were ot voted some three or four chains of pile-ork would be washed away on the northern all. It was with the view of protecting that ork that the money was wanted.

Mr. BEETHAM complained that the har-our at Castlepoint received no consideration, hile money was being spent on these West oast harbours.

Major ATKINSON said this was the fourth r fifth year since the House had been assured hat this would be the very last vote for this ork. He himself had placed votes on the stimates on the same understanding. He ecommended that even this vote should not e spent until it was shown by the Marine Engineer not only that the vote was absolutely ecessary to protect existing works, but that it would be final. A railway was now being made rom Greymouth to Hokitika, and that was a good reason why there should be no more ex-penditure on this harbour.

Mr. SEDDON said it was intended this year to ask for a further endowment, so that the Board might borrow money independent of the Government; but the land had been withdrawn from sale owing to the East and West Coast Railway Proclamation, and the Board could not carry out its intention. In the meantime the harbour-works were being washed away, and there was nothing for it but to ask the Government to give enough to protect the works.

Sir R. STOUT understood that this was to be the last vote asked for, and Hokitika must henceforth understand that the House would vote no more.

Mr. LARNACH said he would try, if possible and desirable, to give effect to the suggestion of the honourable member for Egmont, and if the Marine Engineer said the expenditure would be practically useless the money would not be spent.

Mr. ROLLESTON believed that the harbour was in a worse condition now than it was years ago, notwithstanding all the expenditure.

Colonel TRIMBLE said it was evident the trade of the port was not worth keeping. Out of £55,000 spent the Harbour Board could only pay interest on £10,000, and the colony had to find the rest.

Dr. NEWMAN said there could be nothing more idiotic than the expenditure on these small bar-harbours; but the expenditure and loans authorized were becoming so large that there would soon be a Harbour League formed, and the colony would have to take over the liability. Sir John Coode had said that the colony must be mad to want twenty-seven harbours for a quarter of a million of people; and if his recommendation had been carried out attention would have been confined to making four or five harbours really efficient, and ceasing expenditure on all these small harbours.

Vote, £1,500, agreed to.

CLASS XIII.

Thermal springs, £10,000.

Colonel TRIMBLE asked if the cost of waterworks (£6,000) and improvement of baths (£2,000) would be reimbursed to the colony.

Mr. BALLANCE said, indirectly. It was part of the contract with the lessees that these improvements should be made.

Colonel TRIMBLE asked if there was not a stipulation that they should be paid for out of the proceeds of land.

Mr. BALLANCE said there was not.

Mr. MOSS did not see why 650,000 acres of land should be locked up here from settlement, nor did he see why the Natives who obtained large rents from these lands should not bear some of this expenditure. Why should the Europeans be taxed to improve the property of the Natives?

Mr. BRYCE asked if the Minister was certain that it was in the agreement that the Government should provide this water-supply.

Mr. BALLANCE said it was expressly one of the conditions made with the Government.

Mr. ROLLESTON understood that what was

provided was that the Natives should supply the land and afford every facility for bringing the water in, and it was a bargain on the part of the Government that the supply should be brought in; but it was certainly never contemplated that such a sum as this should be expended for the purpose. He would ask the Minister to consider whether a diggers' race could not be brought in from a stream by Kelly's farm at a cheaper rate.

Mr. BALLANCE replied that they had the best engineering advice on the matter, and were assured that the water, which would have to be brought in in pipes, could not be brought in for a less sum than was contemplated. The contract price was £5,000, and £1,000 was allowed for extras and incidentals. With regard to the agreement, it was expressly provided that the Government should lay water on to the township, and one of the complaints made by those who desired to repudiate their purchases had been that this agreement had not been carried out.

Colonel TRIMBLE said this meant that the people would have to pay £450 interest for fifty years. He understood the Natives received about £3,000 a year rent; and why should the people of the colony be taxed in order to supply their land with water?

Mr. BALLANCE said the policy of the late and present Governments was to make this place a great sanatorium for tourists from all parts of the world, and that was the reason, no doubt, why this agreement had been made.

Mr. BUCHANAN thought the agreement made was binding upon the colony. Having been there, he knew that no water could be supplied to this locality except by some such expenditure as this.

Colonel TRIMBLE thought that the sooner they got rid of this white elephant the better. They were told that there was going to be a profit from the Thermal Springs Act; but they got nothing of the kind, and there was a large expenditure every year.

Vote, £10,000, agreed to.

CLASS III.—RAILWAYS.

Transfer of expenditure on construction of North Island Main Trunk Railway up to 31st March, 1886, hitherto charged on loans raised prior to 31st March, 1886, £60,800, agreed to.

Transfer of expenditure on permanent-way, &c., up to 31st March, 1886, hitherto charged on loans raised prior to 31st March, 1886, £77,000, agreed to.

Contingencies, £15,000, agreed to.

Transfer of expenditure on permanent-way, &c., up to 31st March, 1886, hitherto charged on loans raised prior to 31st March, 1886, £213,000, agreed to.

Permanent-way, sleepers, and rolling-stock, £37,000, agreed to.

Resolutions reported to the House and agreed to.

The House adjourned at five minutes to two o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 17th August, 1886.

Public Works Appropriation Bill—Appropriation Bill.

The Hon. the ACTING-SPEAKER took the chair at half-past ten o'clock.

PRAYERS.

PUBLIC WORKS APPROPRIATION BILL.

The Public Works Appropriation Bill was read a first, a second, and a third time.

APPROPRIATION BILL.

The Appropriation Bill was read a first and a second time.

On the motion for the third reading of the Bill,

The Hon. Mr. CHAMBERLIN said,—I have been struck by the extraordinarily large proportionate sums set down under the headings of "Miscellaneous" in the schedule. In Class I. the amount under that heading is no less than £21,288. I hope the Government will explain the principal items that help to make up that large sum, and why so large a sum is put under so indefinite a term instead of being specified. Then, in Class III. there is the same extraordinary proportion between the amount under "Miscellaneous" and the specified amounts. The "Miscellaneous" is £28,000, while all the specified items only total £25,000. In Class VI. there are only three items altogether, and, of these, £12,000 is under "Miscellaneous." It seems an extraordinary thing that the sums should be so large for miscellaneous purposes, and I hope the absence of further specification will be explained.

Bill read a third time.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes past eleven o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 17th August, 1886.

Hon. Mr. Taiaroa—Census Enumerators—Government Life Insurance Association Bill—J. Murton—West Coast Village Settlement—Special Powers and Contracts Bill—Library—Public Works Appropriation Bill—Appropriation Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at twelve o'clock.

PRAYERS.

HON. MR. TAIAROA.

Mr. PARATA asked the Government, Whether they will take into consideration the report of the Native Affairs Committee on the petition of the Hon. Mr. Taiaroa, praying that the sum of £145 15s. be paid to him for expenses incurred by him in the settlement of the reserves at Arahura?

Mr. BALLANCE said that a letter had been

ent to the Hon. Mr. Taiaroa concerning this matter, stating that it would be inquired into. It was in the Public Trust Office really, and the Public Trustee was making inquiries, in order to deal with the matter.

CENSUS ENUMERATORS.

Mr. HATCH asked the Government, Whether the census enumerators in the cases of Wairarapa East and West, Wairoa (Hawke's Bay), Waipawa, and Patangata Districts, in the North, and Bruce, Tuapeka, and Clutha Districts, in the South, were appointed by the Government or by the Registrar-General; and whether they will explain the greatly-increased cost of collection of census returns in the districts named? The continual increase in the various public departments, and this one more particularly, having been brought before public notice in the public prints, had caused him to ask the question.

Mr. TOLE said the census enumerators were appointed by the Government, and the subenumerators were appointed by the enumerators. The extra cost was accounted for by the increased population and settlement, which naturally necessitated an increase in the number of subenumerators, who had to travel about a great deal.

GOVERNMENT LIFE INSURANCE ASSOCIATION BILL.

Mr. W. D. STEWART said that when speaking on this Bill he referred to the Minister of Justice as having had correspondence with Mr. Shera although a Committee had been appointed to communicate with him in connection with the property. It did not come out before the Committee of Inquiry, and he was not aware at the time he spoke, that the honourable gentleman was a member of the subcommittee appointed by the Board. Hence the criticism he made as to the honourable gentleman was misdirected, and based upon a wrong view of the facts.

Mr. TOLE thanked the honourable member for his explanation, because he thought he would not willingly do an injustice.

J. MURTON.

Mr. HAMLIN said that on a previous occasion he had asked a question with reference to John Murton, whose case was reported upon by the Public Petitions Committee in 1884; and the Minister replied that, in terms of the report of the Committee, this man would be employed. From that time up to the present, although correspondence had taken place between himself and the Minister, this unfortunate man had not got employment. He was injured while working on the railway, and the Committee recommended that he should get some light employment; but up to the present time that unfortunate man had not been employed, although the Minister stated in the House that he would be.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said he would look into the matter, as he did not know the circumstances.

WEST COAST VILLAGE SETTLEMENT.

Mr. SEDDON said that at the present time there was a large section of land known as the Big Wanganui Flat, and another large section, specially fitted for village settlements. The County Council would be willing to co-operate with the Minister in opening up the land and settling it. He would ask if the Minister of Lands would correspond with the County Council with that view.

Mr. BALLANCE said his attention had been already called to Big Wanganui Flat as a suitable place for a small-farm settlement, and he would act upon the suggestion made by the honourable member.

SPECIAL POWERS AND CONTRACTS BILL.

On the question, That the amendments made by the Legislative Council in the Special Powers and Contracts Bill be agreed to,

Mr. BALLANCE said,—At this late period of the session, although the amendments are, in my opinion, altogether unjustifiable, I do not intend to ask the House to disagree with them, for this reason: There were seventy paragraphs in the schedule, and, of that number, the Council struck out twenty-three, retaining forty-seven, upon a variety of subjects; and I think that the number of matters left in the Bill is sufficient to justify us in asking the House to agree to the amendments. I do so because it is to me clear that if we disagree with the amendments there will be no opportunity whatever of getting the Bill passed this session; and the question presents itself to us in the practical form, Should we accept the forty-seven paragraphs left in the Bill, or should we show a just resentment at what has been done by moving that the House should disagree with the amendments and allow the Bill to lapse? In my opinion we ought to accept what has been done, and leave the other matters—some of which are doubtless very urgent—over for next session. There is nothing to justify the reckless and indiscriminate manner in which the other Chamber proceeded to mutilate this Bill, and to take out of it some of its most useful provisions. I venture to say that before two years are over eleven out of twelve clauses which have been rejected will be enacted by the Legislature. No doubt it may be objected as a matter of form that some of these matters should not have been left in the Bill; but I say we have numerous precedents for such provisions being embodied in the Special Powers and Contracts Bill. One of the most useful provisions of the Bill was that which related to the change of tenure from the pastoral deferred-payment system to that of perpetual leases under the small-runs system. We did not, as was generally supposed and extensively circulated, amend the Land Act at all. It did not affect the existing Act, and only had reference to an Act repealed some years ago. This clause was rejected, I am informed on good authority, on the specific ground that it repealed part of the Land Act. Then, there is another remarkable feature in this case. In

the Waste Lands Committee in another place only three or four clauses altogether were rejected in the Bill after a great deal of evidence had been taken from the heads of departments and others, and every clause was carefully gone through, as was the case in this House and before our Waste Lands Committee; whereas the Chairman of that Committee came down to the Council and moved the rejection of twenty-three paragraphs in the schedule and five clauses in the text of the Bill. I say that conduct of that kind seems to me to require justification. I have said that many of these provisions are of a most useful kind; and it is a very remarkable thing that the portions which have been in Wellington said to be the most virtuous in the whole Bill are from the Council's point of view really the most objectionable of all, and have been struck out. The Bill has been entirely misunderstood. It has been the subject of a great deal of calumny. A cry has been been raised of "Mad dog!" and everybody has thought it his duty to censure the Bill. There never was a more useful measure before the House than this. Among the clauses struck out is clause 15, dealing with the West Coast Settlement reserves. I had intended to introduce a special Bill to deal with this matter; but, as it would be substantially the same, it would not be in order. I went before the Committee of the Legislative Council, and explained this clause, and the Committee seemed perfectly satisfied. The result of striking out the clause will be that a number of lessees of Native reserves will have to remain another year without their titles. I move, That the amendments made by the Council be agreed to.

Dr. NEWMAN.—Is the paragraph dealing with the Wellington Hospital reserves struck out?

Mr. BALLANCE.—Yes.

Mr. BRYCE.—The honourable gentleman has given very instructive information as to what passed in another place; but it appears to me that if we are to enter into the debates of another place, and to discuss their merits, we must have some representative from there to show us their views of the question. Perhaps that would be slightly unconstitutional at present; but it would not be more so than the attempts at legislation made in this Bill, some of which attempts, no doubt, were unconstitutional. I agree that a Bill of this kind may be very useful indeed; but I have warned the House in three consecutive sessions that the abuse of the Bill would lead to its discontinuance. Its use is undeniable if confined to its proper functions—namely, the rectifying of technical defects, or the effecting of minor objects as to the desirability of which all parties can agree—and it is to these objects that the Bill should be confined. It is not, to my mind, a sufficient answer to say that there is precedent for a Bill of this kind. I am quite willing to take my share of the blame for the action of the late Government in regard to this matter. I believe some of their Bills in this respect were objectionable; but I think the objection has been growing stronger and stronger up to the present Bill, which is the most objectionable ever introduced. It really includes a great many local Bills, and many amendments of general Acts. There is even an amendment of the Land Act in it. The Bill, as it was brought in, conflicted with the spirit of our Standing Orders and the Royal Instructions, which say that many of the subjects dealt with in this Bill should only be dealt with in separate enactments. I am not here to defend the Council, and I admit that possibly some things may have been struck out of the schedule which it would have been desirable to pass, and it may also be that some things have been retained which it is undesirable to pass—indeed, I am of that opinion; but what I want to point out, without going into the matter at all just now, is this: that when introducing a similar Bill next year the honourable gentleman should confine it to its legitimate objects if possible, and not introduce into it local Bills without number, and amendments of the general law. That, at any rate, putting the constitutional question on one side, is a very inconvenient practice. If the honourable gentleman reduces the Bill to its legitimate limits, it will be, as he has called it, a useful measure; but, if he persists in the practice of introducing objectionable matter, I take it that the introduction of such Bills will have to be stopped altogether, and so the Legislature of the country will lose the advantages of such a Bill. I observed from a Press report that a Minister in another place, in order to get the Council to pass the Bill, assured it that this should be the last Bill of the kind introduced.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is not in order to refer to what has been said in the Council.

Mr. BRYCE.—I agree that it is out of order, but I thought I was following an illustrious example. I will say, then, there is reason to believe that it is the intention of the Government that this Bill shall be the last Bill of the kind introduced. I was going to draw an inference from that—namely, that possibly the present Ministry do not expect to be in office very much longer, and they wish to deprive their successors of the convenience of being able to introduce a useful Bill from their point of view. Of course I do not know how that may be; but, although that may be a jocular reference, I am quite serious in thinking that, in introducing future Bills of this kind, the Government should endeavour to confine them to their proper limits.

Major ATKINSON.—The simplicity of honourable gentlemen on this side of the House is quite refreshing. I—being, I suppose, a little older in these matters—should have taken it for granted, if I had seen it stated by a responsible authority in another place that the Government did not intend to do a particular thing, that they were going to do it, and not, as the honourable member for Waitotara takes it, that, a member of the Government having made a statement, the Government are in the least likely to be bound by it: at any rate, I should look out for an opposite course being pursued. Now, I think the course the honourable gentle-

man proposes is probably the right one — to accept, under the circumstances, what can be got; but I confess that it is with very great regret I see many of the clauses have been struck out of this Bill, and it is with some regret that I see certain clauses are retained. I confess, too, that, looking carefully through what has been done, I cannot see any guiding principle on which the Council have acted. If there had been, I should have been very glad to support the action of the Council. If there had been any intention to reduce the Bill to its original limits it would have been understandable; but it is simply a case of one being taken and the other left. That is the only possible explanation I can see of the line the Council acted on with regard to this Bill. Many very useful clauses, quite within the scope of the Bill, have been thrown out—for instance, the clause carrying out the recommendation of the Native Affairs Committee that a special lease should be granted to Mr. Caverhill. That is clearly within the scope of the Bill. It has been shown that this gentleman has done most useful service, that he has an undoubted claim, and that he has ably assisted the Government in every possible way. This action will, no doubt, cause him considerable loss, which cannot be made up in any possible way; and such a clause should not have been struck out without good reasons being shown. So with the next clause, authorizing the granting of title to land bought from one Katene by McLean. These clauses and the others should have been dealt with on their merits; but, as far as I can see, they have not been dealt with on their merits at all. I am sorry the honourable gentleman is not able to bring in a Bill rectifying the question of the leases on the West Coast. That is a question of settlement, and leaving the defect unremedied seriously affects both Natives and Europeans. However, I think it is the wisest course under the circumstances to accept the Bill with the amendments; and I hope that next year we shall have the Special Powers and Contracts Bill brought down earlier if possible, and that we shall be able to come to an understanding with another place as to the principle which is to regulate these Bills.

Mr. HAMLIN.—It appears to me that the amendments have been made at haphazard, and not on any rule whatever. It looks as if, when any one proposed to strike out a clause, it was struck out without any inquiry being made. It has been said that some clauses were struck out because they were really local Bills; but there is no reason whatever in that, because more than half of what are left are as much local Bills as anything that has been struck out. The greatest inconvenience may be caused by the excision of some of the clauses. Take, for instance, that referring to the burial-ground at Onehunga. The present burial-ground is absolutely full. It was proposed that, without doing injury to any one, a great difficulty should be overcome by enabling the Borough Council to use the rents from part of a recreation reserve to pay interest on money to be borrowed to buy a new burial-ground. I consider it most unjustifiable to reject that clause on the ground that it was a local Bill. The amendments seem to have been made on a "Jump, Jim Crow" principle, and without rhyme or reason. I really think this House should take some notice of the amendments made, for in the case of Onehunga the amendment will cause most serious public inconvenience as to the disposal of the dead, and it is quite likely that other amendments may cause equal inconvenience in other places. If the amendments had been made on a consistent rule I should not have objected in the slightest; but it is nothing of the kind: and if an amendment is moved to disagree with the Council's amendments I shall support it.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—I move, as an amendment, That the amendments in clause 18 of the Bill and sections 22 and 47 of the schedule be disagreed with. The House should take some stand on an important question of this sort, and not simply pass it because it is near the end of the session. An important Bill of this character, involving large interests all over the country, is amply sufficient to warrant the House taking some action. No other reason has been given, I believe, as to why we should accept these amendments than that it is near the prorogation; but I am prepared to stay to do the business of the country for another month or six weeks. It seems to me that the Council's action has been due to want of knowledge of the various subjects of the Bill; and the making of all these amendments in this way—not on any principle whatever—and their being agreed to seems to me to place members in a false position. I hope that the House will agree to my amendment, and that we shall have a Conference, because I think that if fresh light is let into the regions of darkness above they may agree to some of the clauses struck out being replaced.

Mr. MACANDREW.—I hope that the honourable member will not press his amendment, because it is clear that if he does so there will be a great risk of the Bill being lost, and the innocent will be sacrificed to the guilty. The great fault is that the Bill is not brought down sufficiently early in the session: if it could be brought down at an earlier period it should be, though I am aware that there are difficulties in the way, owing to the circumstance that there have to be included in the Bill many matters that are not settled till towards the end of the session. This Bill is one of the things for which we have to thank the Ministry of which the author of these amendments was a member. The Bill was invented in 1877 by Sir Frederick Whitaker, and was first introduced by the Atkinson Government. It is one of the few things for which the colony has to thank that Ministry.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—I do not agree with those honourable members who have spoken somewhat in terms of censure with reference to the other branch of the Legislature, for it seems to me that the members of that House have the right to inquire into the provisions of

such a Bill as this, and that they had little time to do so. There is no doubt whatever that this is a Bill which requires to be watched carefully in a variety of ways. It involves a system of legislation which seems to be entirely foreign to the proper methods of legislation in these colonies. Moreover, it is a Bill which I do not understand how the Governor can assent to, because, under his Instructions, if I remember aright, His Excellency cannot assent to a Bill in which there are a number of distinct matters dealt with. I think also that such a Bill is contrary to the Standing Orders. Certainly it is contrary to the spirit of the Standing Orders and of the Governor's Instructions.

Sir R. STOUT.—The Governor has assented to such Bills previously.

Mr. W. D. STEWART.—It does not follow he ought to have done so. It seems to me quite improper for a Bill of this kind to deal with general Acts. Who would think of looking in this Bill for an amendment of the Land Act? I must say I sympathize very much with what has been done by the Council, and I think this House should consider seriously before it passes Bills of this kind again. I do not agree with the honourable member for Port Chalmers that this was a happy invention. It seems to have been an evil invention; and it is an invention on which we do not seem to be improving. I do not think it is of any use agreeing to the motion of the honourable member for Motueka. It is too late in the session to have a discussion on the subject, and if any inconvenience is felt we must blame ourselves.

Mr. SMITH.—I am sorry the Government cannot see their way to propose a Conference between the two Houses on this Bill, because there are a good many clauses struck out which ought to have been kept in. The other Chamber seem to have dealt with this Bill in a most extraordinary way. When the Bill came before this House it was very carefully considered by the Waste Lands Committee, and was then considered by a Committee of the whole House, and then was read a third time and passed. Then it was sent to the Legislative Council, and the Waste Lands Committee there considered it very carefully. Many clauses—amongst others, clauses 35 and 36—were passed unanimously by that Committee after evidence had been taken and considered. When the Bill went back to the whole Council it seemed that if one voice was raised in objection to a clause that was quite sufficient to have the clause thrown out. The Bill, having received such careful consideration in the Committee, ought not to have been dealt with so summarily by the Council. If the amendment of the honourable member for Motueka be carried I shall move that the amendments in clauses 35 and 36 be also disagreed with. I should not like to see the Bill lost, because there are many clauses in it which will be of great advantage, and I shall not press my amendment unless the other amendment is carried.

Major ATKINSON.—I am sorry to say I cannot support the amendment: not because I do not think that those clauses ought not to be struck out, but because the end of the session is so close that any attempt to have the matter discussed between the two Houses would result in the Bill being lost; and I is not wish to see other persons served in the same manner in which so many have been.

The House divided on the question, "That the amendments to clause 18 of the Bill and sections 22 and 47 of the schedule be disagreed with."

AYES, 11.

Beetham	Kerr	Smith.
Brown	Menteath	*Tellers.*
Bruce	O'Conor	Grace
Hamlin	Seddon	Hursthouse.

NOES, 34.

Allwright	Lance	Ross
Ballance	Locke	Steward, W. J.
Bryce	Macandrew	Stewart, W D
Buchanan	Moat	Stout
Buckland, W.F.	Montgomery	Thomson, J. W.
Fraser	Moss	Tole
Gore	Newman	Vogel
Grey	Parata	Walker.
Hislop	Peacock	
Hobbs	Pyke	*Tellers.*
Johnston	Richardson, E.	Conolly
Lake	Rolleston	Turnbull.

PAIRS.

For.	*Against.*
Cadman	Mitchelson
Cowan	Mackenzie, M. J. S.
Guinness	Buckland, J. C.
Lance	Barron
Levestam	Fulton
O'Callaghan	Fergus
Pearson.	Wilson.

Majority against, 23.

Amendment negatived, and amendments made by the Legislative Council agreed to.

LIBRARY.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the report of the Library Committee be agreed to;—because if it were not agreed to he did not know what would happen during the recess, as nobody would be in charge. The only objection to the adoption of the report was that no rules had been framed to meet the wish of the House that books should be circulated amongst members during the recess. The Committee had, however, met the House half-way by adopting a resolution that any one applying to the Chairman could have any specified book he wished to see. He was a member of the Library Committee himself, and might say that it was simply impossible for the Committee at present to frame rules for lending books to members outside of Wellington. Such rules would have to be exceedingly stringent, because it might very easily happen that as many as two or three thousand volumes would be away from the library at one time. The best thing, therefore, in his opinion, would be to agree to the report; and next year the House would have time to consider the whole matter. The following was the additional part of the report to which he alluded:—

"That, having considered the reference to them regarding the lending of books to members of the Legislature living at a distance from Wellington during the recess, they find that there are so many difficulties in the way of giving effect to this recommendation that they do not see their way to carry it out at present.

"They consider that, if a particular work is required by a member in any special case, an application to the Chairman may enable such member to procure it, and that the Chairman be authorized to lend books in such cases."

Mr. MACANDREW was sorry that the consideration of the report had been postponed until so many members had left, because it had been very fully discussed, and the House had almost unanimously agreed in favour of books being lent to members during the recess. In the face of that decision the Library Committee had taken up a very peculiar position. They had done nothing whatever to try and meet the wish of the House. He had been in the habit of taking away books for years past, and so had many other honourable members. It was rather hard that they should be pulled up at once in this way by a resolution of the Committee. No harm whatever had resulted, so far as he was aware, from the taking-away of books. To put himself in order he would move, as an amendment, That this House reaffirms its resolution *re* the taking-away of books from the General Assembly library by members of the Legislature during the recess, and remits the report back to the Committee for further consideration; and, also, that it be an instruction to the members of the Committee who represent this branch of the Legislature to insist that, if the library is to be available to members residing at Wellington, it must be equally so to members residing in other parts of the colony. He did not see why this splendid library should be confined to the use of five or six members residing in Wellington during eight or nine months of the year; and, notwithstanding what the Premier had said, he believed the difficulty might easily have been got over. He thought the members of the Committee representing the House had scarcely done their duty in allowing the matter to go by the board by passing such a resolution as that which had been brought up.

Mr. LOCKE must express his agreement with the remarks of the honourable member for Port Chalmers, although he was afraid it was now too late to take any practical action. Most honourable members had not the time during the session to study the books in the library that they would wish to study, and they were debarred from taking them away during the recess. Any one who understood the value of books would take proper care of them, and would return them in the state in which they were taken away.

Mr. MONTGOMERY did not think honourable members realized the difficulties there were in the way of carrying out the recommendation of the House. Only the Committee could look into the difficulties from a practical point of view, and they saw that those difficulties were insurmountable. If every honourable member were allowed to take out five or six or a dozen volumes at a time, there would be many thousands out. That would make it necessary to have very stringent rules, similar to those in force in circulating libraries: books would have to be returned within a certain time, and heavy fines would have to be imposed if they were kept too long; and if the books in charge of any person were injured they would have to be paid for, in which case it would probably be necessary to insist on a deposit before the books were taken out. Then, again, supposing Mr. A. took out three, or four, or five volumes, and kept them for a number of months, Mr. B. might want to see them; and what was he to do? And if Mr. B. got them, Mr. C. might want them; so that there was no knowing where the difficulty would end. In fact, all books of value should be kept in the library, for if they were lent all over the country the result would be that there would be a great deal of trouble and loss, not to say heartburning. One could not have a library like this all over the colony any more than one could a museum. There were certain things which must be in a great centre, and this was one. He therefore hoped that the recommendation of the Library Committee would be agreed to.

Mr. KERR sympathized very much with the honourable member for Port Chalmers, and thought it was a great pity that this splendid library should be stuck up in one place; but he must say that the compromise offered by the Premier was a fair one. It was only scientific books which would be wanted out of the library, and any one could get those by giving proper security. It would be well to adopt the suggestion of the Committee, and then see what could be done next session.

Major ATKINSON must confess that he agreed with the honourable member for Port Chalmers, and disagreed altogether with the honourable member for Akaroa. It was all very well to conjure up bogeys, and so manage that only some few members, residing in Wellington, should have the use of the books. Of course it would be necessary to have proper regulations; but he did not see any difficulty in framing them. He would certainly not rest until the privilege was given to members in all parts of the colony to have the use of the library books. He would suggest that they should express their views to the Recess Committee, and did not know why the House should not instruct them.

Sir R. STOUT said the Committee had met the House half-way by saying that books could be got out.

Major ATKINSON said that was in a special case; and he declined altogether to go to the Committee and beg as a favour that to which he had a perfect right.

Sir R. STOUT asked what books the honourable gentleman would have taken out.

Major ATKINSON.—All but books of reference.

Sir R. STOUT said that class would include books on political economy.

Major ATKINSON replied that that was not the case, for the books of reference were now very few. He did not think that honourable members were so utterly careless as had been represented.

Mr. MONTGOMERY.—They are.

Major ATKINSON said that if that was so it would be better to have no library at all. But he did not believe it, and he thought that regulations might be framed that would have the effect of providing for care being taken of the books. If the library was not intended at all as a lending library, but simply for reference, it was of very little use. During the time when honourable members were in Wellington they were so heavily worked that they could only occasionally look into the books. It seemed to him that this was a sort of "dog in the manger" business. If Wellington were a capital city in the sense that many members spent their time in it there would be some reason in maintaining the present system: but to say that they could not devise rules by which members of the House could enjoy the privileges of the library seemed absurd on the face of it.

Mr. MACANDREW said that he had been getting out books for years, and he had known other honourable members to do the same thing.

Dr. NEWMAN, as one of the Wellington members, said that, while the Wellington members had the advantages of the library, it must be remembered that they had a honorarium of £140, while the others got a honorarium of £210; so that honourable members might spend the extra £70 in buying books. His opinion was that the library should be made as useful as possible, and he believed a set of rules could be prepared with a little forethought under which they might very well send books to honourable members; so that members of the House who lived in other parts of the colony would get some advantage from the library during the recess. He believed that it had been the practice of certain members to take books home with them just as they were going away and keep them during the recess. That, of course, was an abuse of the library. He would undertake to bring before the Library Committee, and to discuss with the Librarian during the recess, the question of preparing a series of rules, to be laid before the Joint Library Committee at the beginning of next session, under which, he thought, the library could be made more useful.

Colonel TRIMBLE said there were two classes of books in the library—general and light literature, which was for the most part used; and standard works—works of reference. He ventured to say that the books wanted as a rule from the library were of the light-literature class, which was now the cheapest literature in the world, because everybody could get the best novels for sixpence a volume, and even as low as a penny. There was no reason why the library should get books of that class; and he would venture to say that if once they began to lend these books they would be returned in a very imperfect state. In his early days he had a fair library of books, and might mention that his losses by lending to private friends were of a very annoying kind; and, if they were going to lend books in an indiscriminate manner to about a hundred and fifty people, in a very short time the best books would be imperfect or disappear altogether. They were going on a false principle with regard to novels. They bought immense numbers of these at a frightful price, the cost of binding alone being a very serious item, and at the end of a couple of years they were worth nothing. He thought they should buy novels of the cheapest possible edition, and part with them at the end of twelve months. As to classical novels such as occasionally appeared when a man like Dickens or Thackeray wrote, these, at the death of the author, should be got in full sets and put into the permanent library.

Mr. BRUCE agreed there had been a great waste of public money in purchasing the large number of books of light literature which were to be found in the library. These books of light literature were to be found throughout the country—there was no reason why members should say they were deprived of them, and as for works of reference, it would be extremely inadvisable that they should leave the building. He was one who would be benefited by such a rule as was suggested being enforced, and he strongly objected to it, and did not think the country would approve of it. He might also point out that if this rule were made members would be subjected to a great deal of pressure from students for books, and the result would be that a large number of books would be lost or injured.

Mr. MENTEATH did not understand the argument of the honourable member for Thorndon at all. If the consideration of the extra honorarium was to be taken into account in connection with this matter, then the Ministers, who received £1,400 a year, ought to contribute something towards the library. He had had the privilege of getting as many books as he wanted out of the library, and he exercised that privilege, but was not sufficiently a "dog in the manger" to say that he thought others should not have the same privilege. In fact, in an illegitimate manner that was done which it was now proposed should be done legitimately. He saw no reason why honourable members residing outside the Wellington District should not have the same privileges as the Wellington members, and for that reason he should vote for the amendment.

Mr. FISHER could not understand what all this fuss was about concerning the borrowing of books. Though he lived in Wellington, during the few years he had been a member of the House he had taken out of the library two books. For his part, he concurred in what Ruskin said about books—that a man should buy and not borrow them. During these days of cheap printing one could buy standard works at ninepence or a shilling each. The reason for sending for a book from a distant part of the

colony, it seemed to him, must be that a person wanted to speak or write on a special subject; and he thought it probable that in most cases long before the book reached its destination the necessity for sending it would have passed away. As to light literature, he did not care a straw whether that was circulated or not, but he thought the reference-books should not be sent out, because it would be difficult to get them back again, and if they were lost it would be a year before some of them could be replaced. Even standard literature was so cheap that it was possible for any man to collect a library of books. He might be pardoned for saying that he kept a small reference-library of his own, and so was not under the necessity of borrowing even from their rich parliamentary library. The cost of keeping a small reference-library was now so little as to render almost any man independent of borrowing from a reference-library at all.

Mr. CONOLLY said that if the amendment of the honourable member for Port Chalmers were carried there would be no Library Committee at all.

Mr. MACANDREW.—No great loss.

Mr. CONOLLY thought that would be extremely undesirable. If this were referred back to the Joint Library Committee there was not the slightest chance of that Committee meeting to reconsider it, as half of the members of the Committee had gone away. It appeared to him that the arrangement which the Committee proposed to make was going quite as far as they should go.

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC WORKS APPROPRIATION BILL.

This Bill was read a first, a second, and a third time.

APPROPRIATION BILL.

This Bill was read a first and a second time.

On the motion, That the Bill be read a third time,

Major ATKINSON said,—Before the Bill is read a third time I propose to address a few remarks to the House. I do not propose to detain the House at any great length, although were I to attempt to catalogue the sins of honourable gentlemen opposite I am afraid we should have to put off the prorogation of Parliament for a day or two. I feel a little sorry that the Treasurer has not made a speech upon the second reading of the Bill in fulfilment of a pledge which he gave to show us that the Premier does not understand the use of the English language, and that whenever he made a speech he made it in such a way as to require the Treasurer to interpret it for him in order that the public generally might understand it. Now, I understand the object the honourable gentleman has undertaken to-day is to interpret the speech of the Premier at Invercargill, and to show us and the country generally,—and, no doubt, the Premier himself,—that we are all wrong in the interpretation we put upon it. I hope, if the honourable gentleman does that, that the Premier will, if I may venture to suggest it, and if he has sufficiently recovered his health, pluck up sufficient spirit in the face of the honourable gentleman just to say that he is quite capable of saying what he means, and that, when he desires to tell the public he does mean limited borrowing and "tapering off," he says so, and does not require the Treasurer to interpret his speeches for him. I do not know whether the honourable gentleman has sufficiently recovered to take that stand, but I do hope, in his own interest, he will see his way to do it on the present occasion. Now, I must just ask you, Sir, to look at the financial management of the Government. We know our prosperity is based to a great extent on sound finance. We know the honourable gentleman is a great financier, and we know he came two short years ago to put us right in these matters. We were then in a terrible muddle, you will recollect, and the honourable gentleman had only been in office a week or two—no, I am wrong, it was only a few days—when he had found out or got upon the trail of such terrible disclosures that he announced in this House that nothing but physical force would remove him from those benches until he had made a full discovery. Well, the House waited, almost breathless, and——

Sir J. VOGEL.—I wish the honourable gentleman would quote me correctly. That is not correct.

Major ATKINSON.—Will the honourable gentleman give me the correct quotation?

Sir J. VOGEL.—Does the honourable gentleman want to know what I said?

Major ATKINSON.—Yes.

Sir J. VOGEL.—In face of the harassing manœuvres which the honourable gentleman was so well able to carry on, I said that the Government were determined they would announce their financial policy before they left these benches.

Major ATKINSON.—Why, they have not announced it yet. They have kept on the benches, it is true; but I venture to think they will have left the benches long before they announce it, because they do not understand it themselves, as I am going to show. The honourable gentleman's memory is very good, and so is mine; but I venture to say that, notwithstanding the corrections of the honourable gentleman, he has only given us part of what he said he would give. He told us he was going to give us a financial policy. And a wonderful policy it was, as I mean to show. He went on further to say that until he got to the bottom of the finances of the colony—and he has not got to the bottom of them yet—nothing but personal force should take him away from those benches.

Sir J. VOGEL.—That is a misstatement. I said I wanted to look into the honourable gentleman's transactions.

Major ATKINSON.—Well, the honourable gentleman has had time to look into my transactions, and if I had committed any crime he would have found me out before now. But the honourable gentleman having failed to make

any of those discoveries, I now come to what he promised to do for us; because, after all, that is the most important. I venture to say that the honourable gentleman was quite unable to make any of the exposures which he talked of making, and I believe that when it comes to be his time to leave the Government benches he will not be able to show so clean a sheet as the late Government were able to show. I fear that will be the case, because we have already had scandals of a rather serious nature; and I venture to think that before the honourable gentleman is finally got rid of we shall have proved against him matters which certainly would not compare with any of the actions on the part of the late Government. Then, what was the honourable gentleman going to do? He told us, "Under a reinstated finance and diminished expenditure the country will, we are convinced, rouse itself from apathy and spring forward in leaps and bounds of progress." That was the very hopeful spirit in which he spoke. The honourable gentleman may laugh, but I have no doubt it is so long ago that the honourable gentleman had forgotten all about saying this. He is, perhaps, astonished that we could think of turning back to two years ago and what he then promised; but, still, I am going to do it. Then he goes on to say, "With common prudence we need have no more financial embarrassment or vexatious taxation"—I am not quoting continuously, but I am quoting the honourable gentleman fairly—and he adds that the finances "are suffering only from mismanagement; that they are elastic and buoyant enough to satisfy the most exacting financier; that oppressive taxation is not required; and that under good government we may safely rely on a progressive improvement in our resources." Now what is the position? I am going to trouble the House with very few figures, but I must just put a few before honourable members. But first I must call attention to the speech made by the Premier at Dunedin. In that speech the Premier told us that he was not fit for his place unless he could reduce the expenditure by from £80,000 to £100,000.

Sir R. STOUT.—And, but for Defence, we should have done it. I spoke in 1884, when we had no knowledge of the war-scare that was to come.

Major ATKINSON.—That is an excuse that will not answer. The honourable gentleman said he would do it; and as a prudent man he ought to have been prepared for what was coming. We had already taken steps to establish a land force in the colony. My honourable friend the member for Waitotara and I always intended to establish that land force, and my honourable friend actually had the Constabulary in training for using the big guns at the time we left office; and we had prepared a scheme of defence, and were about to ask the House to adopt it. We had not entered into it very fully, but were about to do so when we were turned out of office. Well, the Premier undertook to save expenditure by from £80,000 to £100,000 a year, and said that if he did not do so he was not fit for his place; but has he done it? The expenditure in consequence of the war-scare will not help the honourable gentleman at all, because the amount in the estimates at present for defence is not so much as it was in 1883–84. The honourable gentleman told us that he was going to abolish the Armed Constabulary. Now, the Armed Constabulary at that time cost £70,000 a year—it may be that it cost £80,000 a year.

Sir R. STOUT. — That is not all I am going to reduce.

Major ATKINSON.—That helps me. Now, I want to know where is the rest. I was going to point out that his promised reduction could not have depended on that item alone, because the cost of the Armed Constabulary was less than the total amount by which the honourable gentleman said he would reduce the expenditure. Now, I have just taken out these figures. If honourable gentlemen will turn to the expenditure for the year 1883–84—that is, the last complete year we were in office—they will see that the total of the expenditure on the twelve classes of the estimates, excluding permanent appropriations, because it is not fair to include them in my argument just now, amounted to £2,009,344. Now, the total last year, when the honourable gentleman must have had full time to make any reductions that he thought to be necessary, was £2,108,404.

Sir R. STOUT. — Does that include subsidies?

Major ATKINSON. — No. That simply includes the twelve classes of the ordinary estimates; and, as "expenses of members" was provided for under Act in both years, that does not require consideration. You will see at once that the expenditure was considerably larger during last year than it was during the last year when we were in office. But the honourable gentleman may fairly say that our railways made a great difference—and it is quite true; and therefore from both years I subtract the railway vote, thus making the comparison quite fair so far as that is concerned. Then we get a total expenditure of £1,381,828, as against a total expenditure for 1883–84 of £1,334,471. There is a difference of £47,000. But it requires still further correction in order to give the honourable gentleman every possible chance of saying that he has fulfilled his obligations. You will find that there is £25,000 for defences put upon loan that year, which must be added to the amount I have already stated. On the other hand he may say that the education vote has increased by natural growth, and that it is hardly fair to charge that upon the honourable gentleman as an increase in the public expenditure. Therefore I deduct £44,836, the additional amount of the education vote. But yet, in spite of every favourable circumstance, the comparison still comes to this: that the expenditure last year was £27,531 more than in the year 1883–84. That is after making every allowance for railways and for education; though I had no right to make any allowance for the education vote, because the honourable gentle-

man had undertaken to give us a better system of education at a cheaper rate—not the Premier, but the Colonial Treasurer. And the Government did come down and propose to take 5s. off the capitation allowance; but the House insisted on its being put back. Well, that is the result of two years of office, although the honourable gentleman pledged himself to reduce the expenditure by from £80,000 to £100,000: that the expenditure has been increased on the twelve departments of Government by £27,000. I hope the Premier will answer that. I hope he will tell us how it is that he could not get his way. It is quite useless for him to tell us about the Russian-war scare, because that is no answer at all. We pointed out, when the honourable gentleman proposed to reduce the Constabulary vote to the very low amount that he fixed on, that it was not sufficient for the requirements of the country; and the honourable gentleman soon found that out. They have professed to make a reduction in the Constabulary vote; but it is a reduction merely in name, because they have simply transferred the men to the Permanent Force, and the Volunteer expenditure has been increased. I have said nothing about the permanent charges, but the honourable gentleman told us that, by the aid of the Act which he passed to seize the sinking fund, or, rather, to make provision for the sinking fund out of loan if we would agree to do that, he could effect an immense relief. Here is what he said: "It means this: that, without adding further to the annual charges than at present, you may borrow seven and a half millions additional." But what are the facts? The permanent charges last year were £123,000 more than they were in 1883–84. So that we find that, notwithstanding that the honourable gentleman got his Act, notwithstanding that he effected the inscription, the charges are being increased very largely, and that there is no probability, according to the plan that the inscription is now going on, of those charges being reduced, but that they must go on largely increasing. The Premier, at Invercargill, very properly told the people, although the Treasurer denies it, that every additional million borrowed means an additional charge of £40,000 a year.

Sir R. STOUT.—That was in Dunedin.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes, that was in Dunedin. I am glad the Premier admits it. The Premier will have to look out very sharp this afternoon whilst the Treasurer is doing his interpretation for him, or he will find himself in still greater difficulties than he is in now. We find an utter failure so far as economy goes, and no statement as to the defence-scare will help the honourable gentleman at all. It may help him to a small amount; but the very utmost he could have reduced the Constabulary vote would have been £30,000 or £40,000. Well, we had the Colonial Treasurer making that statement, and we find that he has not carried out his words. We find that the honourable gentleman has really added to our burdens something like £123,000. That amount may require a little alteration with regard to the interest being carried over. Honourable members know that on operations taking place at particular times of the year sometimes there is as much as £40,000 or £50,000 thrown over from one year to the other. It is very clear that £100,000 more is being paid this year, though the honourable gentleman told us that we should not require any further charge on the public revenues until we had borrowed an additional seven and a half millions; and, of course, we have not borrowed anything like half that sum up to the present time. Then, I suppose that is the effect of the "reinstated finance"—which was in such a state when the honourable gentleman took office that it only required proper management. It was elastic and buoyant enough to satisfy the most exacting financier. And these are the results we have come to: increased expenditure and increased taxation. The honourable gentleman told us he was going to abolish the property-tax, "with its crushing effects upon the progress of the colony"—I am quoting from an official document. Did the honourable gentleman believe that, when he made that statement? and, if he did, does he believe it now? The honourable gentleman is on the horns of a dilemma. He has utterly failed, with all his resources, to provide a sufficient substitute for this tax; or he has come to the belief that this tax is a right tax and does not crush the industries of the colony. I want the honourable gentleman to tell us which it is. I thought that he had come to believe that the tax was a reasonable and right one, and I was rather pleased that he should have arrived at that conclusion, and I should have believed it if it had not been for some remarks which I heard recently. The honourable gentleman has a right to tell the country how it is, if he believes the tax to be crushing the industries of the colony, he continues it. It is not even at the amount it was then. The honourable gentleman has actually increased it since he has taken office—increased this tax which was having a terrible effect on the colony. The honourable gentleman told us at that time that he saw his way to repeal it, and that, if it had not been for some pledge that no local rates should be put on that year, he would have repealed it then. But now that the honourable gentleman has come to know a little of the affairs of the colony, he knows that the thing was impossible; and that tax has practically been the sheet-anchor of the honourable gentleman. Now, the honourable gentleman complains that there is not sufficient elasticity in the Customs; but the honourable gentleman is actually getting more out of the Customs than we got in 1883 and 1884. Although the honourable gentleman undertook to relieve us of taxation, he has asked us more than once to increase the Customs duties. I want to know how the honourable gentleman is going to reconcile those two things. One more reference to this Statement. The honourable gentleman goes on to say, "With common prudence we need have no more financial

embarrassment or vexatious taxation. We may banish from our minds the philanthropic notion of insurance against pauperism, which might more correctly be termed 'insurance of pauperism.'" And, Sir, the honourable gentleman has banished it by bringing into force the first poor-law that was ever known in this colony. That is the way the honourable gentleman has disposed of the question of pauperism. I venture to say that no Finance Minister New Zealand has ever had has made, one after the other, such a complete series of blunders from beginning to end. Not a single one of the honourable gentleman's predictions has been fulfilled, and position after position which the honourable gentleman took up he has had to abandon, and abandon completely. Then, I would ask, can we have confidence in him in this matter in the future? Now let us look at this local government matter. Here great reforms were to be made—in fact, we were to have a complete system of local government. According to the honourable gentleman, previous Governments knew nothing about their business in this matter, any more than they did about finance; and the honourable gentleman had been very few months in office when he and the Premier together invented that wonderful Bill that was introduced last session. I think the Treasurer did the financial part and the Premier did the machinery part. The honourable gentleman told us what was going to happen in this way. Some of us ventured to predict what a very pretty Bill it would be when it came out, manufactured by these two honourable gentlemen. The Premier and the Treasurer knew really nothing about the local bodies or local government. That seems a bold thing to say; but it is borne out by the action of the honourable gentlemen themselves. They brought down that wonderful Bill, which was to give the local bodies £320,000 a year for twenty-five years. We were to find securities to enable the local bodies to borrow from five to seven millions, to spend it as fast as they could, and come to this House and ask for payment. That Bill was laughed out of the House, and the intended making provision for twenty-five years ended in making provision for subsidies for six months,—and even then the honourable gentleman did not fulfil his promise, for he never paid the six months' subsidy. By a return laid on the table of this House it appears that there is still some £40,000 or £50,000 owing on the first six months' subsidy. The return shows that only £85,000 was paid to the local bodies up to the 30th June. The money may have been paid since the 30th June—I am speaking now of the date of the return. No doubt the honourable gentleman has been rather hard pressed in the Treasury—I can quite understand that; and we see that by the fact that he has now had to ask us for some £200,000 more deficiency bills in order to carry on until the consolidated revenue is replenished. But it does not end here. You might have thought the honourable gentleman would have looked a year ahead, if not twenty-five years. The honourable gentleman has come down this year and amended that unfortunate Act which gave subsidies for six months, and amended it so that we are only to have half the rates for the future. I ask, is there any grasp of this subject of local finance? Does the honourable gentleman show it? The honourable gentleman was very anxious to repeal the Roads and Bridges Construction Act, and repeal it he did, and a great triumph he thought he had got. And, no doubt, in repealing it he had to look at it a little bit; because very few honourable members who opposed the Bill knew much about it. Why, only the other day two honourable gentlemen who made most slashing speeches against the Bill frankly admitted to me that they had never read the Bill at all. I think that must have been the state the Treasurer was in when he repealed the Act; but, having repealed the Bill, I think he must have come to the conclusion that the measure must be given effect to in spirit, at any rate, and hence the honourable gentleman has grown wise in this direction and has brought down these local-government Bills, and, as I think, very satisfactory Bills, and they are clearly on the lines, in all important points, of the Roads and Bridges Construction Act, which he condemned in such unmeasured terms. The Treasurer has at last come round to reasonable views. And the Premier, what did he do? He was going to make large districts—he was going to revolutionize the colony. Some of us ventured to laugh at the idea. What was the result? The honourable gentleman very properly took considerable pains during the recess to go about the colony and make himself acquainted with the local bodies, their doings, requirements, and feelings. Then he made that speech, in which he told us that he too was converted to our principles in this matter. He says, "We must have no revolutionizing, we must gradually grow. I must take the institutions as they are. I do not see my way to enlarging them, but I will render their work more efficient." The honourable gentleman set to work, and we have got the Counties Act and the Municipal Corporations Act as the result. We find that the country is going on exactly the same lines that it was in 1883, but the machinery is being improved by past experience. I am very glad indeed that the honourable gentleman has come round to a right and reasonable way of thinking; but I would point out that it was on entirely distinct grounds from those on which the honourable gentlemen took office and pledged themselves to act. I do not object to the honourable gentlemen coming to a reasonable mind; only I do object to them appearing to close their eyes to the facts. I want them to acknowledge their error. At any rate, I want the country to see that the honourable gentlemen have not, in any one respect, so far as I can see, carried out the promises which they pledged themselves to when they took office in this House. Then, as regards the future, what hope have we in regard to the finances of the colony? Look at these estimates we have been passing—these Bills that we have now under consideration.

Major Atkinson

Do they fulfil the pledge of the Premier that we were to gradually taper off? Where is the tapering-off? The honourable gentleman is proposing to spend more this year than we spent last year, and more than was spent the year before. How does the honourable gentleman reconcile that with his pledge that he would gradually taper off borrowing? Let us look at the public works and see; and look at the appropriation for public works. There is nearly as much appropriated this year for roads and outside-works as for railways. It is quite true that greater liabilities are taken; but, if you take the £200,000 which is to be given to the local bodies, then there is more for roads than there is for railways. Yet the honourable gentlemen told us that the railways were what they had been famed for. I am glad to see that they are gradually attaining to more corrrect views on the relative importance of roads and railways; but I do not want them to go round the country, as they have been doing, and say one thing while they are doing another. Now let me say a word or two about the £800,000, which the Treasurer entirely forgot had any liabilities against it when he made his Financial Statement. What do we now find? Honourable members will recollect how the £800,000 was increased to £1,119,000. By selling the rolling-stock, rails, and sleepers which the honourable gentleman had in hand, and which were a fair charge against the late loan, to the new loan, the honourable gentleman was able to make up that £800,000 to £1,119,000. I pointed out at the time that the honourable gentleman would have been wise to have sold the earthwork as well, and so have got a reasonable amount. But now he is in great difficulties. He knows it quite well now. He knows quite well that by the estimates we have passed he has entered into engagements for more money than he has, even after having sold those rails and rolling-stock. The estimates we have voted represent £1,041,000, as against the £1,119,000; so that we are in this position: that we have barely enough money for next year out of the balance of that sum to pay the subsidies. We have no money at all for the defence, which is charged against this loan. There is £40,000, according to the Public Works Statement, still to be charged. Where is that to come from? There is no provision made whatever. Where are the public buildings, school-buildings, telegraphs, and lighthouses to come from? And yet it is pretended to make provision for two years. Sir, there is no attempt to make provision for two years so far as the ways and means are concerned. I hope the honourable gentleman will not slur over this matter, but that he will tell the House candidly how he proposes to provide ways and means next year to carry out these pledges. It is quite clear that he will have to borrow, or work in the colony in this direction will have to be stopped. Then, Sir, I want to say, with regard to this question of public works, a few words in reference to the various schemes that the honourable gentleman has had. There was the celebrated Meiggs scheme, which fortunately fell through. The honourable gentleman may laugh, but he is not out of the wood yet, I can assure him. We saved him from Meiggs; but he is in another trap now, I am afraid. I am very glad indeed to see that the contract has been taken up. I only hope that the company is able and willing to give effect to it; but I confess I have grave doubts about it. I have grave doubts whether that company is strong enough to carry on its work, and I fear, if it is strong enough to carry on its work, the contract is such that it will land us in interminable difficulties. And I venture to think that the honourable gentlemen who have been supporting the Treasurer for this object alone—who obtained this railway whether the colony could afford it or not—will find out that they have sold their birthright for a mess of pottage. They will find to their cost that they are very much worse off by following the Treasurer for this phantom of a railway than if they had remained in their natural parties, and been content to take that work on gradually, as the late Government were doing it. The late Government spent more money in that direction than the honourable gentlemen have spent by hundreds of thousands. What are they doing for Canterbury? The celebrated gentleman who says they must have the railway or burst—he is pulling the Canterbury strings. The Treasurer is simply keeping them all in tow as a means of support, for it is only that that keeps him on those benches. He is dangling this railway before them, and they are following, like silly birds, to their destruction. I venture to think that when they wake up they will find that they have bartered the substance for the shadow of public works. What is the honourable gentleman doing or what has he done for Canterbury? He has persuaded them into this contract, and I only hope that the people will be satisfied with the contract as soon as they see it begin to work; but I venture to tell him and I venture to tell them now that they would have been infinitely better off, and the country would have been infinitely better off, if they had not become the prey of these designing men, and had not insisted on the work being commenced at once and pushed on outside the means of the colony. And I fear, although I deeply regret it, that the Province of Canterbury and the Provinces of Nelson and Westland will reap their reward by having to wait many years to get what they would have got in a reasonable time if they had only been content to follow on. What has been the effect of this? It has been to maintain a Government in power in which neither the country nor this House has confidence. Nothing but that railway has kept those honourable gentlemen in office. There is no doubt about it at all. They know it, and very skilfully the Treasurer has handled it. But it is gradually slipping from his grasp; and when we see this company coming out and beginning its labours—if it ever does—and I sincerely hope it may—I venture to think that a very few months afterwards there will be no more

unpopular man in Canterbury than the honourable gentleman—the Colonial Treasurer. Look at the conduct of the Government in regard to legislation. Have we ever seen anything like it? And it is curious to observe the differences in their proceedings during the two sessions. Look at the last session. Then we had them proceeding by editions of Bills. It is said—and I am beginning to think that it is true—that the Premier prides himself on being able before breakfast either to write a magazine article or draw up an Act of Parliament.

Sir R. STOUT.—You said that last session.

Major ATKINSON.—It is too good not to repeat it. I was then groping in the dark, and I did not exactly believe it; but now I have come to believe it. And that must really account for some of the Bills that we get in this House. I suppose it is done in this way: The Colonial Treasurer or one of his colleagues says, "Can't you draw up an Act on Native lands? That is a simple subject." The honourable gentleman says, "Oh, yes. I will do it tomorrow morning." And so he draws an Act, and the Native Minister, on its being submitted to him, says, "Yes; very good;" and the Bill is printed at once. They are so busy that they cannot consider the matter in Cabinet, and they send the Bill down to the House, and when it gets there it is found there is a mistake in it, and they have to print another edition when the Premier has half an hour to spare.

Sir R. STOUT.—What Bill are you referring to?

Major ATKINSON.—I was speaking generally; but I may refer particularly to a very important Bill called the Mortgage Debentures Bill, of which we had three editions.

Sir R. STOUT.—This year?

Major ATKINSON.—No; last year. I am coming to this year. There were three editions of that Bill. And that sort of thing was the usual course of business. They never had a Bill so thoroughly considered that it could be properly dealt with by the House at once without some alteration being required. The Bill I refer to was changed entirely. I do not know who drew it; but everything, including the title, was changed before it went out of the House. That was the style of legislation we used to have. This, bear in mind, was not from inexperienced men, nor from men who did not know their business, but from men who were in such a discord with themselves, and in such a hurry, that they could not give a reasonable amount of time to properly prepare the measures for Parliament. Then, when we come down to this session, what do we find? We find a new order of things altogether. It seems they were quite ashamed of their three editions of Bills.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Four editions one went through.

Major ATKINSON.—An honourable member reminds me that there was one Bill which went through four editions; and I remember that was a Bill upon which the honourable gentleman claimed that great care and attention had been bestowed. To my mind it showed carelessness and a want of proper attention. Well, I say, when we come down to this session the honourable gentlemen get ashamed of three or four editions of Bills, and they take to issuing Supplementary Order Papers. This year we have had Supplementary Order Papers principally filled with amendments relating to Government Bills. I would ask you, Sir, to think, and see whether you can call to mind a single Bill that has been brought down by the Government and that has not been materially altered before it has gone through the House—Bills of a most important nature, which the House should not properly touch at all excepting to decide upon the principle. All these have been dealt with in this way. Then we have another peculiarity. The honourable gentlemen do not seem to be able to introduce Bills into the House in the ordinary way without making a mistake. We had the finance Bills sent down with all due solemnity by message from the Governor, and yet the honourable gentleman had to withdraw them, and have them sent down by another message from His Excellency. Surely those were matters of sufficient importance to have been carefully considered before they were sent to this House. Then, again, we had the public works estimates sent down by message, and we had not got them long in our possession before down came another message, saying that they were to be withdrawn and others substituted. I want to call attention to the fact that this did not arise from any action on the part of this House, but entirely through the action of the Government themselves, and apparently through their not having considered their estimates before they were sent to us. I want to know why, if such important alterations were to be made in the mode of producing this Appropriation Bill—if the whole proceedings of the department were to be altered, and the proceedings of this House also, so that, instead of having merely one appropriation column, we were to have two extra ones, for liabilities and total authorization—that was not considered during the recess, and not after the estimates were laid before the House, and after they had been sent down in so formal a document as a Governor's message. All these little things show how careless the Government have been in deciding what they were going to submit to the House. We have had not only one instance, but a large number of this sort of thing. Apparently to those honourable gentlemen it is a mere trifle to go over to His Excellency and say, "Will you be good enough to sign this, Sir?" I knew a day when a Governor used to ask if it was right that he should sign documents laid before him, and I should have been very sorry to have taken on myself to recommend the representative of the Crown to sign any document except after due consideration; but apparently such things do not trouble those honourable gentlemen in the least. It does not matter to them to what inconvenience His Excellency or this House is put. Everything had to be done in a hurry,

and carelessly, and then had to be done over again; and we are to be satisfied with that mode of proceeding. I am not going to allude to the wonderful exhibitions which those honourable gentlemen have displayed, for time will not admit—how they do not agree with one another; how all their Cabinet work appears to be done in this House. I will not trouble the House, for I think I have already shown enough to upset any Government of the good old days. I venture to say that no Government ten years ago would have dared to commit the indiscretions—to use the mildest term—which those honourable gentlemen have been guilty of. It only illustrates the truth of the old saying, that "one man may steal a horse when another man dare not look over the fence;" and, indeed, they have stolen many horses. And then all one hears round one in the House is, "What can you expect?" No one wonders at it. Every one takes it as a matter of course. That is the cause of the extraordinary state into which the House and the country have got. There is no doubt that the key to all this is the East and West Coast Railway. If it were not for that, those honourable gentlemen could not hold their seats for a day. Not for a single day could those honourable gentlemen keep on those benches were it not for the determination of the people of certain districts to have a railway made with what they think will be expedition. I only hope they will get their railway; but I very much fear they will not. Then, think of the harm which those honourable gentlemen have done to the country — to the industries of the country, to the life of the country — through their mode of procedure during last recess. I only hope they are not going to repeat the same sort of thing this year. Some time before the House met we were told that nothing could save the country but large loans, and a scheme of finance was to be embodied for years beforehand. Nothing else would save us. And so certain were the Government of the acceptance by the people of this policy that they were prepared to go to the country on it. "We mean to go to the country," says the honourable gentleman. Why did they not go? They never put it to the House. They knew their seats were too uncertain, and they knew that if the Midland Railway fell through they would disappear like smoke. That was the real key to the position. They were not quite sure about that, and so a dissolution was to be got. But why did they not tell us that? They think this is so good a Parliament that it is to last not only this session, but next session; and, in point of fact, we shall find that next year they will come down with a short Bill to extend the duration of so excellent a Parliament. That would be a fitting climax to the position of those honourable gentlemen. But I say those honourable gentlemen contributed to paralyse the industries of the country last year, and in this way: The Treasurer was bent upon borrowing. He tells us it is a great mistake to stop. He wanted large borrowing. Of course if he tells us that it is not so we shall believe him; but, at any rate, whether it is or not, the impression was created in the country that he was an advocate for large borrowing.

Mr. FISHER.—He said so this year in the House.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes, he said so; but he also said that he was not.

Mr. FISHER.—He said both.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; that is so. Then comes the Premier, who said, "We will not have borrowing, except to a moderate extent." And so the country was in this state: that there were the gentlemen who demanded what is called a "boom." "Let us have a large amount of money to spend quickly; let us make our profits and then clear out, and no matter what happens to New Zealand." There was that class of persons egging on the Treasurer to borrow largely; and then there was the prudent class, who looked on with fear and trembling, and who yet had some hopes in the Premier that he would save them. So he went down to Invercargill, and there, taking up the policy of the Opposition—which was very creditable in him indeed——

Sir R. STOUT.—I said the same thing in my speech at Dunedin.

Major ATKINSON.—Oh, no! it was not the same thing. The Premier will have in future to interpret what he has said, as the Treasurer has now to do. Although those speeches were similar in some respects, they were very different in others. They differed in this respect: that from his speech at Invercargill we could gather that he was not going to be led into any large borrowing, but that he was going to put his foot down firmly against it; that he was not an advocate for borrowing, but that he intended to gradually "taper off." I do not think his speech at Dunedin was as clear on that point as the speech at Invercargill. The effect on the country of these two speeches was that those who wanted a "boom" were afraid to act because they did not know whether the policy of the Treasurer or that of the Premier would carry the day, and neither did the prudent men know which would win, so that the consequence was that neither the speculative men nor the prudent would go in for anything more than was absolutely necessary. That, to my mind, has had a material effect on the depression which has existed during the recess, and has, I believe, worked far more injuriously than outside causes would have done if the honourable gentleman had only taken a decided course at first, either in one way or the other. In that case things would have been much more prosperous. In the case of the Treasurer's policy of enormous borrowing being carried out, there would have been a fictitious and ruinous prosperity; whereas, if the policy of the Premier —that is, the policy of the Opposition—had been given effect to, we should now be gradually drawing ahead at a much greater rate than we are at present. I have got some more notes made, but I will not trouble the House at greater length, for practically I think I have said all that is necessary. I seriously ask the Government and the House to consider the

position of the colony; and I tell the Premier distinctly that the policy we have entered upon by the votes of this session under the guidance of the honourable gentleman and his colleagues is a policy of gradual expansion of borrowing, and not of tapering off. I tell him that in all seriousness; and I yet hope that he will look into these matters, and he will see that it is as I say: I hope that he will take the stand the country demands of him; that he will put his foot down and carry out the pledges he has given to the country that our borrowing shall be so far reduced that the charges will come within the reasonable limits of our ordinary revenue.

Sir R. STOUT.—I must say the speech delivered by the honourable gentleman is peculiar from various points of view. It is not so much a review of the work done this session as of the work done last session; and so it seems to me that the honourable gentleman requires twelve months to prepare a speech before he can deliver it to this House. I cannot understand why all these references should be made to last session; for that has been the case in all that I have heard. In fact, I might look into *Hansard* of last session, and take out the speech of the honourable gentleman delivered last year on the third reading of the Appropriation Bill, and I should find this speech a rehash of last year's effort. It is said that history repeats itself; and certainly the honourable gentleman repeats himself, for many of the remarks he made last year he has repeated this.

Major ATKINSON.—Then I did not require to make the speech again?

Sir R. STOUT.—Oh, yes! the remarks of last year were so inconclusive and out of joint that they required to be refurbished up. Now, let us look into this matter. But before I refer to the speech of the honourable gentleman, as it is usual in reviewing the session to say something as to the conduct of the business of the House, I have to say with regard to the Opposition this session that I have always found it very fair, and not at all obstructive to the Government. Of course we have differed on many points, but I have nothing to complain of in the fair criticism which the honourable gentleman has given to our measures. There has, however, been a practice this session, as there was last, and which has been growing up, that instead of leaders of the Opposition taking up a discussion of large Government measure it has been left to the lesser lights, as they may be termed. That is an unfortunate practice, and I hope it will be changed in the future. I now wish to deal with this session. I have first to say that some of the remarks of the honourable gentleman, especially at the opening of his speech, were mere reiterations of his last year's speech. He also, in the style of last year, which I will not further refer to, talked about the scandals of a serious nature which were floating about. I should like him to name them. I do not know what he refers to. If there are any scandals in relation to the administration of the Government, they ought to be mentioned and discussed in the House.

Major ATKINSON.—As the honourable member wishes it, I will mention them. There is the Stark's property purchase, the disused railways commission business, and the purchase of the Government Insurance sites—particularly the first one—for which the Government are responsible. These are what I call scandals.

Sir R. STOUT.—Very well. Then I will take these so-called scandals one by one, and will deal with them. As to the purchase of Stark's property, we have the evidence of Mr. Mitchelson, who is looked upon as one of the leading members of the Opposition. And did not the honourable member for Egmont himself say—with other members—the other night, as to the Stark matter, that the Government, as a Government, were not to blame, that there was no charge against them, and that if there was a charge against any one it was not against the Government, but against its officers?

Major ATKINSON.—I never said so—indeed, I think the Government are clearly to blame—but I said that I did not hold that there was the least suspicion that anything like corruption could be alleged against the Government in the matter; but I hold the Government responsible for every scandal, as I call it, that occurs in the department, and that until the Government have found out the guilty parties and punished them they are responsible in the matter.

Sir R. STOUT.—I am very glad the honourable gentleman states that; but he forgets that the guilty parties are not said to be Government officers, but the guilty party was altogether outside the Government departments. Mr. Mitchelson says in his evidence,—

"As far as I am able to judge, the whole thing has been a cleverly-contrived conspiracy to defraud the Government. That is the generally-received opinion in the Auckland District. Unfortunately the Government officials aided as conspirators to some extent, through having allowed themselves to be let into the trap—I mean the property-tax valuer and Land Purchase Commissioner, Mr. Brewer."

And we have had member after member of the Committee saying that so far as Mr. Seaman, the property-tax valuer, was concerned, he had acted honestly and straightforwardly in everything he had done. We had the honourable member for Egmont himself admitting that, so far as Mr. Brewer was concerned, he thought there was no blame to be laid on him, and that he had given his evidence in a straightforward, manly way. These are the Government officers concerned; and here we have Mr. Mitchelson—whom I look upon more as a prosecutor in the matter, and not as a Judge at all—saying in his evidence that it was parties outside the Government who made the conspiracy, and that the Government officers were not to blame. Where, then, is the scandal? I hope this is the last we shall hear of that. The next thing is this question of commission. What had the Government to do with it?

Nothing at all. Are we responsible for the members of the House?

Major ATKINSON.—Yes.

Sir R. STOUT.—We are responsible for the members of the House? I am surprised to hear the honourable gentleman say that. I think no Government could ever hold itself responsible for the members of the House. If we are responsible for one side we must be responsible for the other side, and we shall have to be held responsible for the honourable gentleman himself. I certainly think that charge fails. Then there is the insurance buildings. Where was the scandal in the purchase of the insurance buildings? Two buildings were bought by the Government—one in Wellington and one in Dunedin; and it was proved conclusively before the Committee that the price paid for the buildings was not excessive. That was proved, and the Committee did not report to the contrary; and surely we are to be bound by the report of a Committee of the House. We did what was unusual in connection with Committees of this House—there was no Government member on that Committee. I undertake to say that if the honourable gentleman had been Premier he would have been himself on the Committee, or one of his colleagues would. When did he ever leave a Committee like that with no Government member on it? Even when the Committee was to consider the disqualification of one of the members of his own Government, I remember, in Sir Frederick Whitaker's time, that gentleman was on the Committee himself, though it was his own disqualification that was being considered. Where, then, is the scandal in the present case? I think that, too, can be left over. Now we come next to this comparison of expenditure—the expenditure of 1883-84 and the expenditure of 1885-86. I shall show what the honourable gentleman can do in figures. Figures are easily tested. Honourable members have nothing to do but to take up the public accounts for the two years, and to look at them and compare them, and they will see whether our Government has not been more economical than the Government of 1883-84. And not only so, but this matter has been entirely overlooked: that in one sense we have reduced taxation to the people using the railways by at least £75,000 or £80,000 by a reduction of fares and freights. Is not that clearly a saving—an enormous saving—to the colony? And how have we done it? Why, by not increasing the expenditure upon the lines. Let me compare the figures where the honourable gentleman leaves off, and let us see how this matter stands. Let us take the railways alone, to begin with. Let us take the difference in the railway revenue. And I would again impress upon the House that we so reduced the rates of freights that there was a loss of revenue to the colony, I believe, of £75,000 a year. The revenue increased £81,186. And what is the expenditure? The expenditure only increased £51,702; so that that increase of expenditure has to be considered when you compare the estimates; and the honourable member entirely omitted that. He did not allow for it at all. Now we will take education. The honourable member says he allowed for education. What was the difference in the education vote? The difference in the education vote, it will be seen, was £44,000.

Major ATKINSON.—Is the honourable gentleman speaking of votes or expenditure?

Sir R. STOUT.—I am taking the public accounts expenditure—not votes—the honourable member's own Financial Statement of 1884, and the public accounts certified by the Auditor-General this year: so that I am not dealing at all with the votes. The difference in the education expenditure is nearly £45,000—£44,854 4s. 6d. Then, there was the difference in the increased railway expenditure, £51,702 11s. 1d.

Major ATKINSON.—I took the whole vote out on each occasion.

Sir R. STOUT.—I am not doing that, because it is unfair.

Major ATKINSON.—It is the same.

Sir R. STOUT.—It is not the same, because the revenue differs. I may explain why: Because if we have an additional line of railway and additional traffic we are entitled to a credit for extra expenditure on the increased mileage of the railway. The honourable member does not allow us for that. If he intended to take it out he should have taken it out in the first instance, and not given the whole amount at first—£2,108,404 in the twelve classes. What is the difference? The difference in the education increase and the public works increase combined is £96,528 15s. 1d.; whilst the total increase for the twelve classes taken altogether is only £80,550. Then, in addition to that there was the defence expenditure. Was the honourable member fair in dealing with that? The honourable member was not fair in dealing with the defence. The expenditure by the Defence Minister in 1883-84 was £199,349 13s. 9d., while the expenditure by us in the appropriation account in a war scare was only £161,106 19s. 1d.; ours showing a saving of £38,242 14s. 8d. Well, if you deduct from that saving the £25,000 loan you still have left no less a sum than £13,242 saved on defence by the Defence Minister during the war scare. Now let us look as to the other matters. The honourable member has entirely overlooked the question of postal increase. With a postal revenue increased, the postal expenditure must necessarily increase. Did the honourable gentleman give credit to the Government for the increased postal revenue? The postal and stamps are not separated in this account, and therefore we cannot give them exactly, but the total increase is £135,150 between the two years, while the expenditure, which the honourable member, of course, will see had to be increased along with that—the expenditure was £287,000 in one year and £246,000 in the other—a difference of something like £42,000 on the expenditure, while there was an increased revenue of about £135,000. The honourable member never alluded to that. I ask, is that a fair criticism of finance'

Major ATKINSON.—Yes.

Sir R. STOUT. — If the honourable member calls that a fair criticism of finance I can quite understand how he has been able, in the past, to make the House believe that two and two make five.

Major ATKINSON. — Will the honourable member look at the Colonial Secretary's Department?

Sir R. STOUT.—I am coming to that. That is increased from £230,210 to £237,300. But there were other things cast into the Colonial Secretary's Department which the honourable member has not referred to, and which in fairness he should have referred to. There was the census, which was an additional increase. The Colonial Secretary gets no credit for that addition, which was something like £6,000 or £7,000, which would make all the difference. Now, I ask this House if I have not shown that the honourable member's figures as to economy and retrenchment are not reliable. I think I have conclusively shown that all this criticism, made with a view of showing that there has been no saving, on the contrary shows that we have made a saving in the expenditure, even though we had increased supplies asked for for an increased population. Let me take the department of the Minister of Justice. That shows a saving of about £3,000; and yet as population increased there must have been increased requirements on the part of the population upon the department of the Minister of Justice. Then, if the honourable member compares the Colonial Treasurer's and Commissioner of Stamps' Departments in his Government and in our Government, he will again see a large decrease in the expenditure in our favour. I ask the honourable member, does he think the House does not know sufficient to take, for instance, the Stamps and the Colonial Treasurer's Department together? If we take these together, they were one year £87,947, while the next year they were £78,560; so that, if we take the Justice Department saving of about £3,000, the saving in the Stamps and Colonial Treasurer's Departments of £4,000, and if we take the increased mileage of the railways, and the increase of passengers and freight carried, and see how we have dealt with the increased expenditure, and looking also at the defence expenditure, I say we have done more than fulfil the pledge I gave at the Drill-shed at Dunedin.

Major ATKINSON.—Sum it up.

Sir R. STOUT.—I have summed it up too strongly for the honourable gentleman.

Major ATKINSON.—Put them together.

Sir R. STOUT.—I do not wish to repeat myself, as the honourable gentleman does. When I have said a thing well once, I do not need to repeat it. I will leave the finances now for a little; but the honourable member is not going to get rid of criticism from my honourable friend, who has the right of reply. I have compared the expenditure of the two years, and have shown conclusively that we have made a saving though the population has increased; and with an increased population we must, of course, expect an increased expenditure. Now I will come to some other things that the honourable member criticised. The most extraordinary thing I heard the honourable gentleman say was, that we had been the means for the first time of introducing a "poor-law" into the colony. I am amazed at the honourable gentleman saying that. Sir, it was one of his pet measures. I have got the Bill introduced by Sir John Hall, when the honourable gentleman was a member of the Hall Ministry, which is the same Bill, in fact, as our Bill, being on the same lines, but a little different in its details. He introduced a Bill, and did a judicious thing which we sometimes do not do: when he found a section of his supporters against the Bill it dropped down low on the Order Paper, and from there into the waste-paper basket it went without a regret. He never attempted to face this question. I ask the honourable gentleman what is the distinction between paying for charitable aid and hospitals out of the Consolidated Fund and throwing it on the districts. Is there any distinction? Is there not a poor-law in the colony just as truly when the Consolidated Fund is paying for the poor and for the hospitals? I will tell the honourable member what we did. At the risk of great unpopularity throughout the districts we said, "This matter must be controlled by the districts. It must be maintained by the districts even to the extent of casting upon them additional rates. We will not be faint-hearted: we will try and pass a Bill, and not do as was done by the honourable member for Egmont—allow the maintenance of hospitals and charitable institutions to fall into such a condition of muddle that no two of the districts were treated alike, and the greatest waste and extravagance was going on, and pauperism being bred in the colony." That was what we said. We thought it was our duty to cast the work on the districts, believing that any Government in Wellington was hopeless and helpless in managing charitable-aid and hospital institutions. The next thing that I will refer to is this question of the Canterbury members. I am again amazed at the honourable member. He spoke of the majority of the Canterbury members who support the Government as belonging to his side.

Major ATKINSON.—No, I did not.

Sir R. STOUT.—Certainly the honourable gentleman did. He said they ought to have remained with their natural party, and that their party was on his side. If they did not belong to his side, and did not remain in their natural party, what party could he mean them to belong to? The thing is as plain as a pike-staff. He meant that they should remain supporting him, and he said that they were grasping at a shadow when they left him and came to support the present Government. That being the case, what is the sort of member who supports him according to his own account? I am astonished at the description he gave. What is his model member who supports him? He must be a member who thinks nothing of the colony, but cares everything for his own district. He cares nothing

for the finances of the colony, he cares nothing for the good of the colony, but will support anything that is beneficial to his own district. That is the class that supports the honourable member. I should say, "Heaven save me from this class of supporters!" I am surprised at the honourable gentleman saying that that kind of supporter naturally belongs to his side. Did he not see the peculiar position in which he was placing his own supporters? He said they were all that class of men. Now let me deal with this Canterbury question. The honourable member is in favour of the Midland Railway; but he says it should not be made by a company—it should be made by the Government. That is peculiar. Why, he voted for making it by a company, and he opposed making it by the Government. What did we propose last year? We proposed that it should be gradually proceeded with, only £150,000 being voted for making the railway, which at that rate would take twenty years to construct. But he opposed our proceeding slowly in that fashion, and was in favour of its being made by a company. Now he says, "If those Canterbury members had only kept by their natural ally I would have proposed to construct that railway by the colony." Now, the honourable member has pledged himself to construct that railway slowly; and that is one of the planks of his platform.

Major ATKINSON.—It always has been.

Sir R. STOUT.—And yet he opposed our attempting to do that last year, and voted against it. If our proposal had been accepted last year there would have been no company, no land-concessions, and the work would have been gone on with by the Government. But he was the member who led the opposition to our scheme. Now I come to some of the little trifling things which were really beneath the honourable member to mention. He should confine his attention to big things, and leave to his supporters these little details about second editions of Bills. He harped upon that last year, and he dwelt upon it before his constituents. I thought he would get tired of thus harping upon one subject. As for myself, I hate to go back again to these subjects, and I dislike looking over the *Hansard* proof of a speech. But the honourable member seems to delight in repeating little bits of little things. Now, with reference to these second editions I will ask the House to do this: I will ask honourable members to take up the Supplementary Order Papers when the honourable member was in office, and compare them with those of the present session, and then it will be seen who brought down most amendments for consideration. I say the balance is in our favour. I will give an illustration of the unfair criticism of the honourable member. Let us deal with the public works estimates. He complained that the Governor sent down two messages. Does he not know the reason? Does he know so little of the finances as not to know the reason? The reason was this: The first estimates came down as ordinary public works estimates; but as soon as we found that our proposals to tie up the loan and to tie up the North Island Trunk Line Loan were agreed to we had to shape our estimates in accordance with our loan proposals. The honourable member should have known that.

Major ATKINSON.—I said so.

Sir R. STOUT.—I did not hear the honourable gentleman. If he gave that explanation, then what was the use of his criticism, because he would see that that was the proper thing to do? How else could we carry out the loan proposals? Were we to assume in bringing down those estimates that the Loan Bills and all our proposals were to be accepted by the House? We had no right to assume that. The estimates were brought down as soon as the Public Works Statement was delivered, in accordance with that Statement; and we had to wait until we saw whether our loan proposals in various shapes were accepted by the House. I think that goes without saying. Now as to local government. The proposals we have made in the Government loans scheme are not the proposals of the Roads and Bridges Construction Act. They are different proposals in every respect. They are different proposals in dealing with the sinking fund, and in dealing with interest. They are different proposals in dealing with the amount of money that the Government is to give to the local bodies, and they are different as to the mode in which that money is to be distributed. The honourable member has shown that he knows nothing about local government. His efforts at local government have been failures throughout. What happened in 1876 with the Counties Act? How is it that after his five years of office he has had to admit in this House, and it is admitted by all, that there is no proper local government yet in the country, and that our Bill is a fair Bill, which he has been obliged to support? If he had any opinions about local government at all, how is it he was never able to give effect to his opinions? If that were not the case, he would not have had to trust to us to bring down a Bill of which he approves. I now come to deal with this question of borrowing. What I have said about borrowing I still adhere to; but I say that you must first edge off loans for roads—you must cast upon local bodies the duty of road-making, as is done under the Local Government Loans Bill. With the exception of some main roads throughout the colony the local bodies must provide for their own colonizing efforts. That is the first step towards tapering off borrowing; and I have said so on every platform since I have been elected. What does the honourable member propose? He complained that the estimates had too little for roads, and now he complains that there is too much. What does the honourable member mean? He complains that the estimates for opening up Crown lands were too small. That is for roads.

Major ATKINSON.—Are you going to give it up?

Sir R. STOUT.—I do not say that we are

going to give it up: if some honourable members had their way they would give it up, but I do not think with them. But I think that it has come up to a sufficiently large amount, and that the colony, even in that respect, will have to taper off. We have on our estimates too much for roads. How is that to be tapered off? Just as I said at Invercargill—by a self-sacrificing spirit in districts and representatives. I contend the estimates this year are excessive for roads. And why? Because, to use a diggers' phrase, we are "washing up" the things of the past—we are trying to bring things to finality. There is a vote for roads north of Auckland, there is the Roads and Bridges Construction Act, and a large number of other votes on those estimates which I hope will never appear again, whoever is in the Ministry. I say that if we wish to taper off borrowing we must begin by telling districts that they must rely on themselves for colonizing efforts. What was the object of the Abolition Act of 1875 if it was not that there were to be no more colonizing efforts by this House? Those things were to be left to the districts. Has that policy failed? Has it come to an end? If it has come to an end you will have to re-establish the provinces. You must either re-establish the provinces or trust to local bodies carrying out their colonizing functions. If this House is to be a huge Board of Works you abolish good government and you banish politics from it. I believe that, sooner or later, a time will come when no railways even will be constructed by the General Government. I believe we shall not have good government, we shall not have good laws, until members shall come up to this House, not thinking about what they are to get for their districts, but thinking what good laws shall be passed for the good government of the people. That is what we should aim at. We cannot cease borrowing at present; but I hope this money will be sufficient to carry on until the 31st March, 1888; and I hope that our expenditure this year and next will be such that even this money will not be all expended then. I think that even with the estimates passed we may taper off. I do not think we can afford to spend the sums voted by the House, and some of the votes will have to be considerably reduced. I look forward to the time when borrowing must cease in this colony, some years hence, and I do not think it will be many years hence. Then, when the railways have been brought to a possible paying point, this Parliament will become a real Parliament. Its principal duty will not then be the distribution of funds to please this district or that district, or this set of men or that set of men. We shall not have a leader claiming men for his side because he will give expenditure on their railways solely in a certain direction. But we shall have our parties defined, not on the distribution of public money, not on the question of roads here, or railways there, or water-races in another place, but we shall have our parties defined on true principles of public policy, and on the need of carrying out those laws and that kind of legislation that will be a benefit to us now here and that will be a benefit to those who are to come after us in this great colony.

Mr. MOSS.—Sir, I should not rise to-night unless I felt that I really ought to do so. First, let me say a word in reference to the Stark subject, as to which I have a telegram of which I shall not have another opportunity of stating the purport to the House. It urges me once more to get from the Premier a statement as to the course he intends to pursue. The telegram says that the people in Auckland are getting up a large petition, but that they will be satisfied if the Premier assures them that there will be further inquiry into the matter on the spot; but, if not, they will have to proceed with the petition, and will be put to a great deal of trouble.

Sir R. STOUT.—I have told the honourable gentleman the matter has not been considered in the Cabinet.

Mr. MOSS.—I quite understand that; but I wish to do my duty to those I represent. In speaking this afternoon in reply to the leader of the Opposition, the Premier was mistaken when—quoting from the evidence—he said that Mr. Mitchelson stated he was satisfied there had been a conspiracy, and that the Government had been the victims of the conspiracy.

Sir R. STOUT.—So he said.

Mr. MOSS.—That is perfectly correct; but the Premier has quoted only half of Mr. Mitchelson's statement. Mr. Mitchelson also said it was the undue haste with which the whole thing was negotiated that made the conspiracy successful, if there had been a conspiracy. Now, that is the point about which the people of Auckland are concerned. Mr. Mitchelson speaks of the "undue haste" with which the purchase was made. The fact that the whole thing, from the very beginning to the end, occupied only a fortnight, is the point most commented on in Auckland.

Sir R. STOUT.—Mr. Mitchelson said also,—"I should like to state, Mr. Chairman, that my sole desire in giving evidence before the Committee is not to cavil at the actions of the Government so much as to object to the undue haste with which the purchase of the property was made, and also to bring before the Committee what I think was clearly a conspiracy to defraud the colony."

Mr. MOSS.—The undue haste referred to by Mr. Mitchelson is the point most commented on in Auckland. To turn now to other matters: the taking of the Sinking Fund has been referred to. In that way £250,000 a year has been added to the revenue resources of the colony. Large additional taxation has been imposed; while many charges have been thrown on the local bodies that the Government used to bear. Still the finances are in as unsound a condition as when those honourable gentlemen took office. These are facts. No amount of roaring rhetoric, deafening but not convincing us, will do away with those solid facts. These are facts sinking into the public mind, which the honourable

eman will find he will have to explain. I nothing of the £40,000 or £50,000 a year we are told has been saved by the con- on of loans; but, if it has been saved, we t to be that amount better off, but cer- y the condition of the finances does not it. I want now to say a word or two on tter personal to myself. I did not catch tly what fell from the Premier a night or ago: but he is reported to have said, speak- of me, that I am "one of the irrecon- les, and will remain so until some one s pity on me and gives me a seat on those hes."

r. SPEAKER.—The honourable member t not refer to a previous debate in the dis- t terms he is doing, even though a large unt of latitude is allowed on the present sion.

r. MOSS.—Then, Sir, I will take it for ted that something of the kind has been .

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member st not lay himself out to evade the rules of House by transparent ingenuity of that .

Mr. MOSS.—I had not an opportunity of lying to the Premier at the time; and, as I st not now refer to a particular debate, I l speak of the Premier generally, and I will , by what right did he use language of that d as to any member of this House?

Sir R. STOUT.—What language?

Mr. MOSS.—Such language as the Premier en uses.

Sir R. STOUT.—Oh!

Mr. MOSS.—Well, the Premier may ejacu- e, but I say the style in which he has lately dressed honourable members in this House is st objectionable; and I say, moreover, that e tone he assumes is a tone which I can rdly conceive one gentleman assuming in dressing other gentlemen. I will remind the nourable gentleman of an old Latin line at rises to my mind occasionally when he is dressing the House,—

Asperius nihil est humili quum surgit in altum.

am sorry I am debarred by the Standing rders from answering directly the statement ade by the Premier; but I am allowed to say e has no right to assume the tone he does, ordinarily addressing members.

Sir R. STOUT.—What tone?

Mr. MOSS.—A tone such as that I have ferred to. I say every honourable member this House has a right to be treated with ourtesy. Every honourable member has a ight to aspire to a seat on those benches if he hinks fit, and does not act unworthily to gain t. Does the Premier consider that he holds a nonopoly of those seats with the honourable gentlemen who sit around him?

Sir R. STOUT.—Not at all.

Mr. MOSS.—Why, he has yet his spurs to win in the colony's service. What great ser- rice has he rendered to the public which would warrant his entertaining such an idea for a moment? He sits there honoured not for great services—they are yet to come, and so far he is but a mere accident of a Queen's jubilee. He has yet his spurs to win. Every one of us has attempted to do his duty just as well as the honourable gentleman, and perhaps some of us have done it better. I am sorry that I am debarred from touching upon the other points mentioned by the Premier then. But I would say this: that I have heard the Premier allege of myself that I have given vote after vote of an illiberal character. I emphatically deny that I have given an illiberal vote, and I am glad the Premier has returned to his seat to hear my denial. The Premier and I have agreed and have voted together on questions connected with the suffrage, on education, on the principles of municipal government. Upon what points have we disagreed? The first point on which we were on opposite sides was when a Bill was brought down by the Premier entitled the Threats and Molestation Bill.

Sir R. STOUT.—The honourable member is quite wrong.

Mr. MOSS.—I am stating facts.

Sir R. STOUT.—That took place last year, and there was no vote on the Bill.

Mr. MOSS.—There was no vote, but we were on opposite sides. I hope the Premier will not resort to casuistry. The honourable gentleman knows perfectly well that we were on opposite sides. I seconded an amendment moved by the honourable member for Kumara, and refrained from speaking upon it in order that I might have an opportunity of speaking afterwards; and I gave my voice in a direction which prevented the Bill being withdrawn, so that there might be a record of the character of the legislation that was being attempted. Well, Sir, I find that I differed from the Premier—I cannot say "from the Government," because I have often found myself in the same lobby as the Premier, while his colleagues were on the opposite side; so I shall not say where I differed from the Government, but where I differed from the Premier. Well, I find that I differed from the Premier on that great job, the district railways question. I voted steadily against that Bill——

Sir R. STOUT.—When?

Mr. MOSS.—Last year and this year.

Sir R. STOUT.—I did not vote this year.

Mr. MOSS.—That is another piece of casuistry. The Bill could not have been brought down without the Premier's consent.

Sir R. STOUT.—It was expressly stated in the Public Works Statement that it would be brought down. I did not vote, nor did I pair.

Mr. MOSS.—What an extraordinary thing! How could the Government bring down such a Bill without the Premier's consent? Then, I find that I voted against the Premier on the East and West Coast Railway question.

Sir R. STOUT.—When?

Mr. MOSS.—Last year—and this year too, for that matter. I always steadily voted against that. Then, I find that on the Law Practitioners Bill, which was not a Government measure, we were on opposite sides. I find also that we were on opposite sides on the Hawkers and Pedlars Bill, which I do not

think was a peculiarly liberal measure, although it was introduced by a private member and was supported by the Government. I find that another Bill in respect of which we were most distinctly on opposite sides was the barbarous Criminal Code Bill, introduced by the Government—a Bill which would be a disgrace to any Government that called itself a Liberal Government.

Sir R. STOUT.—It is the existing law.

Mr. MOSS.—I leave others to judge of that; but is it a fit thing for a Liberal Government to rake together and re-enact all the old obsolete laws and ideas of past ages? I find that I was against the Government on the Stark's property purchase. There is no need to say anything more about that. I have a list of other things with which I need not trouble the House; but I venture to say that the Premier cannot point to one single liberal measure which I have voted against.

Sir R. STOUT.—Any number of them.

Mr. MOSS.—Now let me say shortly what appears to me to have been the course of events. On the 19th August, 1884, about two years ago, the policy of the Government was brought down. The policy with which they went into office was this. I will, with the permission of the House, give the exact words:—

"We greatly object to the present property-tax, and will propose its repeal at the earliest moment practicable. We are favourable to an equal and moderate land-tax, deducting from the value of the land improvements, and a reasonable amount of exemption."

How has that promise been fulfilled? "When I make a promise to the House, no one can say I have not kept it." That is what I have heard from the Premier, and it is a very fine sentiment.

Sir R. STOUT.—How did you vote last year?

Mr. MOSS.—I beg that the honourable member will not interrupt.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I must take steps to protect the honourable member for Parnell from interruption, as he claims such protection. I hope the Premier will not interrupt or disconcert the honourable gentleman in his remarks.

Mr. MOSS.—I am speaking under considerable difficulty, but I am taking the only opportunity that is left to me. I was attacked, as I think, most insolently by the Premier; and I will not put up tamely with insults of that kind. I find also from the Premier's programme laid before the House that "Plans will be submitted to you this session, if possible, for strengthening and improving the system of local government by giving to local bodies larger duties and an assured income." Has that promise been performed? Has any attempt been made to fulfil it? Then, again, we were told that it was "of the first consequence that the country should possess satisfactory and sufficient industries. The subject requires very careful and comprehensive treatment, and little in such a direction can be effected through the Customs tariff, which is already very high." Has that promise been fulfilled? Sir, last session the called Protectionist Government brought a tariff which was rejected by both the House, by Protectionists and Free-traders alike, because its real design was only to impose additional burdens upon the people. It was a Protectionist tariff, or a tariff to encourage industries, that put a 5-per-cent. duty on machinery, and raised the duty on tea and sugar. That was the tariff which the Government brought down to encourage local industries and in fulfilment of their promises. I have said quite sufficient, but I could say much more to justify me in absolutely denying the statement that I have voted against liberal measures. My true position has been this. The Government owe me nothing. I never gave a vote to put them in office. I constantly voted against their sitting there. I opposed them through every one of the kaleidoscopic changes that took place when they were put into power. They owe me nothing, and I owe them nothing. I voted against them simply because they were a coalition. I knew that the Premier and myself, from the sentiments that he had expressed, were heartily in accord, and I did hope that in the course of time he would not only talk, but act, and that he would bring down measures to carry out his views, in which case he would have found no more earnest supporter than myself. I kept aloof from all parties simply with that view. To prove what I say, I may mention that when the Government were defeated last session on their tariff, and there was talk of their resigning, though I had been in a sick-room for ten days, and prohibited from all work, I wrote to the Premier, begging him not to resign, but to bring down some policy to which the country might rally. If he had brought down such a policy I should have been one of his most ardent supporters. I mention that to show my readiness to support the Ministry to the utmost of my ability if an opportunity had been given me to do so. But time has gone on. I have waited patiently. I have heard speeches from the Ministerial benches full of sound and fury, meaning nothing. We have had no attempt to relieve the country from its present position, but the policy of the Government has been like that of its predecessors, simply framed to catch votes by local expenditure and local grants. In what sense does this Government differ from those which have preceded it so far as efforts to obtain support are concerned? Were we not told that they would confine their borrowing entirely to railways? That was laid down as a cardinal point of their policy, and a loan Bill was brought down in which nothing but railways were mentioned; but now what is the result? By a mere trick, by a financial juggle, they took £750,000 out of the railway loan and appropriated it to roads and bridges and works of different kinds. Is that fair or right? Still I went on patiently waiting for the great policy which was to come down; and at last we were presented with the Representation Bill. I felt rejoiced, and thought, "Here, at all events, we have the Premier

intending to carry out part of the policy which he laid before the country." But what did we see? I know that pressure was brought to bear upon him, I know that he was told that he was injuring his party, but I believed that he would take up the position of a statesman, and would prefer the interests of country to the petty interests of party. I believed that he would care less for sitting on those benches than for showing the country that he was influenced by an earnest desire for its welfare. But at the last moment what did we see? Three Ministers walking into one lobby, and three into the other. Then, I confess, my confidence was shaken. Then, I confess, I gave up all hope of seeing that for which I had waited. And I give expression to the feeling which will animate thousands when I say that the Premier has had his chance, he has had the power, but has done nothing—nothing for the country. Those were noble sentiments which I heard from him on his taking office—"Whatever may happen, depend upon this: We will not seek to hold power for unworthy means. We shall hold power only for so long as we think it is for the good of the country; and when we find ourselves incapable of doing good we will retire from office." I have heard the Premier give utterance to those sentiments—and very noble sentiments they were—and I have waited patiently to see them carried into effect. I have waited in vain. And now in what position do we find ourselves placed? I hope that next session there will be a sufficient number of independent members in this House, so that those who wish to assert their independence will be able to prevent the Ministry playing with us as they have played with us in the past. The Ministry will probably come down with some loud-sounding policy, because the elections are at hand, and they will keep this Representation Bill hanging over honourable members as a whip. Then there will be only one course open to those who value independence, and that will be to insist on the Representation Bill being brought down and proceeded with at the very beginning of the session. They must not be put off by talk of early days, and of pushing it on as rapidly as possible. How can they trust the Government, divided as it is, to carry out a great measure of that kind with anything like speed and energy? It will be the bounden duty of those who value the freedom of the House when we meet again to rally in a compact body—to be put off with no promises, but to insist on the one great thing—namely, that the Representation Bill shall be brought down and be dealt with in the very earliest days of the session. To me the Representation Bill is now a secondary thing. I should care very little, as far as the North Island is concerned, about gaining two or three additional representatives. Of what importance is that, compared with the great duty of maintaining the independence of members in Parliament, and of their taking such a position that they shall not be debarred from fairly criticising the administration of the Government by a whip of this kind being held over them? I feel confident that something of that kind must occur, and I tell the Premier that he will find it exceedingly difficult to persuade honourable members, whatever he may himself resolve, that his colleagues will not thwart him, whether with his consent or no, so that his promises will therefore be deprived of all force or weight.

Sir R. STOUT.—I desire to make a personal explanation. I interrupted the honourable member when he was speaking of the Property Assessment Bill. I only wished him to refer to *Hansard* of last year, Vol. LIII., p. 487, where he will find his name recorded as voting against the exemption of agricultural improvements and up to £3,000 in value of machinery—voting against that which would make our Bill a land-tax Bill.

Mr. MOSS.—I think there is just a little of the usual casuistry in that. I cannot see the connection.

Sir R. STOUT.—I should be very glad for the honourable member to explain that, on the motion, That the Bill do pass.

Mr. HURSTHOUSE.—I do not propose to detain the House, in its present humour, at any length, but I wish to say one or two words with reference to what fell from the Premier this afternoon. I understood him to take great credit to the Government of which he is the head for the great reductions which they had made in the rates and freights on the railways; and he went on to say that owing to these reductions a large saving, amounting to some £75,000 a year, had been made to the people of New Zealand; and he said, Is not this equal to a remission of taxation? If he had said, Is not this equal to a remission of taxation on the people who use the railway at the expense of the general taxpayers? he would have been right; but to my mind his remarks only went to prove how remarkably unjust is the taxation so far as railway revenue is concerned. The position is, that by reducing the freights on railways to a non-paying point he is compelling the general taxpayers to contribute to the ordinary revenue for the maintenance of these railways; and I look on the railways as I look on the Postal and Telegraph Department—that they should be made to pay the cost of working them and the cost of interest on construction; and until the railway tariff is so adjusted as to do that I can see no probability of anything like an equitable system of taxation throughout the colony. We have been complaining for years that these railways are a burden to the colony all over, although only certain favoured portions of the colony have received the benefit. The honourable gentleman has only relieved the favoured few of taxation; and that was done owing to the political pressure which was brought to bear on the Government. I cannot agree with what the Premier conceives to be an essential feature in the public works and borrowing policy of the colony. The honourable gentleman went on to say that the colony could never be prosperous until the railways were brought to a paying point, and until the whole of the loans that were bor-

rowed were expended on railways and on railways only; and he said that the local bodies must depend upon their own efforts for colonizing the country. What does that mean? What does the honourable gentleman mean by saying that the local bodies must provide for their own colonizing efforts? Does he mean that local bodies, many of which consist of Road Boards with revenues of less than £100, are to provide ways and means for the construction of main arterial roads and for building expensive bridges over the numerous rivers of the colony? There is no possibility of forcing upon the smaller local bodies these enormous responsibilities which the honourable gentleman wishes to do. Already he has cast upon them, in a half-and-half way, the maintenance of the hospitals and indigent poor of the colony; but it is really only in name, because to a great extent this money is derived from subsidies from the Consolidated Fund; and, if he thinks he is going to free the Consolidated Fund of its just responsibility in the maintenance of the poor and the hospitals of the colony, I think the honourable gentleman will find, when he comes to put the question to the practical test, that he has misgauged public opinion on this point. The honourable gentleman went on to say that he believes the railways must be continued until they have reached a paying point. When will that time be? Does the honourable gentleman dare to say that the policy of the Government, as enunciated in their Public Works Statement and in the Loan Bill, was in that direction? It is monstrous to suppose that the million and a half we have authorized the Government to borrow and spend on railways during the next two years is going to bring all these railways to a paying point. I am one of those who hold that when every railway n the schedule is made to a paying point the position of the colony financially will be worse than it is at the present time; and, unless there is a great advance in the prices of the exports of the colony, I predict that the financial position of the colony, owing almost entirely to the bad expenditure upon railways and other public works, more especially railways and public buildings, will be fifty per cent. worse than it is at the present time. There is just one other matter which I wish to give my honourable friend a little wholesome advice about, and that is with reference to the Representation Bill. I would warn the Premier that if he persists early or late next session in forcing on the country a Representation Bill based on the lines of the Bill lately before the House he will fail to carry it, and for the simple reason that the great majority of members of this House are not prepared to support a Representation Bill based on population and population only; but if he will introduce a Bill giving the same advantage to the country districts and small towns as is provided in the existing Representation Act, I believe he will carry it almost without a division. I notice that in the speech made by Sir John Hall in 1881 there are these words: "It will be proposed in this Bill that the quota which the country districts shall have less than the quota of the town districts will be as nearly as possible 25 per cent." If the honourable gentleman will take that as his quota in introducing a Bill giving the country districts the advantage of 25 per cent. over the large centres of population, I, for one, will guarantee him my support; and I will also say that I have reason to believe that if he insists on a hard-and-fast quota for both town and country districts he will be defeated by a very substantial majority. There is one other matter in regard to which I should like to express my deep regret, and in connection with which I think the Premier has not treated myself and one or two other members with fairness. I refer to the South Island Native Reserves Bill. I regret that there is no probability that that Bill will be passed this session. It is, however, a matter of great interest and vital importance to a considerable section of the whole community, and more especially to the people of the electorate which I represent. It is the outcome of the report of a Royal Commission which the Government very kindly appointed to make inquiries into the complicated position into which these reserves have got in the Nelson and West Coast Districts. I deeply regret that, owing to the inability or want of sincerity on the part of the Government, or owing to the opposition, or some other reason, this Bill has been put in this objectionable position, because I know that unless something is done between now and next session a large amount of evil will happen to a number of very deserving people.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I regret that the honourable member for Egmont is not in his place, as it is necessary for me to reply to the speech, or to a part of the speech, which the honourable gentleman made this afternoon. The speech which he delivered this afternoon was not dissimilar to speeches which he has delivered on similar occasions before. It was characterized by the usual bitterness. He alluded to differences and dissensions in the Cabinet; and he accused the Government of unfulfilled promises. It is not necessary for me, surely, to go back to the Financial Statement of 1884. It is not surprising to me that the honourable member had to do so, for it shows how little there was which he could find to complain of in more recent events. There is no doubt that this Government has had to contend with great difficulties not contemplated in 1884. Especially do I refer to the fall in the price of wool, and, more lately, to the reduction in the rate of wages and the amount of money circulated throughout the country, occasioned largely, if not chiefly, by the action taken by the Opposition last session, and the resolution of Captain Russell. I have pointed out before that a fall in the rate of wages tends to diminish the expenditure and to diminish the profits throughout the country, and seriously affects the revenue. From that cause we are now, to some extent, suffering. As regards the increased expenditure which the honourable member alleges, it is very easy to

group figures together, as the honourable member did, without giving us warning to enable us to check them. But honourable members have seen each year the scale of expenditure proposed, and know that wherever any measures of economy have been possible the Government have been glad to adopt them. The greater part of the allegations made by the honourable gentleman were in respect to the increased expenditure between the two financial years, 1883–84 and 1885–86. I shall not go closely into the figures, but I will take the matter generally, and will in a very few words show the fallacy of the calculations of the honourable gentleman. The honourable gentleman came to the conclusion that as between the years 1883–84 and 1885–86 there was an increased expenditure of £25,000, after making certain deductions for education and defence. Now, Sir, supposing the difference was £25,000—I have not checked his figures—it does not follow that the scale of expenditure was larger in 1885–86 than in 1883–84. You cannot consider the question of expenditure without considering the question of revenue. Some of the departments of the Government are departments in which services are rendered for payments received; and where there is an increased expenditure there may be at the same time an increased revenue. Take three items only in the year 1885–86, which will more than account for the £25,000. For example, there is £20,000 on the estimates of expenditure for 1885–86 on the direct steam service. That was not on the expenditure of 1883–84, nor is it an expenditure which does not bring in a corresponding revenue. Almost the whole of the amount is recouped by postages received. Well, if we take that £20,000 and add to it the abnormal expenditure on account of the periodical valuations of the property-tax, and expenses for the Exhibition, we have then an amount of over £30,000, and on the honourable gentleman's own showing the general scale of expenditure would be more economical for the last year than for the former one; and I am not taking into account the fact that, as the services throughout the country increase from year to year, there is necessarily an increase or a tendency to increase in the expenditure, which the present Government has done its best to keep down. And the very figures mentioned by the honourable gentleman himself show that the expenditure is on a more economical scale, supposing that the honourable member's calculations are correct, which I am not able to say, for I have not followed them. The honourable member laid great stress upon the course the Government have pursued with regard to the property-tax. That, Sir, has been explained over and over again to the House, and it is not necessary for me to do more than say this: that the Government last year endeavoured to provide an exemption for machinery and an exemption for agricultural improvements. It was the action of the honourable member for Egmont and his friends which prevented that course from being adopted. This would have freed the property-tax, at any rate, from some of the objections urged against it. Now, Sir, there is one statement made by the honourable member to which I must take explicit exception. He said that our proposal last year to give a subsidy by Bill for a term of years to the local bodies was laughed out of the House. The fact was—and I appeal to honourable members who are here to-night, and who are acquainted with the circumstances, to say whether I am correct or not—that Bill was read a second time, and the Government itself announced the withdrawal of the continuous subsidy because of the refusal to raise the tariff. In the presence of fifty members who urged us, after the defeat of the tariff, to continue in office, I myself stated it would be necessary for the Government, under the circumstances, to abandon the proposal, and that they could undertake to do no more than give the six months' subsidy for that year. I appeal to my honourable friends the members for Port Chalmers and Akaroa—who were both at that meeting—to bear me out in what I am saying. Therefore it was the action of the Government, after they had successfully carried the second reading of the Bill, that altered the proposed continuous subsidies. Then, the honourable member had the audacity—I cannot call it anything else—to say that we had framed our Bill called the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill upon the foundation and according to the lines of his Roads and Bridges Construction Act. How far this is a fact is shown by a brief passage which was contained in the Financial Statement. I therein said of the Roads and Bridges Construction Act,—

"The principal points of the Act were,—

"1. A division of local works into 'main and 'district:'

"2. The borrowing by the colony to enable both works to be carried on, that borrowing being a part of the railway loans:

"3. The supervision by the Public Works Department over the nature and carrying-out of the works:

"4. The approval of the main roads by Parliament:

"5. The charging the local bodies one quarter only of the cost of main roads, and lending them that quarter:

"6. The lending to local bodies the full amounts for district works by terminable annuities of 9 per cent. for fifteen years."

Now, those were the six prominent points of the Roads and Bridges Construction Act; and I went on to say,—

"The present Government approve none of these points. They doubt the necessity or expediency of drawing so broad a line between main and district works; they think it unwise to provide funds for local bodies out of loans raised for colonial purposes; they disapprove of the responsibility cast on the Public Works Department, or of requiring Parliament to determine the main roads; they do not see sufficient reason for applying to the two classes of works different plans of obtaining money; and they think a system of finance of a more

liberal character should be accorded to the local bodies."

So that that was the distinction I drew as between our measure and the Act which was repealed last year. Well, Sir, the honourable gentleman has had the assurance to say that our Bill was framed upon that Act. The honourable member talks of our wearing his clothes. I may say that he tries to steal our clothes. I see that the honourable member has now entered the House. I am glad that he has had the kindness to come in and hear the remarks I am making. I am just pointing out the total error he had fallen into in saying that we had framed the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill upon the basis of his repealed Roads and Bridges Construction Act, and I was showing to the House the difference between our measure and the one which we repealed by quoting a portion of the Financial Statement which referred to the subjects.

Major ATKINSON.—Yes; and it is all wrong.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I expressed my surprise at the audacity of the honourable member in making such a statement, seeing that he was at last obliged to admit that his Roads and Bridges Construction Act was a blunder and had to be repealed. I am now going to refer to a subject which the honourable member has twice alluded to this session—once on a former occasion and once this afternoon—the Meiggs contract. He said the Opposition had saved the country from the Meiggs contract. Now, Sir, while we are perfectly cool and collected I will give a brief account of the history of the Meiggs contract; also of my conduct throughout the matter and the honourable gentleman's conduct throughout the matter in relation to the East and West Coast Railway. When I first addressed a public meeting on my return to the colony, at Ashburton, I expressed myself strongly in favour of the construction of the East and West Coast Railway by means of a land grant. Subsequently, when standing for Christchurch, after consideration, I announced that I was in favour of the construction of that work by a loan if it was not possible to obtain the construction by means of a land grant. Then, when we met in Parliament I advised the Nelson members to join the Canterbury members and Westland members, and endeavour to make their railway part of the same line between the East and West Coast; and that course was adopted. A Bill was passed through the House, and became law at the end of the session; and in consequence of that measure a contract was made, and then it was proposed by the gentlemen who had entered into the contract to send Home two delegates. It was decided to send Home one delegate from Canterbury and one from Nelson. The Canterbury delegate was chosen in the person of Mr. Allan Scott, and the Nelson delegate was Mr. Fell. But before Mr. Fell agreed to go Home he saw me, and I advised him to do so. He then made up his mind—if I am correctly informed—that he would not go without having the express advice of the honourable member for Egmont on the subject. I may say that Mr. Fell is an old friend of mine, known to me for many years; but he is a very close connection of the honourable member for Egmont, and naturally, he desired to ask his advice, and did not go to England until he was expressly advised to do so by the honourable gentleman. Then, after the House met in 1885 the two delegates telegraphed out that they had completed an arrangement by which the railway could be constructed by the firm of Meiggs and Co. The proposal which was made was generally, to this end: that the railway would be constructed within the term of about four years, and it was proposed to capitalize the interest during the period of construction. The total cost was mentioned, and the Government was asked to give a guarantee of 2½ per cent. equal to £97,000, on that total cost for twenty years, and any money that was paid to the company under the guarantee during the twenty years was to be recouped to the Government out of subsequent profits to be made during those twenty years. The Government thought favourably of the proposal, but they came to the conclusion that they would not ask the colony to undertake the total liability of the guarantee, but that they would agree that the colony should take one-third of the amount, and the other two-thirds should fall on the districts, in the shape of a special property-tax. A meeting of the members of the districts interested was called, and they almost, if not quite, unanimously agreed to the proposal. The Government then proposed that a Committee should be appointed to consider the question; but between the time of the receipt of the first proposal and the moving for the Committee information was received that the first proposal was altered; and the Government were uncertain as to the exact nature of the alteration. They therefore thought it more desirable to leave the matter to the Committee, and the Committee was moved for, and it was to consider the whole question whether the work should be constructed by Meiggs and Co., or by the districts as a Board of Works, or by the colony itself. All that was left open to the Committee. Then what took place? Insinuations were thrown out that the delegates at Home and the Government and the members for the districts interested were all concerned in what—to call a spade a spade—was neither more nor less than a swindle on the colony. This accusation was not made in a distinct manner, so as to enable a denial to be given; but the insinuations were floating about the House: and the Committee was denied. Later on in the session the Government proposed, in view of carrying out the work by the colony, that a vote should be taken on account of this work. That takes me to the end of last session. Since then Mr. Fell has arrived in the colony, and I have had a meeting with him and questioned him. I am going to state what he told me, and I challenge the honourable gentleman, or any

honourable gentleman, to institute an in- into the whole of the circumstances, and etermine whether the Government were treated by the leader of the Opposition g advantage of these allegations — al- gh he did not utter them himself — to political capital against the Government. Fell told me that Meiggs and Co. would been willing to carry out the first pro- l pure and simple, and to abandon the equent additions — that the first would been carried out if the Committee had appointed and had communicated with lelegates and with the contractors. I say that, looking at the circumstances of present arrangement, and the amount of ey available, and the time the railway will to construct, in my opinion the first ngement proposed by Meiggs and Co. and he delegates would have been better for colony than the present arrangement.

on. MEMBERS.—No.

r J. VOGEL.—Honourable members may "No;" but I undertake to prove it before any pendent financial authority. Here was a posal to place these three districts in com- nication with one another within four years, no money was payable until the railway completed. There was only to be a guaran- for twenty years at a rate of 2½ per cent., any payments made under that guarantee e to be recouped out of subsequent re- ts; while the districts concerned, when y heard of the proposal, accepted it on terms proposed by the Government— nely, that there should be one-third gua- tee by the colony and two-thirds by the ricts themselves. I say that, for the colony, even for the districts themselves, that posal was better than the one we have r. As regards the colony, there was no , because the third of the guarantee would been more than recouped by the traffic h would have been brought to the exist- lines by the proposed railway; and, as re- the districts concerned, the benefit of g the railway completed in four years but any payment whatever would have worth more than the risk they ran under uarantee, and better for them, when com- d with the number of years it will now to complete the railway under the pre- arrangement. That was the course I wed, so far. We know the later history, I need hardly go through it. Mr. Scott, by atigable energy, has succeeded in making rangement, and Parliament has allowed overnment to alter the contract consider- in order to meet the views of the new actors. That is the course the railway ion has taken, and my conduct with re- to it; and now let me show that of the urable member for Egmont, and then I make no remark, but leave it to the House the country to judge between us and which has been most satisfactory. If I unpopular, as the honourable gentleman or if I become unpopular on account of ailway, at any rate I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have acted straightforwardly, honestly, and honourably throughout, and not endeavoured to make political capital out of the matter, but have done my duty with respect to it. Now let us follow the honourable gentleman's lines. In 1882 he brought down the Three-million Loan Act and put into the schedule of that Act three sums supposed to be applicable to this line—one for an extension of the railway from Belgrove to Roundhill, another for continuing the line to Red-post, and a third for the line towards Reefton. None of that money was expended except some portion on the line to Red-post, and that extension was killing two birds with one stone. Then, before we took office the honourable member for Egmont was negotiating with some of the people of Canterbury to give them greater facilities for making the line than they could get under the District Railways Act. I believe it came out last session that the honourable gentleman had not brought the matter before the Cabinet: still, I believe that he admitted that he was in correspondence with these people.

Major ATKINSON.—It was the Minister for Public Works.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I understood it was the honourable gentleman. At any rate, the Government, I take it, were not indisposed to consider the question of giving to those who had the making of the railway at heart greater facilities, the exact nature of which I am not able to say. In 1884 a Bill was passed. I do not know that the honourable gentleman took any particular part in opposing it, but it certainly did not come out as the Government proposed it. Still, it passed. Then delegates were appointed, as I have said, and Mr. Fell went Home with the approval and recommendation of the honourable member for Egmont. Next came the discussion of last session, and then the honourable gentleman was silent. He expressed no opinion about it, and allowed without challenge those disgraceful insinuations to be made against the Government and certain honourable members and the delegates. He never stood up to say one word in their defence, and he has since taken advantage from a political point of view of these disgraceful attacks to make political capital out of the Meiggs proposal. My course and that of the honourable gentleman are now before the House and the country. I will make no comment on them, and will merely say that I believe those who dispassionately judge of us in the present and in the future will not be disposed to think that I have any cause to envy the honourable gentleman's line of conduct throughout the transaction. I have now to come again, Sir, to the honourable gentleman's attempts throughout the session to create dissension in the Government. I do not know whether I should put it in that light; perhaps I should rather put it in its more practical form and say — his attempts to seduce the Premier. Sir, the honourable gentleman has sung but one song throughout this session, and that has been, *Robert, Robert, toi que j'aime*— "If you will only claim me, see I am ready to

come to thee." But the honourable gentleman, this afternoon, disappointed, no doubt, at the want of appreciation of his advances, took a very different tone, and, for the second time this session, indulged in an honest outburst of angry disappointment. I prefer the honourable gentleman in that aspect to any other one, because I tell him that the road by which he will obtain power again—and I suppose he may some day do so—will not be by pretending alliances which he does not desire, or seeking alliances with those who do not wish to ally themselves with him, but by having the courage of his opinions, and insisting on his followers having the same, or else acting independently. I told the honourable member the other day that I would read to the House a portion of the Premier's speech at Invercargill. I do not wish to detain the House, but I was surprised when the honourable gentleman told me he had read it—he so constantly referred to it in a sense which seemed to me to prove that he had not read it, or did not understand it. However, he told me he had read it, and therefore I am bound to believe it. What was said in that speech was this: that borrowing must be reduced—that borrowing for roads and public works other than railways could not be continued indefinitely; and the Premier also particularly called attention to the fact that, while there were so many who preached economy, there were very few who were ready to practise it. The Premier, in an eloquent speech, the other night, went over the same ground precisely, and this afternoon he has gone over it again. So far as my opinion is concerned, I have over and over again stated my view: that the expenditure for purposes other than railways was too large and would have to be curtailed, and that there was no general disposition on the part of honourable members for economy; for, whilst they talked in the House about reducing expenditure, they went outside the House and asked one member of the Government after another to give them this road or that bridge and this work or that work: in fact, that they had two existences—a dual sort of life, one of economy in the House and the other of extravagance outside of it. The Premier also states his opinion that borrowing for railway expenditure will cease after a time, in a few years. I am not of that opinion. I consider that we shall go on borrowing from time to time, as the colony can afford it, till New Zealand has a complete railway system; but it is immaterial whether we agree upon that point or not, for, so far as several years to come are concerned, and as to continuing to carry the railways on to a paying state, the Premier's opinion as expressed at Invercargill and to this House and the opinions which I have given expression to are the same. I have already explained how it was we came down with a proposal for only a million-and-a-half loan. Sir, I will tell the honourable gentleman a story—perhaps he is familiar with it; it is related in one of Lever's novels. A person in one of the streets in Dublin, for a wager, stood opposite to a drainage-grating and pretended to talk to some one underneath. First two or three people came up, then ten, then twenty, then fifty or a hundred, and at last the whole street was crowded, and the pavement and roadway dug up, all under the persuasion induced by the first individual that there was somebody suffering underground. Now, Sir, that is only a familiar instance of the way in which belief may be obtained for anything if you only iterate it sufficiently. The honourable member and his satellites, if I may use that expression to describe the small orbs that revolve round him, by constantly declaring that they saw something inconsistent in that particular speech with other utterances, led people to suppose it was so, although the statements were, at set periods, contradicted. No one knows better than the honourable member the advantage of constant iteration. He does not mind being contradicted for the time being, for he knows he will have another chance of repeating the statement. In this way he has managed to persuade people, during the session, that the Government overlooked liabilities existing against the loan fund to the extent of £800,000; and another honourable member gathered therefrom the impression that the sum had been carted out of the Treasury, and that it was lost to the world. In a similar way some have been led to believe, by a newspaper constantly stating it, that within the last few days, in another place, a vast service has been rendered to the colony, because it was discovered that the Loan Bill was sent up by mistake without a railway that was referred to in it having been authorized. It was said that this discovery was a great benefit. Why, Sir, will it be believed the Bill in question was passed just as it was sent up, before the Bill authorizing the railway was introduced to the House in the usual course as in previous sessions? Still, by constantly reiterating that the Committee referred to prevented an illegality, there will be people throughout the colony who will believe it; whereas there was absolutely nothing in it. We have always authorized the railways through the Authorization Bill, and this railway was authorized in the usual course, and, whatever use the Committee may have been for other purposes, it did not prevent any mistake, or point out anything that the Government and the House were not perfectly aware of. I refer to these subjects to show how easy it is to create false impressions, and how very clever the honourable gentleman — unconsciously, of course — is at doing so. Referring to the honourable gentleman's constant attempts to establish that the various members of the Cabinet are not working in harmony, I would say that the honourable member was guilty of an act the other night which, I undertake to say, so far as my experience goes—and I think it is as large as that of any other member of the House—has never before been attempted by any leader of an Opposition against any Government. What, Sir, did the honourable member

o? He was in the House the other night when I had charge of the Loan Bill—which it was proper, of course, for me to have charge of, being Colonial Treasurer—and he rose and said they would refuse to go on with the Bill unless the Premier came in and helped the House, and explained to the House the circumstances connected with it. I passed that affront—my position made me indifferent to it; but I ask the honourable member how he would like such an insult. It is possible, if the honourable member for Mataura had carried his resolution the other day and had become the Premier, that he might have done the honourable member for Egmont the honour of asking him to become a member of his Government, and, the honourable member for Mataura not taking the place of Treasurer himself, it is possible he might have given it to the honourable member for Egmont. How would the honourable member for Egmont have liked it then, if he was in charge of a financial measure, if the leader of the Opposition got up and insisted that the House should not go on with that measure until the honourable member for Mataura came in? Well, Sir, it may be that some such thing may overtake the honourable member for Egmont in the future, and may lead him to regret that he should have established a precedent of the kind. I think there was nothing else in the honourable member's speech that requires to be answered that has not been answered by the Premier earlier this afternoon.

Major ATKINSON.—Hear, hear.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I am glad the honourable member does think the answer a fit one.

Major ATKINSON.—I am quite satisfied.

Sir J. VOGEL. — The honourable member ought to be more than satisfied. Before I conclude I would like to say, as it is usual to do on these occasions, a word or two upon the work of the session. This session has been one of singular utility and public service. We have passed a number of Bills which are calculated to be of great service to the colony. Among them I can enumerate the two Native Land Bills, the Local Bodies' Loans Bill, the Government Loans to Local Bodies Bill, consolidating measures in reference to municipal laws and the laws affecting counties, a consolidating Mining Bill with a new and most beneficent provision for reducing considerably the cost of miners' rights; then, we have a consolidation of the laws relating to defence, the Midland Railway Bill, the First-offenders Bill, a Rabbit Bill, a Loan Bill, and the North Island Loan Allocation Bill, besides others too numerous to mention, the effects of which will be beneficial to the colony at large and to its several divisions. Now, it is true, as the honourable member has pointed out, that since the Financial Statement was made there has been a falling-off in the revenue; but otherwise the condition of the colony has improved. There is a rise in the price of wool; there is a much larger amount of cultivation going on; and there are signs that lead us to suppose that the goldfields will prove more productive. But there is a reverse to the picture: local industries are not so successful as they ought to be, because of the low rate of Customs duties. In regard to revenue, the fall is not altogether unsatisfactory. Partly, it is consequent, as pointed out by the Premier this afternoon, on larger facilities being given to settlers to use the railways. This Government have not looked upon the railways as a taxing-machine, as was done by the last Government, and of course they have not thought it right or desirable to increase the rates in order to make up losses of revenue in another direction. The fall in the revenue is greatly consequent upon the diminished use of spirits. I think that will be considered a satisfactory feature by many honourable members in this House, if not by all of them. There may be honourable members who do not believe in the diminished use of alcohol, and those will not sympathize with my words; but there are honourable members who, whatever their own tastes may be, believe that the good of the community is served by the reduced use of intoxicating fluids; and therefore I do not think that honourable members generally will disagree with me, that a fall in the revenue consequent upon the diminished use of alcoholic liquors is not a thing to be deplored. I assert that it places a larger amount of means at the disposal of the community. Then, there is a fall in the revenue consequent upon the reduced prices at which imports are shovelled into the country. That I do not consider satisfactory, because it brings me to the point that the local industries of the colony—those industries that ought to be our firmest reliance—are suffering and languishing very much as compared with those industries in other colonies; and we have reason to deplore the want of encouragement that they receive. I am quite aware that it is a very delicate thing for the Government to interfere with industries. It is in the last degree undesirable that the Government should deal with individuals; whatever is effected it should be done on such a scale as to be felt comprehensively, and not bring the Government into contact with one or two or a few individuals. The present Government have entertained, from the very beginning of the time that they took office, the hope, the aspiration, that the industries of the colony in every direction would receive an impetus, and become more successful and important. I am not referring only to artisan industries, but to all industries which could be dealt with on a comprehensive scale. We have given encouragement, or opened the means of encouragement, to the pursuit of fishing, to forestry, to settlement, to gold-mining and other mining pursuits; and we have desired to open the way to promote local industries by keeping up the Customs tariff to a rate such as it has been the past policy of the country to maintain in relation to the prices of imports and the cost at which articles can be made within the colony. For reasons which it is not necessary I should go through again, we have

been unable to deal with that question; and therefore, much to my regret, I feel that this session is closing with a feature that we have to deplore—that the condition of the local industries throughout the country, the artisan industries, is not so satisfactory as we could wish. The progress of settlement is satisfactory, and we have reason to think that large results will follow the encouragement given to mining pursuits, and that we shall have good results from the facilities given to the fishing industries; but we must wait until we can deal with the Customs tariff before we can place the local industries of the colony on a footing that will be satisfactory, and will afford to the labour of every one in the colony suitable employment. Whilst I have said so much, I hope that honourable members will understand clearly that I contend, on behalf of the Government, that we have reason to be satisfied, so far, with the results which have followed our efforts since we took office, and that we hope to be as successful in the future as we have been in the past. I shall not trouble the House any longer. It is satisfactory to me that the honourable member for Egmont has accepted my remarks in so friendly a spirit.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—The speech of the Treasurer to-night appears to me to be like the proverbial scorpion, which has its sting in its tail. The honourable gentleman spoke for a long time, yet told us nothing; but in the last moment or two he said a great deal. He told us that the Ministry were committed to a protective policy, and that a thoroughly-protective policy was to be the salient point of their policy in the future. Now, that is a fact that should go forth to this country. He told us that all other matters were of no importance, but that this was the important point: that Customs duties should be imposed for the purpose of protecting industries; and that until that was done we can hope for no return of prosperity to New Zealand. It brings us back to the recollection of the good old times in our politics in New Zealand, when, upon the third reading of the Appropriation Bill, Ministers used to give a clear and straightforward forecast of what their policy was to be in future. That has not been the case for the last two years, because Ministers have entirely shirked the duty of informing the country, on the third reading of the Appropriation Bill, what was to be their policy. But the Treasurer has told us to-night what their policy is to be. The honourable gentleman has told us that there can be no return of prosperity to New Zealand until we have a thoroughly-protective policy. That is the only card the honourable gentleman has left, and he will not find it a very good one. He will find that there are better cards than that to be played, which will beat it over and over again. I tell the honourable gentleman that that policy will be defeated in the country and in the House. The honourable gentleman never showed his lack of knowledge of the people of this country, of their interests and sentiments, more plainly than he did to-night. Here we have a purely maritime country—with a larger coast than any other country in the world of equal magnitude—and yet upon this country the honourable gentleman would yoke this fatal policy of Protection. His love of Protection as regards New Zealand arises out of his want of knowledge of the circumstances of the people or the destiny of this country. We are destined to be the carrying of the Pacific Ocean. There is no country so certainly destined to be a maritime country as New Zealand, and, if any one tells me that a maritime country can live by Protection, all I can say is that if he is right we sane men do not know what we are talking about. The most maritime countries in the world are those that live on the traffic of the ocean; and yet the honourable gentleman tells us that he is going to set up in this country little factories and industries—that he is going to coop up starving women and children in miserable rooms at 6s. a week. He seems to know nothing of the history of New Zealand or of its circumstances. Here we have a country of small towns and a great rural population; and the great effort of the colony should be to open up the country, so that a rural population may be scattered all over the country, and that there may be a discouragement of the aggregation of people in the towns. The honourable gentleman's policy would cause an agglomeration of people in the towns, and the setting-up of factories, which would be solely dependent on the local consumption. The honourable gentleman must know that the moment the limit of local consumption is reached and excess begins this grand protective policy falls to the ground. It is then impossible to export in competition with foreigners, who can produce far more cheaply than you can: the rural population has been drawn into the towns, the town population is ruined by the ruin of the export trade, and you come to utter failure in every respect. That is what the honourable gentleman would try to force on a country which is now very well balanced indeed as between town and rural population. I dispute absolutely the honourable gentleman's statement that this colony is dependent on Protection for prosperity. Nothing would further the welfare of this country so much as a liberal measure of Free-trade; and, until we have a Ministry who are bold enough to face that question, and who will take the trouble to look into it and devote themselves entirely to it, as Ministries in England have done, we shall never get that great revolution in the affairs of this country which can alone set us again upon that path of prosperity upon which we ought to be. I look forward to the time when we shall have a Ministry on these benches who will dare to face this question boldly, and who will away with this miserable claptrap, popularity-hunting course of so-called "encouraging of local industries" by imposing restrictions on the great natural pursuits and industries of the colonists: a Ministry who will have the courage to say that one great political principle shall pervade our fiscal policy—a principle which ought to pervade our colonial policy as much as

it pervades the policy of the Mother-country, which it has brought to the greatest grandeur among the empires and among the peoples of the earth. Sir, I may have spoken a little warmly on this subject, but I hold that it is the greatest subject to New Zealand colonists: and yet it is a subject that has been trifled with by the Treasurer to-night in the most foolish manner. He has talked about this Protection question, and thrown out hints about it in the loosest manner, in order to catch the ears of a few in the larger centres, where there may be a class who desire to see various highly-protected industries. By the language the honourable gentleman has used to-night about Protection he has pinned to his Government a label that will condemn them. They will be known as "the Protection Ministry." There is "the Protection Minister!" But who can say he means anything, or that any member of the Ministry means anything at all, by what he may say? It is enough to look back over the records of this session and last session and then to ask, What do they mean? Where are they? Who are they? What are they? "Which be these?" The Treasurer told us to-night that it was impossible to carry on business properly in this House, things are so bad. He said the state of affairs is this: that members from all parts of the colony would demand benefits for their own districts—that the great difficulty of the Government was that members coming from different districts demanded things for their own districts. Now, it was only last session that the honourable gentleman told us, "I should regard it as a very proper state of affairs were every member from every district to apply and make its wants known to the Government. I wish a book were kept in the vestibule in which every member could write down the wants of his district; and then the Government would know the wants of every district, and would be able to act accordingly." This was last session. Of course there has been a great change since then. The honourable gentleman has a whole year's more experience now. But one could not have looked upon him as a tiro last session. He had then been in office, I think, seven years. We have heard him boast of that many times—he has told us he has been in the House twelve or thirteen years and knows the run of the ropes as well as any man. The honourable gentleman considered, last session, that it would be a highly-desirable state of politics if a vast ledger were kept in the vestibule, on one side of which was to be inscribed what each honourable member wanted for his district, and, I suppose, on the other side there would be an account of the service that that honourable member had rendered to the Government. That is what it amounts to. That is the honourable gentleman's whole idea of politics—that political support is to be the price of benefits that are to be distributed by public expenditure. That is the whole of his system. It is very simple: it is charmingly simple. The honourable gentleman knows perfectly well that that has been his principle from the very beginning, and it is his principle now that there shall be a *quid pro quo*—that whatever is given to any district shall be paid for in political support.—(Oh!)—Somebody said "Oh"—somebody who got more than he expected; and the interjection came very ill from him. Yet at this stage the Colonial Treasurer has the audacity——

An Hon. MEMBER.—Say "courage."

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—He comes down and tells us that members are asking for things for their districts. But who has invited them? Who has spread the net? I say there is no member of this House, there is no public man in New Zealand, who has ever so imbued members of this House—and, far wider than that, their constituents, every man who pretends to be a politician throughout the country—so deeply with the idea that, if men will but ask enough, and give political support enough, they shall have what they ask, no matter what the public interests may be. Now, let us look back over a year or two and consider for a minute what the honourable gentleman's position is here to-night. We all remember his return in 1884, when he came back, after eight years' absence, fresh to our affairs, bringing with him, I will say, frankly, from the Old Country the name of one who had held a very prominent place there as a representative of colonial interests—one who had raised himself, by his writings and in other ways, to a position of being a representative colonist in England. He came back with a great prestige, there is no doubt about that: it is of no use for any of his political opponents to say that he did not. He came welcome to the colony. We had a Government which had been long in office; which had undergone several changes of head, but not change in other respects; and which had, I believe, got out of touch with the public feeling of the country completely. There can be no doubt about that. They were an unpopular Government, and they had made great mistakes, mainly for this reason: that they had been too departmental, and had not had an opportunity of keeping in touch with the people. The honourable gentleman came in the nick of time. I never remember a time in the history of this country where a new man, or an old politician revived, had such a chance as the honourable gentleman had in 1884. He met with kind friends in all directions—kinder than any public man in this country ever met with. He met with generous opponents, who would not say anything against him if they could not say anything in his favour. He was allowed the fullest and fairest opportunity. No man in this country strove harder than I did to give the honourable gentleman the fair opportunity he should have. He appealed to several constituencies, and appealed to them successfully. I believe if he had gone to Poverty Bay he would have been elected, or at Ashburton. Finally, he was elected at Christchurch, with the general wish of the people of New Zealand that he should have a chance. He made a magnificent speech at Ashburton—one of the ablest political speeches ever delivered

in this country; and by it he made a most favourable impression, because the speech brought back the old recollection of our politics, combined with fresh views on matters which were in great disorder at the time of his speech. That speech, unchanged by events since, remains as one of the ablest political utterances ever delivered. He came into the House, and he showed a great deal of tact; and he also showed a great desire to conserve the public welfare and to guide our politics in a moderate course, and to do us good. But he did so only until he found that he had not got the power he expected; and ever since then, I say, unhesitatingly, instead of being a good influence he has been an obstruction to the public good of the colony, and it would have been better for the colony if he had not returned to office; it would have been better for his colleagues, it would have been better for all parties and for the colony, if he had not returned to that bench and remained there. The honourable gentleman has immense ability. Any one who denies that must himself be wanting in ability. He has immense ability, and he has great public spirit, too. Surely no such opponent of him as I am would ever for a moment think of denying that. But the honourable gentleman's methods of obtaining public influence and using it when he has got it are, to my mind, entirely foreign to the spirit of the institutions of this colony. Ever since he has been in office he has endeavoured to hoodwink this House. He has never taken this House into his confidence. His colleagues have tried to bring down straightforward measures; but, at all points, every Bill with the Treasurer's name on it has been a deceptive Bill and not a straightforward one—there has been a want of clearness about it. All has been done by devious courses. There have always been twists and turns when apparently there has been no conceivable necessity for them. He cannot buy a railway but he must do it in the most complicated way, such as no one ever heard of before. He must have debentures, bonds, and all sorts of things. Instead of simply buying the thing and paying the money, and there making an end of it, he must have debenture-bonds bearing 4 per cent. interest, agents, security, and other things that there is no need of. He never does anything in the House but by some sort of circuitous route. Look at the Midland Railway Bill, for instance. Was there ever such a Bill seen in any Legislature in the world? Here is a Bill consisting of correspondence from Heaven-knows-whom to Lord-knows-whom—people whose names we never heard of before. Yet these letters between all sorts of unknown persons, people who may be mere John Does and Richard Roes for all we know, this correspondence among people who, to us, are only so many names, is now part of the law of New Zealand: it is an Act of Parliament, the meaning of which nobody at this moment knows; and the very promoters of the measure themselves say they do not believe it will be effective, and that they do not believe anything will come of it. This is the sort of thing the honourable gentleman does—this is a type of the system of the honourable member. He will not meet us as colonists, he will not treat us as colonists. The honourable gentleman had a perfect right to return here—as an old politician and a leading public man, he was perfectly entitled to come back and claim a great amount of support. He did claim it and he got it. But he has not fulfilled his pledges for this reason: Instead of acting straightforwardly to us as a colonist to colonists, he has acted, throughout, in a way alien and foreign to the land and alien and foreign to our Parliament and institutions. He has never brought in a straightforward measure. His Bills have always been queer, incomprehensible things. At this moment not a soul knows anything about the measures the honourable gentleman has introduced. Some one has said of the honourable gentleman that he has not done any harm. The Premier has a pleasant way of saying, when explaining a Bill, that the measure will not do any harm; but, if the work of the Treasurer has not done any harm, it has not done harm because he has got a stout Opposition, which has prevented it. The honourable gentleman's defenders say his intentions are not harmful; but I say we ought not to have given away, as we did, our political independence to an honourable gentleman who came from Home after eight years' absence, on the strength of his promise of being able to restore prosperity to the welfare of this colony. Now nothing stronger is said than that the honourable gentleman has not done much harm. The honourable gentleman undertook to restore prosperity in a few months; he said so in this House in my hearing. Two years have passed away; and where is he now? Where is his prosperity? The colony is as sound as a rock, and so it was when the honourable gentleman took office; and, if it is sounder now than it was before, that is not because he has taken office, but in spite of his having taken office, and in consequence of the determined opposition of the people of New Zealand to the policy the honourable gentleman would have foisted upon us. The honourable member has told us that he is a great advocate for economy, and that it is part of his policy to reduce borrowing. Well, the honourable gentleman, in that, is following the course of public opinion: he is listening to the voice of the people for a moment, and I do not blame him for doing so; but does any honourable member for one moment believe that those are the views of the honourable gentleman? The honourable gentleman is one of those who adhere to their own policy regardless of the opinion of other people; and we know perfectly well what his own policy is. I believe it is this: that the whole of the resources of the colony should be developed immediately by the application of borrowed money. He has told us that over and over again.

Mr. SEDDON.—No.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—The honourable member for Kumara says "No." Well, I know of no other honourable member who has more persistently endeavoured to get the resources of his district developed by means of borrowed money, and I am bound to say that I know of no one who has been more successful. Why, he is going away with his carpetbag as full as it can be stuffed. It is so stuffed that if it were attempted to put more in it it would burst. The honourable member should be the last to say "No." I am not going to refer to Cabinet secrets, but it is well known that the Treasurer's whole policy has been the development of the resources of the colony at one *coup*, as soon as possible, by the aid of borrowed money. Did I understand the Premier to say anything?

Sir R. STOUT.—I was merely completing the French phrase.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Oh, I see; the honourable gentleman was applauding me in his sleep; but, unfortunately, when he wakes he applauds his colleagues, though he does not agree with them. It is one of those cases of somnambulism where men speak what is in their mind, expressing their true principles and their true wishes; but when they awake to their senses they unfortunately come under evil influences, and do not retain that truthfulness, that patriotism, which comes to them in their happy hours of dreams. Well, Sir, as I was saying when the Premier, in his fit of somnambulism, cheered me, the Treasurer has not changed. He has changed very much indeed in his tone; but he is a man that does not change his mind, and he would still advocate the old policy. He is one of the few public men of this country who never change their minds. No doubt he gives way for a time to men weaker than himself, because for a time circumstances compel him to do so; but will any one tell me that his policy has changed? Give him a great majority to-morrow, and let us ask what his policy would be. Give him a majority of twenty in this House to-morrow, and what sort of Bills should we have down? There would be a Ten-million Loan Bill down, and we should be fortunate if we stopped at ten millions. If the honourable gentleman had his way he would go further—if he were logical he would do so. He sees endless El Doradoes, immense wealth, boundless resources, fabulous riches arising out of a country of which he is really ignorant. He disregards its institutions, he disregards all those changing circumstances which affect its institutions. He looks beyond to the great, enormous, splendid wealth of the colony hundreds of years hence, and wishes to discount the future and to skip over this interval, and to bring all these things at once within the reach of the present generation. But he cannot do it. No man can do it.

Mr. SEDDON.—Without crossing the Arafura Sea.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Yes; the honourable gentleman wanted to cross the Arafura Sea, he wanted to embark upon that perilous ocean, but I think I wrecked him there. He wanted to sell sheep and blankets to the inhabitants of the Arafura Sea. I do not want to refer to that, because I did enough on that occasion. I am perfectly satisfied with the result of my speech on that occasion. That is a speech I took no credit for at the time, but it is one that will never be forgotten in the parliamentary affairs of this colony. We shall not embark upon that sea again. The predictions in which I then indulged have come true to an extent beyond what we could have had any idea of. I have been called a Cassandra.

Sir R. STOUT.—Cassandra in trousers.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—The honourable gentleman does not want to see Cassandra here without her trousers, I hope. I say that the predictions that we made when the honourable gentleman took office have been fulfilled to the letter, not merely to the spirit but to the letter—more than fulfilled—fulfilled far more accurately, more completely, more particularly than any of us anticipated or pretended at that time that they would be. I may say this about the honourable gentleman, and I say it with all respect for a Minister of the Crown, for a great public man: that the country has been disappointed in him, and that this House has been disappointed in him, not only in respect of the policy which was laid down, but also in respect of his capacity as a public administrator. Will any one tell us that the Bills which have been brought down this session and the session before this exhibit that capacity which the honourable gentleman showed years ago, and which we were led to expect would be shown on his return to politics in this country? When he came out in 1884 as the great reformer, as the great reviver, who was to make New Zealand herself again, to raise her once more to the highest prosperity, we looked not only for his schemes—no doubt reckless, speculative, short-sighted agitators, people who had nothing to lose and everything to gain by the borrowing and expending of large sums of money, looked for the schemes which the honourable gentleman would produce; but there were other men in the colony who did not look for such schemes, who did not believe in them, but who entirely based their support of the honourable gentleman and the Ministry of which he is a member on the expectation that they would bring down upon the floor of this House a policy which would be marked by ability, by resource, and, I may say, by genius that had been absent from the public councils of the colony for many years.

Mr. SEDDON.—You would not let him carry his policy out.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—You put him into office. He had unlimited sway for at least one year. He was the master in the Government, he was the ruler of this country, and, with the following he had at that time, he had the chance to do whatever he thought ought to be done. But what was the result? Where are the measures? Why, no measures could have been more wanting in principle, more futile in practice; and those which he did induce the Legislature to pass have been useless

and thoroughly unworkable ever since they were passed—they have never been put into operation. And those were his most important measures—the measures without which everything was to go wrong, and with which everything was to go right. We, weakly and foolishly, passed those measures, because we had an idea that they might possibly have some charm that we were not aware of. We did not like the look of them; they were crude, incomprehensible Bills: still, we passed them, and the other House passed them, because Ministers had just put nine new members into that House—who have, however, since been as unkind to the Ministers who made them as they possibly could be. Not one of those Bills has proved of any value. They have, it is true, never done any mischief, because they were unworkable. Take the Beet-root Sugar Act. The honourable gentleman deliberately told this House that if we would but pass this Beet-root Sugar Bill it would immediately revive the fortunes of the agricultural districts of New Zealand. He told us that every farmer who planted this beet would clear £10 per acre out of the land, and that if a man planted a hundred acres he would make a thousand pounds. We were to pay off our national debt with it.

Mr. SEDDON.—And sorghum.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—I do not know anything about sorghum, but I remember the honourable gentleman's speech about the beet-root, and, if I were only to read the speech now, members of the House would be unable to repress their laughter at the absurdity of the thing. We told him that it was nonsense; but he would not believe us. I venture to say that there is not a single farmer in New Zealand who has planted a single acre of this beet-root for the purpose of getting this bonus. But there the Act stands, a hamper upon the Customs laws of the colony, for we cannot alter the sugar duties, because, immediately we did, there would arise a class of imaginary monopolists, and we should have to incur all sorts of expense in order to settle their claims to this subsidy. That is one of the things that the Treasurer told us would restore prosperity to the colony. We have had all sorts of "fads" of that kind. I see the honourable member for Rangitikei in his place. I am glad to see him, because I have a word or two to say in regard to him, and I should not like to say anything about a man in his absence which might be construed into a reflection upon him. When the Hon. the Treasurer was speaking last session—if I remember rightly, it was his speech upon the third reading of the Appropriation Bill—the honourable member said this——

Sir R. STOUT.—Who? The honourable member for Rangitikei?

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—The honourable member should not be so eager in his interruptions. I was not alluding to the honourable member for Rangitikei—I was alluding to the Colonial Treasurer; and if the Premier will restrain his feelings I shall be glad. Of course it is evident to us all that he is much excited. I make all allowances for his uncomfortable position. I am sorry for him; but I ask the honourable gentleman not to interrupt me. In his speech on the third reading of the Appropriation Bill last session the Colonial Treasurer said, amongst other things, this: that the Government had every reason to congratulate themselves upon the course of affairs during the session, but there were one or two points on which they had to admit there had been shortcomings, and one of these was this: that they had not dealt with the Seamen Representation question; and, Sir, when he said that he turned round in his chair and gazed with the fond gaze of his on the honourable member for Rangitikei, and he looked at him as much as to say, "Does not that touch you?" He said, "We ought not to have parted without passing the Seamen Representation Bill." Votes were votes. The future was uncertain. And he looked at the honourable gentleman as much as to say, "You are a sailor, you are a man of chivalry, you are a sentimental fellow; and if that does not captivate you I do not know what will." But he was utterly at fault—he misunderstood the honourable gentleman; he misunderstood the party he was working with. The whole House laughed in their minds, if they did not openly; for really the thing was so exceedingly well done that we were compelled to keep silence from mere emotion. Now, I seriously ask this House to cast its mind back to the speech in which the honourable gentleman reviewed the session and forecast the future. His one regret was that he had not passed the Seamen Representation Bill. Where is the Seamen Representation Bill now? Has the honourable gentleman performed that duty? No. It has gone glimmering through the dream of things that were. It has gone with the Exhibition and all those tinsel fabrics with which the honourable gentleman tried to hoodwink this country, and to amuse the minds of the members of this House. I told the honourable gentleman last year that he had made a great mistake—that he took too low an estimate of the public feeling of this country, and too low an estimate of the political character of the members of this House. He is found out. Who is he in this House? I say the honourable gentleman has sunk into the lowest position of any Minister who has ever held a position of power. He has sunk to a position which is extremely humiliating. When the honourable gentleman has been defeated again and again on measures in this House, and when he has known often enough that it was wiser for him to leave the House and his colleagues, he has tried to carry a measure, and has advocated it with his own opinions. The House has found him out, and the country is rapidly finding him out; and so soon as he is found out by the people the strength of the Ministry is gone, and they will then have to seek some other source of strength. The people of this colony are not to be subjected to the government of one whose feelings are alien from theirs, who knows little about

their affairs, and who is in no respect one of the natural leaders of the people. The time cannot be long when the people will revolt against the Government of the honourable gentleman. The Premier is a different man. The Treasurer has said that members of this House have thrown themselves at the Premier and sought to form an alliance with him. Not only is that contrary to fact, but if it were a fact there were good reasons for it. There are thousands of colonists in New Zealand who believe that this Ministry is a very bad Ministry—one of the worst Ministries which the colony has known in many respects—and who at the same time have a strong sentiment for the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister of this colony is a statesman who has had immense drawbacks and objections to him on various grounds; but I am one of an immense number in this colony who are political opponents of his, and who are also opposed to him on many grounds, and, if I may say so, on none more strongly than on religious grounds.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman, in discussing public matters, is not at liberty to refer to the religious convictions of honourable members. Those are matters outside the limits of legitimate debate.

Mr. WAKEFIELD.—Many of those who are on many grounds opposed to the Premier at the same time see that under the peculiar circumstances he is the best man who could rule the colony at present. There are many of us who see this: that he has capacities of government which would be extremely useful to the colony at the present time; and we are able to see in him public qualities which we respect and admire; and we find him supporting measures which we are also willing to support, and these are measures which his colleagues—or some of them—have no sympathy with; and therefore it is competent for many of us on this side of the House to support the Prime Minister, to admire him, and regard him as a great future man, who at the same time cannot support the measures of his Government. The Treasurer implied that there was a desire on the part of some members on this side of the House to ally themselves with the Prime Minister. Surely, in the state of parties now existing in the House, it is perfectly competent for any member to express admiration of the Prime Minister, and to express agreement with his opinions, without reflecting on other members of the Ministry, or without derogating from the self-respect of members on this side of the House. The Colonial Treasurer took the trouble to review the legislation of this session, and he did so in a manner which, from his point of view, brought great credit to his Government. He said that, although it had been a peculiar session, it was one that reflected great credit on the Government in respect of the legislation which had taken place. I say this: It is a session that reflects credit on the House as a whole for having done considerable public good; but it has been done in spite of the Government, rather than in consequence of any action of theirs. The Government have acted as an administrative body, and they have followed fairly the direction of this House. They have resisted occasionally, but have always had to give in. The honourable gentleman said that the mining laws had been improved, and that the gold duty had been reduced. The Gold Duty Bill was thrown out twice by the other House. He told us that the Midland Railway Bill was a great thing. If what the Premier said about the Midland Railway is to be depended upon, I am sorry for the Midland Railway. The Premier has told us, in effect, that he has little expectation of that project coming to anything. The Treasurer also said that the North Island Trunk Railway Loan Bill was a thing to be proud of. The Government have stripped the North Island Trunk Railway Loan of a great portion of its proceeds; they have misappropriated the North Island Railway Loan. The honourable gentleman went on to tell us that the efforts of the Government to make local industries successful had failed because the Customs duties were not treated as the Government desired. The reason why the industries of the country have not been successful is that our Customs duties are too high. The efforts of the honourable gentleman to make out the success of the Ministry have been unsuccessful, and I say their conduct of affairs in this House has been an entire failure. They have been successful in their administration, because they have able officers to serve them, and because the colony is one of the easiest to govern, and because there are one or two right minds in the Ministry which have withstood the evils which others would have forced upon them. As to the management of business in this House, I have never seen worse leadership. There has never been a session where the people of the colony have been so startlingly awakened to the defects of administration, or one after which the public will arise more actively to demand a reform in the public affairs of the colony.

Mr. BRYCE.—I must say that I have been infinitely disappointed this evening with the speeches that came from the Government benches. I think they are the weakest speeches that ever came from those benches on an occasion of this kind. Of course it is not for me to feel disappointment at their weakness, but I do feel a sense of sorrow at the falling-off which appears in the intellectual capacity of the occupants of those benches, and that they have not been able to make a better show of defence than they have done on the present occasion. Then, the Premier in his speech did not soar into his wonted eloquence. I may say that, after the examples we have had on a few recent occasions, I shall always in future feel a little doubt of the sincerity of the honourable member when he does soar into those flights of earnest eloquence which, whether we believe in them or not, we must all very much admire as a work of art. But on the present occasion it was perfectly evident that he was striving to reach that height of eloquence, but that the badness of

the case absolutely prevented it. He did not become so eloquent as is his wont. The honourable gentleman regretted—and I must join in the regret—that proper party-lines are disappearing in this House, and that measures could not be considered in a proper manner; and he said that, no doubt, as long as we were a great Board of Works that circumstance would prevent measures being considered as they should be considered; that party-lines were highly desirable, and he hoped to see us revert to them on the disappearance of the loans which impose on us the functions of a Board of Works. I agree with that very well indeed; but I cannot forget that there has been scarcely any one more responsible of late years for this destruction of party-lines than the Premier himself. Why, let him go back to the time—it is ages ago now, but, after all, it is only 1884—when he endeavoured to form his present Government. The present Government was formed, in the first place, in violation of all party-lines, by a conjunction of the most opposite elements in this House; and so thoroughly disgusted was this House with that action that they absolutely turned out that Government without courtesy and without mercy after they had been in office a few days.

Sir R. STOUT.—And the next one a few hours.

Mr. BRYCE.—The honourable member must know—and I admit at once the point of the remark he has made—that substantially the present Government was formed afterwards precisely, or practically, on the same lines as that Government that had been rejected by the largest majority of the House that ever ousted a Ministry in New Zealand. How can he deprecate the disregarding of party-lines, when he himself is a party to this great political crime? If I go now to the utterances of the Treasurer, I notice, first, that the honourable gentleman complained very much of being misrepresented. He said the honourable member for Egmont knew perfectly well the value of insistance, and that he had insisted, and misled public opinion by insistance; and he instanced the great case of the Meiggs proposal. Well, now, it is curious how very much explanation the proposals of the Colonial Treasurer do require. Notwithstanding all his explanation he does not appear to be able to make members of this House understand the matter which he tries to explain—which, in a gentleman of his surpassing ability, is surpassingly strange. In reference to this Meiggs proposal, was it not evident that his warmest supporters had abandoned him, and that, so far from being able to convince the Opposition that it was an appropriate and just proposal in favour of the interests of the colony, he failed entirely to convince a great many of his own supporters? That was a matter of perfect notoriety; and I must say, if I may be permitted for once to use a word which is always on the lips of the honourable gentleman himself, that to pretend otherwise shows very great audacity indeed. Well, that is not the only matter that the honourable gentleman states he finds a difficulty in explaining, or rather, his intentions as to which have been misrepresented, in spite of his explanations. Now, I would refer for a moment—if I understand that in discussing this Bill we have great latitude—to his action in reference to the schedule of the Loan Bill, and how utterly he failed, whether intentionally or accidentally, to convey his meaning to the House. Why, I shall remember as long as I remember anything in this House one of his own friends—one of his own warm supporters, a gentleman who was recognized as such in the words the Treasurer utterred—asking a question frankly and openly, apparently, to be satisfied on a particular point, and the honourable gentleman pretended to satisfy him, leaving a wrong impression on his mind at the time. At any rate, this was evidently the opinion of the honourable member for Bruce. If that kind of thing goes on, it is no wonder indeed that many explanations are required from honourable gentlemen, and that these explanations fail to convince the public of the integrity of his action. And if I turn now from the Treasurer to the Premier, and refer to the recent action on the Representation Bill, shall we not say that this also requires a great deal of explanation, and may we not add that that explanation will not satisfy the public of the integrity of the matter proposed to be explained? Referring again to the member for Bruce, who could help observing the by-play between the Premier and that member? The member for Bruce had made certain promises, or implied promises, apparently, to his constituents, and he called upon the Premier, when he was proposing the Bill, to justify him (Mr. Reid) in opposing the Bill.

Sir R. STOUT,—Can the honourable member refer to a previous debate?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The debate on the Appropriation Bill being made use of as a *means of* reviewing the work of the session, I did not feel called upon to interpose. Besides, the honourable member has not referred *to any* particular words that were made use of in a previous debate.

Mr. BRYCE.—It was a piece of by-play that was not calculated to cause the sincerity of the Premier to rise in the estimation of this House. The honourable member for Bruce said, "I did say so-and-so; and what action will you take in reference to a certain contingency?" And then he sat down. Then up rose the Premier and answered his question. Again he put another question of a somewhat similar character; and again up rose the Premier, always with a view to affording the member for Bruce an excuse for voting against the Bill that he was then proposing in the House. I shall be glad—and the Premier may, if he chooses to reply, tell me that I am utterly mistaken in this—to find that I have done him a gross injustice, and that my suspicion is absolutely without foundation. I shall be also-

lutely pleased if the Premier is able to say that; but that is the way it impresses me. Then the Treasurer spoke of the exceedingly meritorious character of the legislation of the present session. The honourable gentleman is an original man; and, if he means that the character of the legislation of the session is meritorious in respect to its originality, I admit the claim at once, for no such specimen of originality has ever appeared in this House before. He referred to the Midland Railway Bill, I suppose, as a specimen of superior legislation in the manner and form of its character. Was ever such a specimen of legislation seen in this world before—not to say New Zealand, but in this world before? Why, bless me! there is absolutely correspondence introduced into it, to which correspondence is given the full force of law. If that is not a kind of legislation calculated to produce a condition of affairs to which the lawyers can apply themselves in the future, I am utterly at a loss to understand what kind of legislation could do it. Can the honourable gentleman cite an instance in the history of the legislation of the world—I do not say of this country—in which such correspondence as that is introduced as the embodiment of a Bill? I believe he could not. And, so far from the Treasurer being able to boast of the character of the legislation in this House during the present session, he should sink down and apologize for the thing in sackcloth and ashes. That is a matter of amusement to the Premier. The whole character of the legislation of this session, of which I may say a word or two more, is of a slipshod kind. And now I may refer to a point that has been referred to before, but which I may refer to myself. What shall we say of the second, third, and fourth editions of Bills that we have seen from these honourable gentlemen, and the character of the legislation which is carried on by means of Supplementary Order Papers? It sets aside all constitutional principles of legislation; it sets aside the spirit, if not the letter, of our Standing Orders. I am making no imputation against you, Sir, but I say it violates the spirit of our Standing Orders, which require that Bills shall be introduced, read a first and a second time, and so on. If they are introduced in this way in Supplementary Order Papers, and if those Supplementary Order Papers differ materially from the Bills originally introduced, then we are violating all constitutional principles in regard to legislation.

Sir R. STOUT.—Can you name one that differs in that way?

Mr. BRYCE.—There was one which I pointed out at the time it was introduced on the Supplementary Order Paper. The honourable gentleman knows that I have not got the Bills before me, and, lawyer-like, he asks me to cite an instance; but I venture to say that I could quote them, not singly, but by the half-dozen. And that is the character of the legislation for which the Treasurer takes so much *kudos*. I say such legislation is disgraceful to the Government which is responsible for it, and, if I might venture to say so, it almost casts disgrace on the House itself. It has been suggested that I should say something about the Special Powers and Contracts Bill; and surely, if the Premier wishes me to mention an instance, I might mention that; but I will not mention it, because I think we have had enough about that already. However, since the Premier is so pressing, I will mention one thing, which happened in 1884.

Sir R. STOUT.—I was speaking of this session.

Mr. BRYCE.—Exactly: 1884 is ages ago, and we have forgotten all our experiences of then. In 1884 there was a case somewhat kindred to the Owhaoko case of this session—a case in which it was supposed the Native Land Court had made a mistake and granted the Little Barrier Island to the wrong people. As the Premier is so anxious about the matter, I will tell the House all about that case. It came up shortly after the Premier had taken office. The case had been settled in Court before then; but one of the honourable gentleman's colleagues, the Minister of Justice, who was solicitor to the people who required a rehearing, had applied to me repeatedly on the subject of the Bill authorizing a rehearing.

Mr. TOLE.—I never asked the honourable gentleman to introduce that into the Special Powers and Contracts Bill. The honourable gentleman did it himself, and granted the rehearing.

Mr. BRYCE.—No. Two weeks before I went out of office the present Minister of Justice waited on me and asked me if a Bill could be introduced dealing with this case, and if provision could not be inserted in the Special Powers and Contracts Bill granting another rehearing.

Mr. TOLE.—No.

Mr. BRYCE.—Well, it is my word against the honourable member's, and I will leave it there. Now, I want to know who asked the Premier for a rehearing in the Little Barrier case. I do not know.

Sir R. STOUT.—A petition to the House.

Mr. BRYCE.—Will the honourable gentleman allow me to proceed? There was no Bill introduced specifically dealing with this case, and when the Special Powers and Contracts Bill of 1884 was introduced it was read a first and a second time without any reference to this case in it.

Mr. TOLE.—That is what the honourable gentleman did himself before, in the Special Powers and Contracts Bill, in the last days of the session.

Mr. BRYCE.—Two blacks do not make one white.

Mr. TOLE.—But you are doing us a very great injustice.

Mr. BRYCE.—Pray let me go on. The Premier has insisted on my giving a case, and I am doing so.

Sir R. STOUT.—Go on. I should like to hear the whole case.

Mr. BRYCE.—A Bill to grant a rehearing in the Little Barrier case was not specifically introduced by leave of the House and read a

first time specifically and a second time. What happened was this: The Special Powers and Contracts Bill was introduced and read a first and a second time without this case being in it, and then whilst it was in Committee the Premier slipped this clause into the schedule of the Bill without any notice whatever.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Mr. BRYCE.—I remember it distinctly, because I asked a question about it at the time. I said that, if the Premier was to be responsible for that sort of thing at that stage of the session, I did not feel it of any use to say any more about it; but I pointed the matter out. The honourable gentleman challenged me to give an instance where the Standing Orders as to the introduction of Bills had been violated by the Government, and when I spoke of 1884 he said, "Oh! the present session." Well, I have not given him one of this session, although I could name half a dozen, but I have given him one of 1884 which is, at any rate, pretty conclusive as showing the character of the legislation for which the Treasurer takes so much credit. But I say that, if we get into the way of running through legislation in this slipshod and irregular manner, we shall have ultimately to suffer for it. I followed the Treasurer through his speech and made notes of it, but I am not going into them. There is, however, one point which has been raised by the honourable gentleman which I should like not to controvert exactly, but, rather, to express an opinion upon. He says that the honourable member for Egmont has been constantly throughout the session endeavouring to show his willingness to go over to the Premier, if only the Premier would have him. Does the Treasurer really think that such an imputation as that is worthy of his own intelligence? Does he not know that every conceivable and reasonable circumstance is against any such suggestion? He must know it. I do not want to insult his intelligence by supposing that he believes anything of the kind, and I would rather suppose that he was trying to make a point—a very weak point—against an opponent, knowing that there is not much in it. I should be insulting the honourable member for Egmont, and I should be insulting the intelligence of the House, if I were to refute this suggestion in anything like an argumentative manner. Every member of the House knows that such an idea is utterly absurd. The honourable member may, indeed, quote from newspapers, and tell us that the *Lyttelton Times*—certainly, according to him, the best newspaper in the colony—has this opinion or the other opinion, and then be prepared to indorse it. He may say the same of the *Evening Post* of this city, and he may say the same of an Auckland journal for which he is supposed to have a great affection; but is there not such a thing as creating a rumour for the purpose of repeating it? If the suspicion which exists in some quarters is right, the honourable gentleman is not at all above creating rumours of this kind in the very papers to which he has referred, and then, when he quotes these rumours which are supposed to be somehow around he talks also of the high character of the paper. Why, it is above or below argument—I leave it to the honourable gentleman to say which. I might use an Americanism I would say it is altogether "too thin" for argument. I have a number of notes of the speech of the Premier in which he defended his Government from the scandals which are afloat, and other matters, but in reading through my notes I declare that every one of them shows that each point on which the honourable gentleman dwelt partook more or less of a character which, if the honourable gentleman were not Premier, I should say was a quibble. Therefore, at this late period of the session, and at this late hour, I do not think I need say anything more.

Sir R. STOUT.—I would just say one word with regard to the Little Barrier case. I think it is scarcely fair that in criticising the legislation of the session of 1886 the honourable gentleman should drag in what took place in 1884. The position was this: that the honourable gentleman himself, without having given notice to those interested, had inserted a clause in the Bill ordering a rehearing of the title to this Little Barrier Island. That will be seen in paragraph 14 of the first column of the schedule to the Special Powers and Contracts Act. The Native name of the land is "Hauturu." And the Native people then petitioned this House for another rehearing, and the name was changed. The matter was sent to the Waste Lands Committee, which inserted it in the Special Powers and Contract Bill after the whole matter had been fought out and the whole circumstances inquired into, and the request for a rehearing was granted: so that what was done in the House was exactly the same as what had been done by the honourable gentleman himself in 1883.

Mr. W. F. BUCKLAND.—Sir, I am very sorry indeed if I have been the cause of this debate being prolonged. I do not wish to speak either for or against the Government. I may say that last session the Premier said that the leaders only spoke on these occasions. I am sorry that has not been followed on this occasion; but certainly honourable members have spoken who are not leaders; and I wish to make one point, and one only. I think it is only fair and just to myself, to my constituency, and to the part of the colony I come from, that I should put this on record. I consider that a very serious mistake has been made in the estimates. I am not going to say how this mistake occurred; but it was a mistake that any business man would not make. The North Island at the present time is very much dependent upon the success with which the Native lands are dealt with. We have a vast area of those lands unopened—something like ten millions of acres; and upon the successful opening of these lands for the next year or two depends the future success of the North Island; and, of course, the success of the North Island will reflect upon the whole colony. The Colonial Treasurer took credit for passing

he Native Lands Act; and I give the Government credit for that Act so far as it goes. It ives the Government the pre-emptive right; nd I do not object to that—in that respect t meets my views; but the point I take exception to is this: that no provision is made for urchasing the Native lands, and nothing like sufficient sum has been put upon the estinates for that purpose to meet the requirenents of settlement. The Government, in ealing with that Act, will, in almost every nstance, have to purchase the land themselves. he Natives will not come under the Crownands proposals of the Act, but will be anxious o sell the land for the purpose. We have borowed money for two years, and I do not see ow the Government are going to purchase the and, which will be offered in enormous areas. t may be that the Minister of Lands mediates making the Natives themselves the pernanent owners of the land—the landlords; but hold that the true prosperity of the North lepends upon the speedy settlement of these ands, and especially of the better portion of hem, and we have no adequate sum on the stimates to buy the land. What I wanted to ay was that this was the one blot on the estinates. The Government will find out that hey have taken away the power of private apital to utilize the land. There has been continuous flow of private capital towards he purchase of the land; but that has been topped, and the Government have not provided sufficient sum to purchase the land. That s the point I wanted to bring out. It is serious matter, and one that will retard the ettlement of the North Island. I look upon his question as an ordinary business man. do not speak as one of the shining lights of olitics, but look at it from a merely business oint of view; and I think it would be better f all politics were looked at in that light. I o not believe in the recriminations that have aken place between the great leaders of parties; ut, looking at this matter from a business oint of view, I say that, unless some provision s made for this, and that speedily, we shall nd stagnation taking place in dealing with Native lands in the North; and settlement here, and the advancement of the colony as a hole, will be retarded. If it is expected that he Natives will bring their lands to be sold hrough the Government under the Crownands system the Government will be disapointed. I do not believe that will be done; ut I believe the Government will have ample pportunities of purchasing this land. What I omplain of is that no adequate provision has een made for this purchase; for I believe a illion acres might be purchased. I am sorry have felt compelled to speak on this quesion. Not being a leader in the House, nor oping to be one, it really does not matter to e who sit on those benches so long as they dminister the affairs of the country well; but think it may perhaps be better if, in the ture, on these Appropriation Bill debates we ave a fixed understanding as to who should peak and who should not.

Sir J. VOGEL.—I can assure the honourable gentleman who has just spoken that it always gives me very great pleasure to listen to him. I will not answer the honourable member for Waitotara, because I think that, for a gentleman who professes to be a teacher on the subject of taste, he has not exhibited very good taste when he refused to be bound by an arrangement made during the day with the leader of the Opposition.

Mr. BRYCE.—I know of no arrangement.

Sir R. STOUT.—It was that the discussion should be taken on the third reading.

Major ATKINSON.—Surely that did not prevent any one from speaking afterwards.

Sir J. VOGEL.—The arrangement was, I believe, that the discussion was to take place on the third reading; but, whether there was such an arrangement or not, I protest against the practice which has grown up in this House, by which all the traditional regulations as to the course of debates are absolutely made waste-paper. The intention of the Standing Orders in this matter is that the honourable member who has charge of a Bill, after the debate has taken place, should have the right of reply; but we have got into a system by which, after an honourable member has replied, the whole of the debate is liable to be repeated on a new motion, instead of the new motion being kept distinct from the previous discussion. Therefore I shall not follow the honourable member for Waitotara in his remarks beyond saying that I think, if the legislation has been so disgraceful during the session, it would have been well for him if he had taken the opinion of the House upon some occasion and ascertained whether honourable members, or a majority of them, were of the same opinion as himself. As to the remarks of the honourable member for Selwyn, I shall not reply to them; but I shall place upon record that I do not consider that he has correctly represented what I said. Making every allowance, notwithstanding all his expressions against Protection, I could not help thinking that the honourable gentleman himself very badly needed protection. I think he will find it undesirable to enter into a large financial discussion after the usual dinner adjournment.

Bill passed.

Sir R. STOUT.—I move, That this House adjourn until half-past four o'clock to-morrow.

Mr. MACANDREW.—Would you not make it half-past two, so that my resolutions might come on? It will be very much to be regretted if these resolutions are not considered.

The House adjourned at a quarter past eleven o'clock p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 18th August, 1886.

Prorogation.

The Council met at half-past four o'clock p.m. The ACTING-CLERK informed the Council

that the Hon. the Speaker was unavoidably absent.

The Hon. Captain BAILLIE, Chairman of Committees, thereupon took the chair.

PRAYERS.

PROROGATION.

The Hon. the ACTING-SPEAKER acquainted the Council that His Excellency the Governor had been pleased to issue a Commission to certain honourable members for proroguing the General Assembly.

Three of the Commissioners, the Hon. WILLIAM DOUGLAS HALL BAILLIE, the Hon. PATRICK ALPHONSUS BUCKLEY, and the Hon. WILLIAM HUNTER REYNOLDS, having seated themselves upon the dais, commanded the Acting-Clerk of the Council to signify to the House of Representatives that the Commissioners desired their immediate attendance in the Legislative Council Chamber to hear the Commission read.

The SPEAKER of the HOUSE of REPRESENTATIVES, accompanied by honourable members, attended.

The Hon. the ACTING-SPEAKER said,—

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, AND GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,—

His Excellency the Governor, not thinking fit to be personally present here this day, has been pleased to cause a Commission to be issued, under the seal of the colony, appointing certain honourable members to be Commissioners for proroguing the General Assembly; which Commission you will now hear read.

Then the said Commission was read by the ACTING-CLERK, and is as follows:—

VICTORIA, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland Queen, Defender of the Faith:

To the Honourable Sir WILLIAM FITZHERBERT, Knight Commander of our Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Speaker of our Legislative Council of our Colony of New Zealand; the Honourable PATRICK ALPHONSUS BUCKLEY; the Honourable Sir FREDERICK WHITAKER, Knight Commander of our Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George; the Honourable WILLIAM HUNTER REYNOLDS; and the Honourable WILLIAM DOUGLAS HALL BAILLIE, also members of our said Council,—

Greeting:

WHEREAS the General Assembly of our Colony of New Zealand was begun and holden at the Parliament Houses, in Molesworth Street, in the City of Wellington, on Thursday, the thirteenth day of May last, and is there now holden: Now know ye that, for certain causes and considerations, we have thought fit to prorogue the said General Assembly; and therefore we, confiding in your fidelity and discretion, have assigned and appointed you, the said Sir William Fitzherbert, Patrick Alphonsus Buckley, Sir Frederick Whitaker, William Hunter Reynolds, and William Douglas Hall Baillie, our Commissioners, giving to you, or any two of you, by virtue of these presents, full power and authority, in our name and in the name of our Governor of our said Colony of New Zealand, to prorogue and continue the General Assembly of our said colony, at the said Parliament Houses, in Wellington aforesaid, from Wednesday, the eighteenth day of August instant, until and unto Thursday, the sixteenth day of December one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, there and then to be holden and sit: and therefore we command that you diligently attend the premises and effectually fulfil them in manner aforesaid; commanding all and singular the members of the said General Assembly, and all whom it concerns, that they meet in the said Assembly by virtue of these presents, and that they observe, obey, and assist you in executing the premises as they ought.

In testimony whereof we have caused our letters to be made patent, and the seal of our said colony to be hereunto fixed.

Witness the hand of our trusty and well beloved Sir WILLIAM FRANCIS DRUMMOND JERVOIS, Lieutenant-General in our Army, Knight Grand Cross of our Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Companion of our Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Governor and Commander-in-Chief in and over our Colony of New Zealand and its Dependencies, and Vice-Admiral of the same, at the Government House at Wellington, this eighteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty-six, and in the fiftieth year of our reign.

WM. F. DRUMMOND JERVOIS.

By His Excellency's command.

P. A. BUCKLEY.

The Hon. the ACTING-SPEAKER then said,—By virtue of His Excellency's Commission, under the seal of the colony, to us directed, and read, we do, in His Excellency's name and in obedience to his command, prorogue the General Assembly to Thursday, the 16th day of December next; and the General Assembly is prorogued accordingly to Thursday, the 16th day of December next.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 18th August, 1886.

Appropriation Bills—Business of the Session—Government Printing Office—Old Soldiers' Claims—Taxing Church Property—Cattle killed on Railway—Recess House Committee—Expenditure under Certain Votes—Land Grants to relieve Poverty—Prorogation.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past four o'clock.

PRAYERS.

APPROPRIATION BILLS.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had to inform the House that he had waited in person on His Excellency the Governor to present to him the two Bills of Supply, and His Excellency said, on behalf of Her Majesty, assented to the said Bills.

BUSINESS OF THE SESSION.

Mr. SPEAKER laid on the table the following return of the business of the session:—

1. SELECT COMMITTEES—			
On public matters	9		
On private Bills...	4		
	—	13	
2. STANDING COMMITTEES...	11		
Ditto on private Bills...	3		
	—	14	
		—	27
3. PUBLIC BILLS—			
Originated in the House—			
Received the Royal assent ...		65	
Reserved for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure		0	
Dropped or otherwise disposed of		56	
		—	121
Brought from the Council—			
Received the Royal assent ...		7	
Reserved for the signification of Her Majesty's pleasure		0	
Dropped or otherwise disposed of		2	
		—	9
Local Bills—			
Introduced		24*	
Passed the House of Representatives		16	
Passed and assented to		15	
Bills other than Local Bills introduced by Private Members—		36	
Passed the House of Representatives		7	
Passed and assented to		5†	
Time devoted to their consideration		34½h.	
4. PRIVATE BILLS—			
Originated in the House—			
Received the Royal assent ...		3	
Dropped		1	
		—	4
Brought from the Council—			
Received the Royal assent ...		1	
Dropped		0	
		—	1
5. PETITIONS PRESENTED—			
From Europeans		364	
From Maoris		96	
		—	460
6. DIVISIONS—			
In the whole House		82	
In Committee		144	
		—	226
7. SITTINGS—			
Days of meeting...			65
Hours of sitting			476
Daily average			7h. 19m.
8. VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS—			
Questions asked of Ministers ...		545	
Entries in Journals		1,213	
		—	1,758
Daily average			27
9. ORDERS FOR PAPERS			59
10. PAPERS LAID UPON THE TABLE—			
By command			111
In return to orders			55
In return to addresses			0
By message			1
By Act			45
By leave			30
Papers ordered to be printed		183	
Papers not ordered to be printed		59	
		—	242
11. REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEES—			
From the Public Petitions Committee		185	
From the Native Affairs Committee		152	
From the Waste Lands Committee		47	
From the Goldfields and Mines Committee		10	
From the Local Bills Committee ...		24	
From other Committees		43	
		—	461

* One declared to be a private Bill.
† One taken up and passed as a Government measure.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Government, Whether they will call for tenders for the new printing office immediately, in order that the building may be finished before next session?

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said it was owing to the action of some honourable members—of whom the honourable gentleman was one—that the building was not already erected. The Government had not yet considered the matter sufficiently to enable him to say when the work would be put in hand.

Dr. NEWMAN said that since the honourable gentleman answered the question in that fashion he would move the adjournment of the House. Last year the Minister called for tenders for a wooden building, but many persons had thought a wooden building most unsuitable for the purpose, and he had asked the honourable gentleman to call for tenders for a building of less inflammable material. Considering the very many thousands of pounds' worth of property at stake—some of it could not be replaced—they thought it was exceedingly unwise to put it in a wooden building. As representing the district, and believing it to be in the interests of the colony, he had gone to the Minister and suggested that the building should be erected in a more solid material. The honourable gentleman said there was not sufficient money to build it in brick, but that he would ask Parliament for more money. He thought the honourable gentleman had given an utterly insufficient reason for not proceeding with the erection of the building, considering the urgency of the need of it.

Mr. O'CONOR thought the Government had done quite right in not going on with the building. A great many works of the greatest possible importance to the colony had been put back from time to time by the adverse vote of some members of that House, of whom the honourable gentleman was one of the most prominent. He thought it would be very wrong, in these circumstances, for the Government to go on with a building that could be dispensed with. For years past the work had been done very well in the present building. It rather ought to be the aim of the House to reduce the amount of printing, and so reduce the necessity for a new building—and the principal part of the printing was for that House: it was the work for the House that put the great strain on the Printing Office. He thought it was a very great mistake to go on spending so much money in erecting buildings in Wellington, instead of devoting all the available funds to opening up the out-districts now neglected, and enabling people to settle on the land.

Mr. BRUCE could not agree with the honourable member for the Buller. He had been a

member of the Committee which last year investigated this question of the Government Printing Office, and he must say that he was perfectly shocked by finding that, owing to the insanitary condition of the building, a very great number of the employés of the Government had suffered very much in health: in fact, it was shown most conclusively in evidence that some had lost their lives through the exceedingly bad sanitary accommodation provided for them to work in. While quite admitting the need of doing everything possible to open up the outlying districts of the colony, he thought their first care should be to make provision for the safety of the lives and health of those they employed in the colony's service. He quite agreed with the arguments of the honourable member for Thorndon in reference to this question; but, at the same time, he quite admitted the difficulty the Government had to contend with owing to the insufficiency of money; but he thought this was a question which ought to receive the attention of the Government during the recess.

Mr. FISHER said he quite agreed with everything that had been said by the honourable member for Rangitikei; but he did not think any representation by the members for the city was likely to produce the least effect, and therefore he had not said anything himself on the subject.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said he had to thank the honourable member for Thorndon for confirming what he himself had stated when replying to the question.

Mr. SMITH was sure the Government would treat this matter as favourably as anything else. He did not think Wellington had anything to complain of as far as public works were concerned. A very large amount had been and was being spent on buildings in the city, and a very large expenditure of public money otherwise was always going on in Wellington. There was no doubt that a new printing office was required, and that the Government would take the matter into consideration. He would, while speaking on the subject, urge the Government to see that the various papers and returns promised to the House were printed and sent out as soon as possible, while the subjects to which they related were fresh in the minds of honourable members. The sooner they got the parliamentary papers and returns the better.

Mr. BEETHAM had intended to urge on the Government the publication of the papers as rapidly as possible, as it was a matter of great importance that they should be distributed as soon as possible after the conclusion of the session, while the matters dealt with were fresh in mind. The delay in publication often prevented honourable members from addressing their constituents: the absence of the papers was really very material. He hoped their publication would be pushed on as rapidly as possible, and that the printing staff would not be unduly reduced immediately after the session.

Motion for the adjournment of the House negatived.

Mr. Bruce

OLD SOLDIERS' CLAIMS.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Minister of Defence, If he will forthwith appoint the Commission to inquire into the claims of old soldiers for grants of land? A number of persons who had presented petitions were exceedingly anxious to know whether the Government would appoint the Commission at an early date. A very large number of petitions and claims had been sent in, he believed; and therefore it would take any Commission a long time to make a full inquiry; and, to enable the Commission to have ample time to inquire and present their report before next session, he hoped there would be no further delay in making the appointment.

Mr. BALLANCE could only reiterate what he had repeatedly announced to the House, that it was the intention of the Government to appoint a Commission at an early date for this purpose.

TAXING CHURCH PROPERTY.

Mr. MACANDREW asked the Government whether the provisions of the new Property Assessment Act applied to manses and parsonages.

Sir R. STOUT said it was not so intended. The Government did not intend the Act to apply to manses, parsonages, or church sites, but only to other Church property.

CATTLE KILLED ON RAILWAY.

Mr. FISHER asked the Minister for Public Works whether he would again consider the claim of Mr. Charles Lett, of Pakuratahi, who at various times had had cattle killed—to the total value of £150—by the railway which passed through his property. Mr. Lett had on former occasions brought the matter under the notice of the Government, without receiving any satisfactory consideration; and, as the damage inflicted upon him had been made greater since those occasions, it was again necessary, in the interests of Mr. Lett, to bring the matter under the notice of the Government. In the Resident Magistrate's Court, Wellington, a few days ago, an action had been brought against the Wellington-Manawatu Railway Company by a Native for damages for cattle killed on the company's line, and Mr. Wardell, the Resident Magistrate, had given judgment against the company. If the honourable gentleman desired it, he would furnish him with the exact particulars of Mr. Lett's claim.

Mr. E. RICHARDSON said he was not exactly aware of the nature of the claim to which the honourable gentleman referred; but, if the honourable gentleman would furnish him with the particulars, which he had said he was willing to do, he would give the matter his consideration.

RECESS HOUSE COMMITTEE.

Mr. BEETHAM moved, That the report of the Joint House Committee, recommending that the members of both Houses residing within ten miles of Wellington should form the Joint House Committee during the recess,

the Hon. Mr. Mantell to be Chairman, be confirmed by the House. He would also ask the Minister for Public Works to comply with the request of the Committee to have another boiler fitted up during the recess.

Motion agreed to.

EXPENDITURE UNDER CERTAIN VOTES

On the motion of Mr. MOSS, it was resolved, That there be laid before the House, within one month after the beginning of the session, a statement of the expenditure and liabilities for the financial year under the following votes: Harbour Defences, Class IX., Schedule 2; Purchase of Native Lands, Class VI., Schedule 2, and Class III., Schedule 3; Thermal Springs, Class XII., Schedule 2: the statement to show the several amounts paid or due, the persons to whom paid or due, and the services rendered respectively.

LAND GRANTS TO RELIEVE POVERTY.

Mr. MACANDREW, in moving the motion standing in his name, said,—Sir, it is likely that "Black Rod" may make his appearance while you are putting this question, so that I do not think it is worth while introducing it. I must say that I regret very much having been unable to submit these proposals before the last dying minute of the session; but you are aware, Sir, that this has not been through my fault. These proposals have been on the Order Paper for a great many weeks past, and it only shows the unsatisfactory way in which the business of this House must needs be conducted when a private member has little or no chance of bringing any question to an issue, however important its bearing may be on the public interests. I may say I have no desire whatever, in submitting these resolutions, to reflect upon either the present or any other Government; nor have I any desire to reflect on either side of the House; but I certainly did and do reflect upon the general political incapacity, of which I myself must bear a fair share, which has allowed this colony to drift into the mess into which it has got—its most unsatisfactory condition as regards the unemployed and pauperism. My belief is that we should have done well, if necessary, to have spent a whole session in order to solve this very serious question. It would have been time well spent, and I am very sorry indeed that circumstances have prevented the question being brought up. We are told that these resolutions offer a fit subject for a debating club. I say the question is one for this House—one for the country: it is the question of questions. And, while we have been here now for twelve or thirteen weeks, what, I ask, is the value of the work done as compared with the settling on the land of the whole of the unemployed in this colony, making them their own landlords—each one sitting under his own vine and under his own fig-tree? I say there is no comparison between the results that might have accrued from our labours in that direction and those that have resulted as it is. I might ask, of what value has been all our work here this session as compared with nipping in the bud that sapling of pauperism which has taken far too deep a root in the land, or, rather, I might say, as compared with cutting down that sturdy tree of pauperism which is assuming such gigantic proportions, and which, by our legislation, we are nourishing and cherishing? I take it that this pauperism will be the curse of the country, if not checked—a far greater curse than all your rabbit pest, and the low price of produce, and all the rest of it put together. Depend upon it it has been a grave blunder to place the whole or any part of charitable aid upon the consolidated revenue: it is utterly subversive of that self-reliance that can alone mitigate the pauper evil. I am perfectly satisfied that "the granting of an adequate area of land, on the sole condition of beneficial occupation, to every man who is able and willing to work, would to a large extent reduce the number of unemployed." Speaking of that district with which I am best acquainted, I am satisfied that if the homestead regulations had been earnestly put in force twelve months ago we should not have had half the number of unemployed there that we have now. During the past few months I have had any amount of correspondence on the subject: even now I have got the names of some forty or fifty heads of families who are compelled to enrol themselves amongst the unemployed, not one of whom would have been on that list if he had had a bit of land of his own. Honourable members who have read a work that has lately come out under the auspices of the Duke of Argyll and Mr. Chamberlain, "Three Acres and a Cow," will see that it is very remarkable what has been done and what is now being done in the Old Country under that system, even where there is a rent to pay. How much more, then, could be done in New Zealand, where there need be no rent to pay, and where the area need not be confined to three times three acres! There is another reason why I regret very much that the Government did not give an opportunity of discussing this question, and that is that I think the result would have been that they would have been authorized to appoint a separate Minister of Lands for each Island. You require a separate Minister of Lands for each Island; and in saying this I am not reflecting in any way on my honourable friend the present Minister of Lands, who, I believe, has worked like a galley-slave. He has a great deal too much to do, and it is utterly impossible for him or for any other man, I do not care who he is, to administer the lands from one end of New Zealand to the other satisfactorily—at all events as I should like to see them administered, and in the interests of the colony. I think there has been a fine opportunity missed of having the whole subject discussed, with the probable result which I desire to accomplish. I feel that the salvation of New Zealand depends now, as regards the *bonâ fide* settlement of the country, very much upon the administration such as I have indicated—namely, a Minister of Lands for each Island, who should have nothing else to attend to.

There would be healthy emulation between them, which could not fail to promote settlement. When speaking the other day I likened the land to the Kingdom of Heaven. What I meant by that was, that I should like to see the Minister of Lands in the position of a certain king in the parable, who made a great feast and sent his servants forth into the highways and byways to compel the people to come in. I feel extreme regret that the House has not been afforded an opportunity of discussing so important a question as this; and, as I am sure honourable members would not like to have the debate interrupted by the prorogation, I will at once content myself with simply moving the resolutions of which I have given notice, although, had there been a few minutes to spare, I should have endeavoured to elucidate their practical working.

Motion made, and question proposed,—

"(1.) That in this colony, replete as it is with every element of comfort and wealth, the existence of so much idle capital in the form of unemployed labour, and the heavy burdens that are being imposed towards providing for charitable aid, are anomalies which do not reflect credit upon the Legislature, and which demand the most earnest consideration of this House.

"(2.) That the granting of an adequate area of land, on the sole condition of beneficial occupation, to every man who is able and willing to work would to a large extent reduce the number of the unemployed.

"(3.) That the placing of suitable blocks of land at the disposal of Municipal Councils, County Councils, or District Road Boards, as the case may be, to be by them assigned, in small allotments, to the able-bodied poor, and the devolving upon such local governing bodies the entire cost and responsibility of providing for the relief of the poor within their respective boundaries, would greatly tend to diminish and ultimately all but extirpate pauperism.

"(4.) That, in order to remedy the evils in question, more depends upon executive than upon legislative action; and, in so far as executive action in the direction indicated may be deemed to be fettered by the existing land-laws, this House will readily agree to such amendment of the law as may be considered necessary.

"(5.) That a readjustment of portfolios, by which the time and attention of a separate Minister of the Crown might be devoted exclusively to land administration in each Island, would be highly calculated to render the administration more effective than it can possibly be under the existing system, and would conduce to ease off those hindrances that practically stand so much in the way of people settling on the land.

"(6.) That the Government be requested to take the foregoing resolutions into its serious consideration before the session closes, so as, if need be, to obtain the sanction of the Legislature to any action in the matter that may be deemed requisite."—(*Mr. Macandrew.*)

Sir R. STOUT.—I do not think it would be proper to allow an important resolution of this kind to pass without saying a word or two on it. I entirely demur to the statement of the honourable gentleman that this colony is exceptionally situated in the number of its unemployed. I also take exception to his statement that the number of unemployed in New Zealand is greater now than it was years ago. I can remember when, in 1865, the number of unemployed in Dunedin was so strong that the authorities were obliged to have some fifty or a hundred armed policemen to keep order in the streets, because of the demands which the unemployed were endeavouring to enforce. This question of unemployed will arise periodically. You cannot get capital and labour to adjust themselves without it, and even if there be more people settled on the land there will still be unemployed. Why, even in those countries where the whole of the land is taken up you have unemployed, and under our present social conditions it is impossible to prevent it. What does "the poor" mean? It means those who are unable to maintain themselves in the necessaries of life; and there will always be some people in that position. No settlement of the land, no encouragement to local industries, will stop pauperism. The honourable gentleman says, "(2.) That the granting of an adequate area of land, on the sole condition of beneficial occupation, to every man who is able and willing to work would to a large extent reduce the number of the unemployed." That is practically what we are doing now, and I believe next year will show a larger number of people settled on the land than has ever been settled on it in any one year before in New Zealand, notwithstanding all the difficulties we have had to contend with. And how has that been done? By a system of encouraging small settlers.

PROROGATION.

A message was brought by A. T. BOTHAMLEY, Esq., Acting-Clerk of the Legislative Council, to the following effect: "The Commissioners appointed by His Excellency the Governor to do all things in his name in order to the proroguing of this Parliament, request the attendance in the Legislative Council Chamber of the members of this honourable House to hear the Commission read."

Accordingly, Mr. SPEAKER, with the House, went to the Legislative Council Chamber; and a Commission was read for the proroguing of Parliament.

The Hon. the ACTING-SPEAKER of the Legislative Council, one of the Commissioners, said,—By virtue of His Excellency's Commission, under the seal of the colony, to us directed, and read, we do, in His Excellency's name and in obedience to his command, prorogue the General Assembly to Thursday, the 16th day of December next; and the General Assembly is prorogued accordingly to Thursday, the 16th day of December next.

END OF FIFTY-SIXTH VOLUME.

LL OF THE HONOURABLE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF NEW ZEALAND.

THIRD SESSION—NINTH PARLIAMENT—1886.

HON. SIR W. FITZHERBERT, K.C.M.G., SPEAKER.

LAND, HON. J. B. A. ...	CANTERBURY.
ILLIE, HON. W. D. H. ...	MARLBOROUGH.
ENICOAT, HON. J. W. ...	NELSON.
THGATE, HON. J. ...	OTAGO.
NAR, HON. J. A. ...	WESTLAND.
ANDON, HON. A. DE B. ...	WELLINGTON.
ETT, HON. DE R. J. ...	CANTERBURY.
CKLEY, HON. P. A. ...	WELLINGTON.
MPBELL, HON. R. ...	OTAGO.
AMBERLIN, HON. H. ...	AUCKLAND.
IGNAN, HON. P. ...	AUCKLAND.
TZHERBERT, HON. SIR W., K.C.M.G. ...	WELLINGTON.
RASER, HON. T. ...	OTAGO.
RACE, HON. M. S. ...	WELLINGTON.
ART, HON. R. ...	WELLINGTON.
ENDERSON, HON. T. ...	AUCKLAND.
OLMES, HON. M. ...	OTAGO.
OBINSON, HON. G. R. ...	WELLINGTON.
OHNSTON, HON. J. ...	WELLINGTON.
ENNY, HON. C. W. A. T. ...	MARLBOROUGH.
OHERE, HON. MOKENA ...	WAIAPU.
AHMANN, HON. H. H. ...	WESTLAND.
ANTELL, HON. W. B. D. ...	WELLINGTON.
ARTIN, HON. J. ...	WELLINGTON.
ENZIES, HON. J. A. R. ...	OTAGO.
ILLER, HON. H. J. ...	OTAGO.
CLEAN, HON. G. ...	OTAGO.
MORRIS, HON. G. B. ...	AUCKLAND.
NGATATA, HON. WI TAKO ...	WELLINGTON.
OLIVER, HON. R. ...	OTAGO.
PEACOCK, HON. J. T. ...	CANTERBURY.
PETER, HON. W. S. ...	CANTERBURY.
PHARAZYN, HON. R. ...	WELLINGTON.
POLLEN, HON. D. ...	AUCKLAND.
REEVES, HON. W. ...	CANTERBURY.
REYNOLDS, HON. W. H. ...	OTAGO.
RICHMOND, HON. J. C. ...	NELSON.
RICHMOND, HON. M., C.B. ...	NELSON.
ROBINSON, HON. W. ...	NELSON.
SCOTLAND, HON. H. ...	TARANAKI.
SHEPHARD, HON. J. ...	NELSON.
SHRIMSKI, HON. S. E. ...	OTAGO.
STEVENS, HON. E. C. J. ...	CANTERBURY.
SWANSON, HON. W. ...	AUCKLAND.
TAIAROA, HON. H. K. ...	OTAGO.
WALKER, HON. L. ...	CANTERBURY.
WATERHOUSE, HON. G. M. ...	WELLINGTON.
WHITAKER, HON. SIR F., K.C.M.G. ...	AUCKLAND.
WHITMORE, HON. SIR G. S., K.C.M.G. ...	HAWKE'S BAY.
WIGLEY, HON. T. H. ...	CANTERBURY.
WILLIAMS, HON. H. ...	AUCKLAND.
WILLIAMSON, HON. J. ...	AUCKLAND.
WILSON, HON. J. N. ...	HAWKE'S BAY.

MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, 1886.

THIRD SESSION—NINTH PARLIAMENT.

PROVINCIAL DISTRICT OF AUCKLAND.

BUCKLAND, W. F. ...	Franklin North.
COWAN, A. J. ...	Coromandel.
DARGAVILLE, J. McM. ...	Auckland West.
FRASER, W. ...	Thames.
GILLON, L. M. ...	Tauranga
GREY, Sir G., K.C.B. ...	Auckland East.
HAMLIN, E. ...	Franklin South.
HOBBS, R. ...	Bay of Islands.
HURST, W. J. ...	Waitemata.
LARK, E. ...	Waipa.
LEWIS, S. ...	East Coast.
MITCHELSON, E. ...	Marsden.
MOAT, W. P. ...	Raglan.
MOSS, F. J. ...	Parnell.
OGILVIE, Hon. Sir G. M., Kt.	Manukau
PEACOCK, T. ...	Newton.
THOMPSON, T. ...	Auckland North.
TUTE, Hon. J. A. ...	Eden.
WHYTE, J. B. ...	Waikato.

PROVINCIAL DISTRICT OF TARANAKI.

ATKINSON, Hon. H. A. ...	Egmont.
SAMUEL, O. ...	New Plymouth.
TRIMBLE, R. ...	Taranaki.

PROVINCIAL DISTRICT OF HAWKE'S BAY.

ORMOND, J. D. ...	Napier.
RUSSELL, W. R. ...	Hawke's Bay.
SMITH, W. C. ...	Waipawa.

PROVINCIAL DISTRICT OF WELLINGTON.

BALLANCE, Hon. J. ...	Wanganui.
BEETHAM, G. ...	Wairarapa North.
BRUCE, R. C. ...	Rangitikei.
BRYCE, Hon. J. ...	Waitotara.
BUCHANAN, W. C. ...	Wairarapa South.
FISHER, G. ...	Wellington South.
FITZHERBERT, H. S. ...	Hutt.
JOHNSTON, C. J. ...	Te Aro.
MACARTHUR, D. H. ...	Manawatu.
NEWMAN, A. K. ...	Thorndon.
WILSON, J. G. ...	Foxton.

PROVINCIAL DISTRICT OF NELSON.

HURSTHOUSE, R. ...	Motueka.
KERR, J. ...	Waimea.
LEVESTAM, H. A. ...	Nelson.
MENTEATH, A. A. S. ...	Inangahua.
O'CONOR, E. J. ...	Buller.

PROVINCIAL DISTRICT OF MARLBOROUGH.

CONOLLY, E. T. ...	Picton.
DODSON, H. ...	Wairau.
LANCE, J. D. ...	Cheviot.

PROVINCIAL DISTRICT OF CANTERBURY.

ALLWRIGHT, H. ...	Lyttelton.
CASTER, J. L. ...	Heathcote.
CLARKE, F. J. ...	St. Albans.
HARPER, L. ...	Avon.
HOLMES, J. ...	Christchurch.
IVES, J. ...	Waikari.
McMILLAN, D. ...	Coleridge.
MONTGOMERY, W. ...	Akaroa.
O'CALLAGHAN, A. P. ...	Lincoln.
PEARSON, W. F. ...	Ashley.
REESE, D. ...	Stanmore.
RICHARDSON, Hon. E., C.M.G. ...	Kaiapoi.
ROLLESTON, Hon. W. ...	Geraldine.
STEWARD, W. J. ...	Waimate.
SUTTER, J. H. ...	Gladstone.
TAYLOR, R. M. ...	Selwyn.
TURNBULL, R. ...	Timaru.
VOGEL, Hon. Sir J., K.C.M.G.	Christchurch
WAKEFIELD, E. ...	Selwyn.
WALKER, W. C. ...	Ashburton.

PROVINCIAL DISTRICT OF WESTLAND

BEVAN, J. ...	Hokitika.
GUINNESS, A. R. ...	Greymouth.
SEDDON, R. J. ...	Kumara.

PROVINCIAL DISTRICT OF OTAGO.

BARRON, W. ...	Caversham.
BRADSHAW-BRADSHAW, J. B.	Dunedin Central
BROWN, J. C. ...	Tuapeka.
BUCKLAND, J. C. ...	Waikouaiti.
COWAN, C. ...	Hokonui.
DUNCAN, T. ...	Waitaki.
FERGUS, T. ...	Wakatipu.
FULTON, J. ...	Taieri.
GORE, J. ...	Dunedin South.
HATCH, J. ...	Invercargill.
HIRST, H. ...	Wallace.
HISLOP, T. W. ...	Oamaru.
JOYCE, J. P. ...	Awarua.
LARNACH, Hon. W. J. M., C.M.G. ...	Peninsula.
MACANDREW, J. ...	Port Chalmers.
MACKENZIE, M. J. S. ...	Mount Ida.
McKENZIE, J. ...	Moeraki.
PYKE, V. ...	Dunstan.
REID, D., jun. ...	Bruce.
RICHARDSON, G. F. ...	Mataura.
ROSS, A. H. ...	Roslyn.
STEWART, W. D. ...	Dunedin West.
STOUT, Hon. Sir R., K.C.M.G.	Dunedin East.
THOMSON, J. W. ...	Clutha.

MAORI MEMBERS.

HAKUENE, I. ...	Northern Maori
PERE, W. ...	Eastern Maori.
TE AO, TE P. ...	Western Maori.
PRATT, T. ...	Southern Maori

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